

Directions: Use the information for each section to answer the following questions. You must read and understand all of the information to answer the questions. You must write in complete sentences. Explain your answers completely.



The Little Rock Nine, pictured here with Daisy Bates, a newspaper journalist and active member in the local NAACP, are nine students, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Elizabeth Eckford, Terrace Roberts, Carlotta Walls, Gloria Ray, Jefferson Thomas, Melba Pattillo, and Minnijean Brown. Bates would become the advisor for the nine students. The day before school opened, Governor Orval Faubus called the National Guard to surround Central High, declaring "blood would run in the streets" if blacks students attempted to enter.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued its historic *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling, on May 17, 1954. The decision declared all laws, which allowed the segregation of schools to be unconstitutional, and it called for the desegregation of all schools throughout the nation. After the decision, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attempted to register black students in previously all-white schools in cities throughout the South. By 1957, in Little Rock, the capital city of Arkansas, the NAACP had registered nine black students to attend the previously all white Little Rock Central High, selected on the criteria of excellent grades and attendance.

Several segregationist "citizens' councils" threatened to hold protests at Central High and physically block the black students from entering the school. In response, Governor Orval Faubus deployed the Arkansas National Guard to support the segregationists. The sight of a line of soldiers blocking nine black students from attending high school made national headlines and polarized the city. President Dwight Eisenhower attempted to de-escalate the situation and summoned Governor Faubus to his vacation home in Newport, Rhode Island. The president warned the governor not to interfere with the Supreme Court's ruling.

The Governor backed down and withdrew the National Guard, and the Little Rock Police Department took their place. Hundreds of protesters, mostly parents of the white students attending Central High, remained entrenched in front of the school. On Monday, September 23, 1957, the police quietly sneaked the nine students into the school. When the protesters learned that the nine black students were inside, they began confronting the outnumbered line of policemen. Under threat of a near riot, the nine students were escorted out of the school. President Eisenhower then sent federal troops to enforce integration and protect the nine students. The President deployed the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army to escort the students to school on September 23, 1957. The paratroopers of the division remained at the school for the rest of the school year.

1. Summarize the events surrounding The Little Rock Nine. Compare and contrast the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* with the implementation of that ruling in Little Rock Arkansas.



Birmingham, Alabama

In the 1950s and '60s Birmingham received national and international attention as a center of the civil rights struggle for African-Americans. The city was given the derisive nickname Bombingham because of a string of racially motivated bombings that took place during this time. A watershed in the civil rights movement occurred in 1963 when Martin Luther King, Jr., imprisoned for having taken part in a nonviolent protest, wrote the now famous *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, a defining treatise in his cause against segregation.

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given up by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was well timed in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see...that "justice too long delay is justice denied."

—Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter From Birmingham Jail

2. Summarize the central idea of the reading above from Letter from Birmingham Jail.

3. In relation to the struggle for African Americans civil rights, explain the following quote by the author. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see...that "justice too long delay is justice denied."

JFK Takes a Step Forward on Civil Rights

National television carried vivid pictures of police setting snarling dogs on unarmed demonstrators and washing small children across streets with the powerful impact of fire hoses. President Kennedy sent 3000 troops to restore peace. On June 11th, 1963, in Jackson Mississippi, Medgar Evers the field secretary for the NAACP was murdered. The murder and the events in Alabama forced President Kennedy to make a decision. Appearing on national television, Kennedy spoke of the "moral issue" facing the nation:

"The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot... enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place?"

Watch the YouTube Video at the following link address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rS4Qw4lIckg>

3. Read the information in the reading and the quote above. Then watch the YouTube video of President Kennedy addressing the nation in June of 1963. Explain the central idea behind the President Kennedy's speech to the nation on civil rights.

4. Closely read the quote by JFK above. In President Kennedy's view what is the "heart of the question" behind the civil rights movement?
