By the mid-1960s, much progress had been made in the arena of civil rights. However, leaders of the movement began to understand that merely winning political rights for African Americans would not completely solve their economic problems. The struggle would continue to try to end economic inequality.

**Urban Problems**

**MAIN Idea** African Americans became impatient with the slow pace of change; this frustration sometimes boiled over into riots.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Have you ever seen news coverage of a riot in the United States or overseas? What triggered the outburst? Read on to learn about the factors that fed into the riots of the 1960s.

Despite the passage of civil rights laws in the 1950s and 1960s, **racism**—prejudice or discrimination toward someone because of his or her race—was still common in American society. Changing the law could not change people’s attitudes, nor did it help most African Americans trapped in poverty in the nation’s big cities.

In 1965 nearly 70 percent of African Americans lived in large cities. Many had moved from the South to the big cities of the North during the Great Migration of the 1920s and 1940s. There, they often found the same prejudice and discrimination that had plagued them in the South.

Even if African Americans had been allowed to move into white neighborhoods, poverty trapped many of them in inner cities. Many African Americans found themselves channeled into low-paying jobs with little chance of advancement. Those who did better typically found employment as blue-collar workers in factories, but most did not advance beyond that. In 1965 only 15 percent of African Americans held professional, managerial, or clerical jobs, compared to 44 percent of whites. The average income of an African American family was only 55 percent of that of the average white family, and almost half of African Americans lived in poverty. Their unemployment rate was typically twice that of whites.

Poor neighborhoods in the nation’s major cities were overcrowded and dirty, leading to higher rates of illness and infant mortality. At the same time, the crime rate increased in the 1960s, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. Juvenile delinquency rates rose, as did the rate of young people dropping out of school. Complicating matters even more was a rise in the number of single-parent households. All poor neighborhoods suffered from these problems, but because
more African Americans lived in poverty, their communities were disproportionately affected.

Many African Americans living in urban poverty knew the civil rights movement had made enormous gains, but when they looked at their own circumstances, nothing seemed to be changing. The movement had raised their hopes, but their everyday problems continued. As a result, their anger and frustration began to rise—until it finally erupted.

The Watts Riot

Just five days after President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, a riot erupted in Watts, an African American neighborhood in Los Angeles. Allegations of police brutality had served as the catalyst for this uprising, which lasted for six days and required over 14,000 members of the National Guard and 1,500 law officers to restore order. Rioters burned and looted entire neighborhoods and destroyed about $45 million in property. They killed 34 people and injured about 900 others.

More rioting was yet to come. Riots broke out in dozens of American cities between 1965 and 1968. The worst riot took place in Detroit in 1967. Burning, looting, and skirmishes with police and National Guard members resulted in 43 deaths and over 1,000 wounded.

Eventually the U.S. Army sent in tanks and soldiers armed with machine guns to get control of the situation. Nearly 4,000 fires destroyed 1,300 buildings, and the damage in property loss was estimated at $250 million.

The Kerner Commission

In 1967 President Johnson appointed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, headed by Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois, to study the causes of the urban riots and to make recommendations to prevent them from happening again. The Kerner Commission, as it became known, conducted a detailed study of the problem. The commission blamed racism for most of the problems in the inner city. “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal,” it concluded.
The commission recommended the creation of 2 million inner-city jobs, the construction of 6 million new units of public housing, and a renewed federal commitment to fight de facto segregation. President Johnson’s War on Poverty, which addressed some of the concerns about inner-city jobs and housing, was already underway. Saddled with spending for the Vietnam War, however, Johnson never endorsed the recommendations of the commission.

The Shift to Economic Rights

By the mid-1960s, a number of African American leaders were becoming increasingly critical of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s nonviolent strategy. They felt it had failed to improve the economic position of African Americans. Dr. King came to agree with this criticism, and in 1965 he decided to address economic issues.

Dr. King decided to focus on the problems that African Americans faced in Chicago. King had never conducted a civil rights campaign in the North, but by tackling a large Northern city, he believed he could call greater attention to poverty and other racial problems that lay beneath the urban race riots.

To call attention to the deplorable housing conditions that many African American families faced, Dr. King and his wife Coretta moved into a slum apartment in an African American neighborhood in Chicago. Dr. King and the SCLC hoped to work with local leaders to improve the economic status of African Americans in poor neighborhoods.

The Chicago Movement, however, made little headway. When Dr. King led a march through the all-white suburb of Marquette Park to demonstrate the need for open housing, he was met by angry white mobs similar to those in Birmingham and Selma. Mayor Richard J. Daley ordered the Chicago police to protect the marchers, and he was determined to prevent violence. He met with Dr. King and proposed a new program to clean up the slums. Associations of realtors and bankers also agreed to promote open housing. In theory, mortgages and rental property would be available to everyone, regardless of race. In practice, little changed.

