

The Trail They Blazed

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. **Activism:** Actions by individuals or groups that attempt to make social, legal, economic, or environmental changes in society. The members and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were political activists, fighting to make society more just and equitable.
2. **Black Power:** Black Power was a revolutionary movement. It was not a single group or organization. Instead, it was a political ideology. People who believed in Black Power felt that the mainstream Civil Rights Movement's strategy for winning full civil rights for African Americans was too slow or too moderate. Black Power emphasized racial pride, economic self-sufficiency, community policing, and free meals for children as well as a greater embrace of African culture in art, music, and fashion.
3. **Boycott:** A nonviolent form of economic protest by an individual or group. People boycott by refusing to do business with individuals, organizations or even states and countries they disagree with. During the Civil Rights Movement, boycotts were used widely against segregationist businesses that would not serve African American patrons.
4. **Civil Rights:** Rights that protect the personal freedom of individuals from infringement by the government, social organizations, or other individuals and protect against discrimination. Examples of civil rights

include the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right of self-defense, and the right to assemble. Many of these rights were denied to African Americans before the civil rights movement.

5. **CORE:** The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) is an African American civil rights organization founded in 1942 whose mission is “to bring about equality for all people regardless of race, creed, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic background.” A national organization, CORE also had many state and regional chapters including one in New Orleans to which many prominent civil rights leaders and activists belonged.
6. **Freedom Riders:** Civil rights activists who rode interstate buses through the segregated Southern states. The bus rides were called Freedom Rides. The activists, both African American and white, many of whom were students, led protests against segregation and faced threats of violence and arrest for their actions.
7. **Integration:** The process of ending segregation. During the Civil Rights Movement, champions of integration sought to strike down any and all laws that segregated on the basis of race.
8. **Jim Crow:** A catch-all term for state and local laws introduced to enforce racial segregation and to limit the rights of African Americans and other minorities. Jim Crow laws in some states remained in force for nearly a hundred years from the end of Reconstruction in 1877 until the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965.
9. **NAACP:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a civil rights organization founded in 1909 whose mission is “to ensure the political, educational, social, and

economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.” Many of the most famous and important civil rights leaders and civil rights campaigns were associated with the NAACP.

10. **Protest:** A public display expressing an individual or a group’s objection to a law, action, or idea. Protests can be large or small, violent or non-violent, and successful or unsuccessful. Protests, typically non-violent ones, were one of the hallmark features of the Civil Rights movement.
11. **Second-class Citizen:** Someone whose rights and privileges are restricted or not protected under the rule of law. Typical conditions second-class citizens endure include restrictions on the right to vote, who they can marry, or restrictions on where they can live, work, or go to school. At various times, African Americans faced all of these forms of restrictions.
12. **Segregation:** Any policy or law that aims to keep individuals separated based upon a real or perceived distinction. The type of segregation that the Civil Rights Movement aimed to defeat was segregation by race where African Americans and other people of color were kept separate from white people and were treated as second class citizens.
13. **Sit-In:** A peaceful form of protest in which one or more people occupy a space, business, or building to challenge policies that are perceived to be unfair, unethical, or illegal. During the Civil Rights Movement, sit-ins were often used to challenge segregated businesses such as cafeterias and lunch counters. Even though they were peaceful, sit-in participants were often threatened with intimidation, violence, or arrest.

14. **Supreme Court of the United States:** The highest court in the United States, the Supreme Court decides if local, state or, national laws stand in violation of the US Constitution. Many Supreme Court decisions in the 20th century were important in the extension and protection of American civil rights.

15. **White Supremacy:** The legal and extra-legal application of the belief system that white people or people of European ancestry were and should remain superior to all other racial groups in society. This belief was justification for Jim Crow policies of racial segregation, school segregation, and denying African Americans the right to vote after the end of Reconstruction.