CHAPTER 29

The Civil Rights Era

1954–1973

Why It Matters

In the 1950s, a tide of protest began to rise in America against deeply rooted attitudes of racism and discrimination. The campaign for equality grew and gained momentum in the 1960s. Although the civil rights movement could not overcome all the obstacles, it achieved some great and long-lasting successes.

The Impact Today

Inspired by the movements of the 1950s and 1960s, many Americans work to secure full rights for all citizens.

The American Journey *Video* *The chapter 29 video, "Beyond Prejudice," examines what it was like to be a young adult during the civil rights movement.*







United States Presidents

Eisenhower 1953–1961

Kennedy 1961–1963

Johnson 1963–1969

1954
- *Brown* v. *Board of Education* ruling

1955
- Montgomery bus boycott begins

1963
- President Kennedy assassinated

1964
- Civil Rights Act passed

1955 1960 1965

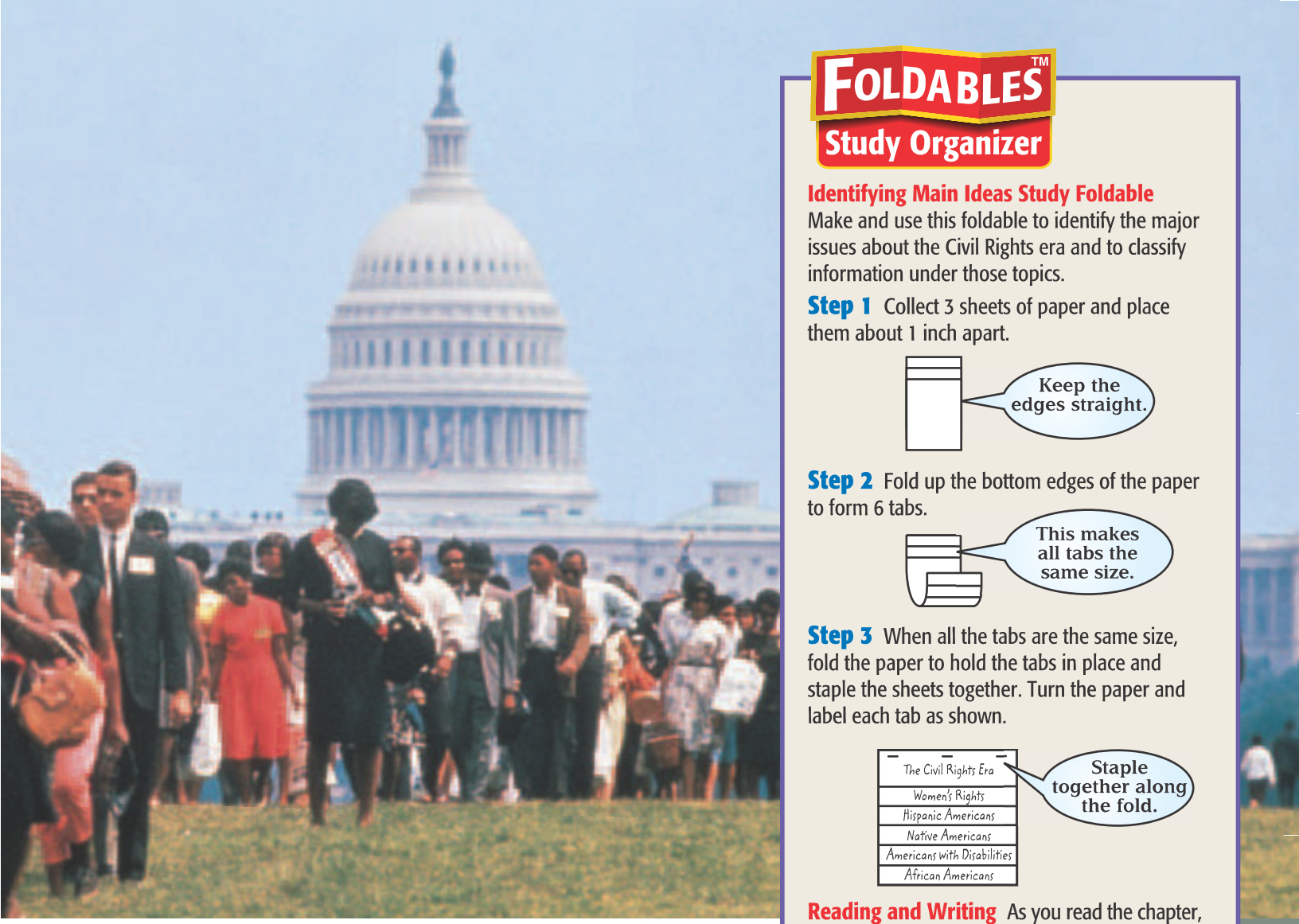
World

1954
- French forced out of Vietnam

1959
- Fidel Castro seizes power in Cuba

1962
- Algeria gains independence from France

1964
- Nelson Mandela receives life sentence in South Africa



March on Washington On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 people gathered to urge support for civil rights legislation.

FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

Identifying Main Ideas Study Foldable
Make and use this foldable to identify the major issues about the Civil Rights era and to classify information under those topics.

Step 1 Collect 3 sheets of paper and place them about 1 inch apart.

Step 2 Fold up the bottom edges of the paper to form 6 tabs.

Step 3 When all the tabs are the same size, fold the paper to hold the tabs in place and staple the sheets together. Turn the paper and label each tab as shown.

Reading and Writing As you read the chapter, write (under each appropriate tab) what you learn about the struggle for civil rights by different groups of Americans.

1968
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated
- Indian Civil Rights Act passed



1970
- Grape workers gain increased pay and better conditions



1971
- Floppy disk introduced

Nixon 1969–1974



1970 — 1975

1967
- First heart transplant performed in South Africa

1972
- Britain imposes direct rule on Northern Ireland
- Terrorists kill Israeli Olympic athletes

HISTORY Online

Chapter Overview
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SECTION 1

The Civil Rights Movement

Guide to Reading

Main Idea
Despite obstacles, African Americans pressed for equal rights.

Key Terms
segregation, integrate, boycott, civil disobedience

Reading Strategy
Classifying Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and describe the roles these people played in the civil rights movement.

	Roles
Linda Brown	
Rosa Parks	
Martin Luther King, Jr.	

Read to Learn
- how a Supreme Court decision helped African Americans in their struggle for equal rights.
- why Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged as a leader.

Section Theme
Civic Rights and Responsibilities African Americans organized in an effort to secure equal rights.

Preview of Events

1954 — 1955 — 1956 — 1957

1954 Supreme Court strikes down segregation in education

1955 Rosa Parks is arrested; Montgomery bus boycott begins

1957 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., heads SCLC; Federal troops help integrate a Little Rock high school



Jackie Robinson baseball card

AN American Story

Jackie Robinson could do everything on a baseball field—hit singles, slam home runs, and speed from base to base. Robinson was the first African American to play major league baseball. When his team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, reached the World Series in 1947, Robinson recalled, "I experienced a completely new emotion when the National Anthem was played. This time, I thought, it is being played for me, as much as for anyone else."

Equality in Education

African Americans had suffered from racism and discrimination in the United States since colonial times. As the nation entered the second half of the twentieth century, many African Americans believed that the time had come for them to enjoy an equal place in American life. They fought for equal opportunities in jobs, housing, and education. They also fought against segregation—the separation of people of different races.

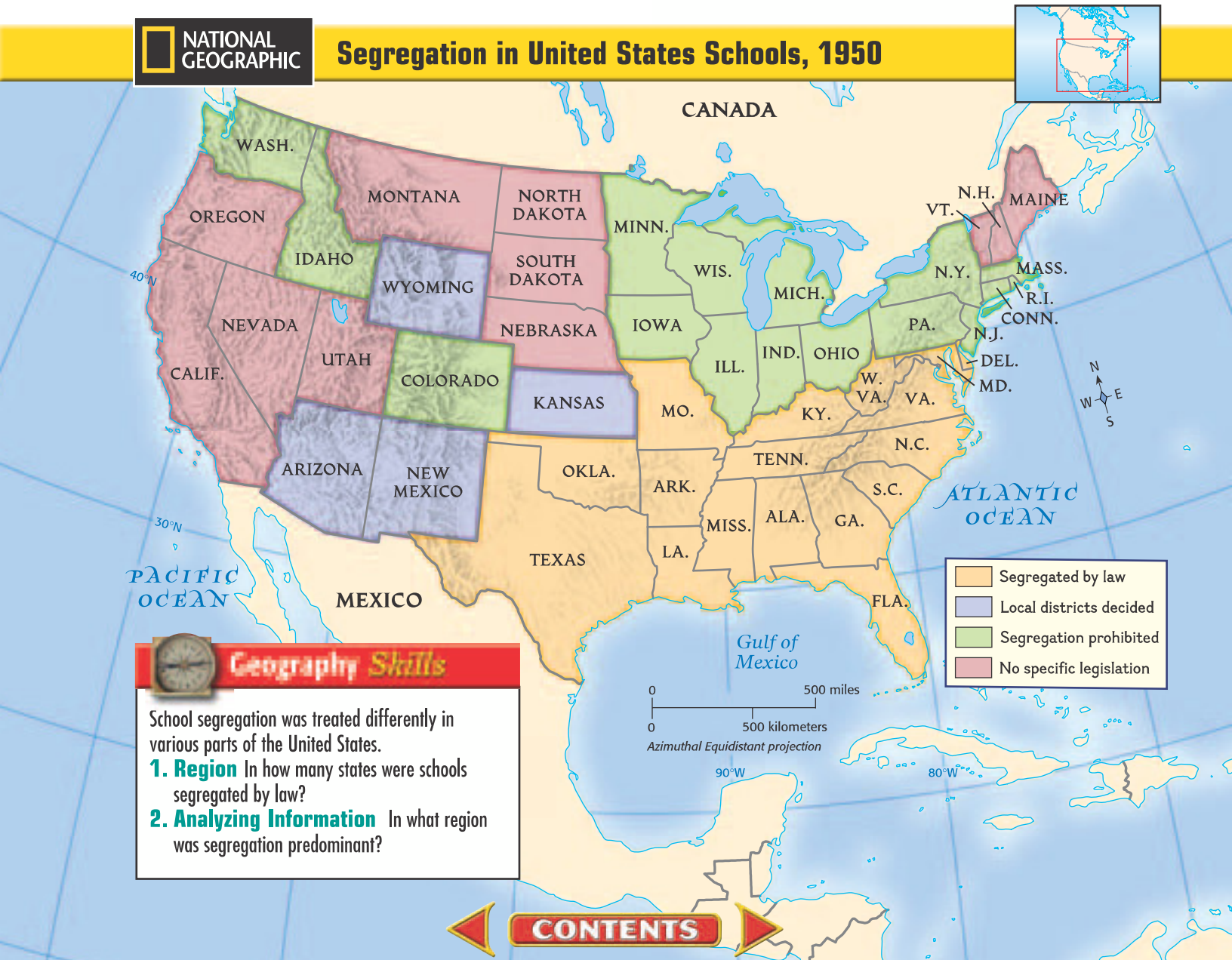
The *Brown* Decision

The **NAACP** (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) had worked on behalf of African Americans since its founding in 1909. In the 1950s, NAACP lawyers searched for cases they could use to challenge the laws allowing the segregation of public education.

The Supreme Court had upheld segregation laws in the past. In 1896 in ***Plessy* v. *Ferguson,*** it had ruled that "separate but equal" public facilities were legal. **Thurgood Marshall,** the chief lawyer for the NAACP, decided to challenge the idea of "separate but equal." The NAACP began to decide which among the nation's segregated school districts to bring before the Court. Seven-year-old African American Linda Brown was not permitted to attend an all-white elementary school just blocks from her house. The Brown family sued the school system but lost. Marshall and the NAACP appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court.

The case of ***Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,*** combined with several similar cases, reached the Supreme Court in December 1952. Marshall argued that segregated schools were not and could not be equal to white schools. For that reason segregated schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

On May 17, 1954, the Court unanimously ruled in *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,* that it was unconstitutional to separate schoolchildren by race. The *Brown* decision reversed the Court's decision in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson.* *(See page 997 for a summary of the* Brown *decision.)*



Geography Skills

School segregation was treated differently in various parts of the United States.

1. **Region** In how many states were schools segregated by law?
2. **Analyzing Information** In what region was segregation predominant?

CONTENTS

Integrating the Schools

The Court's decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* called on school authorities to make plans for **integrating**—bringing races together—in public schools. The Court also ordered that integration was to be carried out "with all deliberate speed"—as fast as reasonably possible.

Some school systems integrated quickly. However, in parts of the South, local leaders vowed to keep African American children out of white schools. A clash between the federal government and these states seemed unavoidable.

Confrontation in Little Rock

In 1957 a federal judge ordered Central High School in **Little Rock, Arkansas,** an all-white school, to admit African American students. Arkansas governor **Orval Faubus** opposed integration. In September he called out the state's National Guard to prevent African Americans from entering the high school.

On the first day of classes, armed members of the National Guard blocked the school's entrance and turned away nine African American students. One of them, 15-year-old **Elizabeth Eckford,** recalled that when she tried to squeeze past a member of the guard,

> "He raised his bayonet, and then the other guards moved in and raised their bayonets."

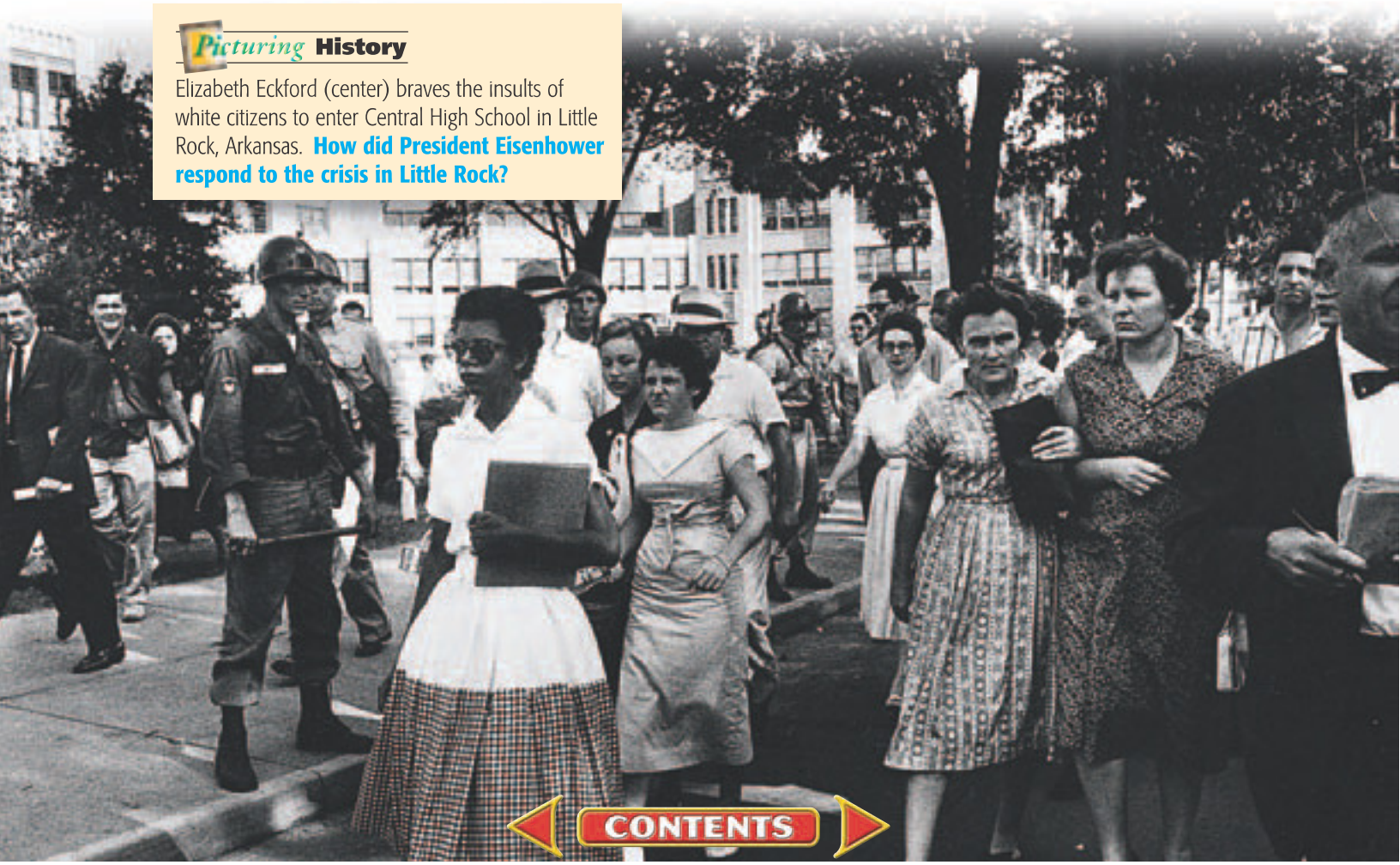
For the first time since the Civil War, a Southern state had defied the authority of the federal government. Although Eisenhower had some doubts about the *Brown* decision, he believed it was his duty to enforce the law. The president warned Faubus that, if the governor did not admit the students, the federal government would act.

When a federal judge ruled that the governor had violated federal law, Faubus removed the National Guard. Eisenhower sent hundreds of soldiers to Little Rock to patrol the school grounds and protect the students. Shielded by the federal troops, the nine African American students entered the school.

Reading Check **Explaining** What did the Supreme Court rule in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*?

Picturing History

Elizabeth Eckford (center) braves the insults of white citizens to enter Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. **How did President Eisenhower respond to the crisis in Little Rock?**



People In History

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 1929–1968



After the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged as the leader of the African American protest movement. What drove him into this demanding role in history?

The son of a Baptist minister, King attended Morehouse College, and when he was 18 years old decided on a career in the ministry. By the time he first arrived in Montgomery in September 1954 as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, he had also met and married Coretta Scott.

From the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott, King encouraged his followers to use nonviolent resistance. This meant that those who carried out the demonstrations should not fight with authorities. In spite of his stand on nonviolence, King often became the target of violence.

In April 1968, King was in Memphis, Tennessee, to support a strike of sanitation workers. There, the minister was shot while standing on a motel balcony.

Gains on Other Fronts

While school integration continued, African Americans made other advances in securing their rights. More and more took part in a movement dedicated to securing fair and equal treatment.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

On the evening of December 1, 1955, **Rosa Parks** boarded a bus in downtown **Montgomery, Alabama.** Parks, a seamstress, was secretary of the local chapter of the NAACP. She found an empty seat in the section reserved for whites.

When white passengers entered the bus, the driver told Parks, an African American, to move to the rear of the bus. Parks refused. At the next bus stop, she was taken off the bus by police, arrested for breaking the law, and fined $10. The episode could have ended there—but it did not.

Rosa Parks's arrest led African Americans in Montgomery to organize a **boycott**—a refusal to use—the city's buses. The boycott organizers hoped to hurt the city financially and force it to alter its policies. They had strength in numbers—almost 75 percent of the bus company's riders were African American.

At a boycott meeting, a young Baptist minister came forward to speak. Not widely known at the time, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,** made an impact on the crowd. He declared:

> "We're here because, first and foremost, we are American citizens, and we are determined to acquire our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning. We are tired—tired of being segregated and humiliated, tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression."

The boycott upset many people's daily lives, but the African Americans of Montgomery pulled together to make it work. Students hitchhiked to school; workers walked or rode bikes to their jobs. King helped organize car pools to shuttle people from place to place.

The bus boycott lasted for more than a year. City officials arrested King and other leaders at different times, but African Americans held firm. The local bus company lost thousands of dollars in fares, and downtown businesses lost customers. Finally, the Supreme Court settled the matter by ruling that the Montgomery bus segregation law was unconstitutional. In December 1956, the boycott ended.

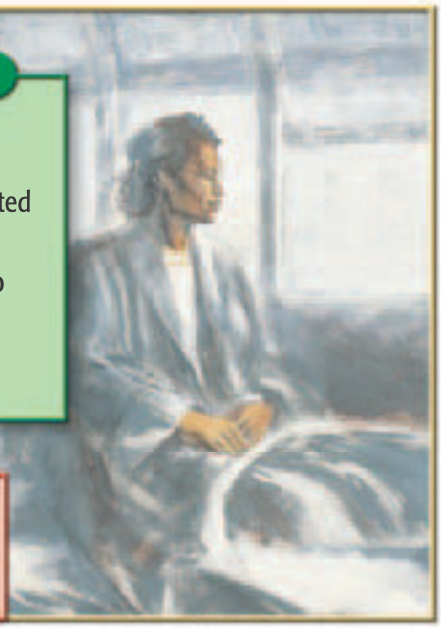
Causes and Effects of the Move Toward Equality

Causes

- 1955, Rosa Parks is arrested
- 1955, Montgomery bus boycott begins
- 1957, Conflict at Little Rock
- 1957, SCLC is organized
- 1960, Students stage sit-ins
- 1963, March on Washington, D.C.

Effects

- 1962, James Meredith enrolls at University of Mississippi
- 1967, Thurgood Marshall appointed to Supreme Court
- 1968, Shirley Chisholm elected to House of Representatives
- 1972, Barbara Jordan elected to Congress



Graphic Organizer Skills

African Americans faced many obstacles in their struggle for equal rights.

Analyzing Information What protest followed the arrest of Rosa Parks?

Nonviolent Protest

With the victory in Montgomery, King became a leader of the civil rights movement. He followed the tactics of **A. Philip Randolph,** the nation's most prominent African American labor leader. King was also strongly influenced by **Mohandas Gandhi,** who had used nonviolent protest to help India gain independence from Great Britain. In keeping with his beliefs, Gandhi used protest methods based on **civil disobedience,** or the refusal to obey laws that are considered unjust.

In January 1957, King and 60 other ministers started a new organization called the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference** (SCLC). SCLC leaders emphasized nonviolent protest. They showed civil rights workers how to protect themselves from violent attacks. The SCLC also discussed how to identify targets for protests and how to organize people for support. In taking these steps, the SCLC prepared African Americans for the struggle for equal rights.

Reading Check **Describing** How did the Montgomery bus boycott begin?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

2. **Reviewing Facts** Name the Supreme Court decision that banned segregation in education.

Reviewing Themes

3. **Civic Rights and Responsibilities** How did the Montgomery bus boycott end?

Critical Thinking

4. **Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., believed nonviolent protest was the most effective course to gain civil rights?
5. **Sequencing Information** Re-create the time line below and list important events in the civil rights movement in the 1950s.

May 1954	Dec. 1955	Jan. 1957	Sept. 1957