**Black Power**

**MAIN Idea** Impatient with the slower gains of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s movement, many young African Americans called for “black power.”

**HISTORY AND YOU** How did Dr. King work to avoid violence? Read on to find out how some African Americans broke with Dr. King’s approach.

Dr. King’s failure in Chicago seemed to show that nonviolent protests could do little to solve economic problems. After 1965, many African Americans, especially urban young people, began to turn away from King. Some leaders called for more aggressive forms of protest. Their strategies ranged from armed self-defense to promoting the idea that the government should set aside a number of states where African Americans could live separate from whites. As African Americans became more assertive, some organizations, including CORE and SNCC, voted to expel all whites from leadership positions in their organizations. They believed that African Americans alone should lead their struggle.

Many young African Americans called for black power, a term that had many meanings. A few interpreted black power to mean that physical self-defense and even violence were acceptable—a clear rejection of Dr. King’s philosophy. To most, including Stokely Carmichael, the leader of SNCC in 1966, the term meant that African Americans should control the social, political, and economic direction of their struggle.

**Primary Source**

“This is the significance of black power as a slogan. For once, black people are going to use the words they want to use—not just the words whites want to hear. . . . The need for psychological equality is the reason why SNCC today believes that blacks must organize in the black community. Only black people can . . . create in the community an aroused and continuing black consciousness. . . .”

—from the New York Review of Books, September 1966

Black power stressed pride in the African American cultural group. It emphasized racial distinctiveness rather than assimilation—the process by which minority groups adapt to the dominant culture in a society. African Americans showed pride in their racial
heritage by adopting new Afro hairstyles and African-style clothing. Many also took African names. In universities, students demanded that African and African American studies courses be made part of the standard school curriculum. Dr. King and some other leaders criticized black power as a philosophy of hopelessness and despair. The idea was very popular, however, in poor neighborhoods where many African Americans resided.

Malcolm X

By the early 1960s, a young man named Malcolm X had become a symbol of the black power movement. Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, he experienced a difficult childhood and adolescence. He drifted into a life of crime and, in 1946, was convicted of burglary and sent to prison for six years.

Prison transformed Malcolm. He began to educate himself and played an active role in the prison debate society. Eventually, he joined the Nation of Islam, commonly known as the Black Muslims, who were led by Elijah Muhammad. Despite their name, the Black Muslims do not hold the same beliefs as mainstream Muslims. The Nation of Islam preached black nationalism. Like Marcus Garvey in the 1920s, Black Muslims believed that African Americans should separate themselves from whites and form their own self-governing communities.

Shortly after joining the Nation of Islam, Malcolm Little changed his name to Malcolm X. The “X” symbolized the family name of his African ancestors who had been enslaved. He declared that his true name had been stolen from him by slavery, and he would no longer use the name white society had given him.

The Black Muslims viewed themselves as their own nation and attempted to make themselves as self-sufficient as possible. They ran their own businesses and schools, and published their own newspaper, Muhammad Speaks. They encouraged their members to respect each other and to strengthen their families. Black Muslims did not advocate violence, but they did advocate self-defense. Malcolm X’s criticisms of white society and the mainstream civil rights movement gained national attention for the Nation of Islam.

Primary Source

Black Power in the 1960s

In the late 1960s, a new group of African American leaders, such as Malcolm X, had lost patience with the slow progress of civil rights and felt that African Americans needed to act more militantly and demand equality, not wait for it to be given.

Primary Source

“Since the black masses here in America are now in open revolt against the American system of segregation, will these same black masses turn toward integration or will they turn toward complete separation? Will these awakened black masses demand integration into the white society that enslaved them or will they demand complete separation from that cruel white society that has enslaved them? Will the exploited and oppressed black masses seek integration with their white exploiters and white oppressors or will these awakened black masses truly revolt and separate themselves completely from this wicked race that has enslaved us?”

—Malcolm X, from his speech “The Black Revolution,” 1964

1. **Identifying** What are two options Malcolm X thinks African Americans have regarding their relationship with whites?

2. **Drawing Conclusions** Do you think Malcolm X supported integration? Why or why not?
By 1964, Malcolm X had broken with the Black Muslims. Discouraged by scandals involving the Nation of Islam’s leader, he went to the Muslim holy city of Makkah (also called Mecca) in Saudi Arabia. After seeing Muslims from many races worshipping together, he concluded that an integrated society was possible after all.

After Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam, he continued to criticize the organization. Because of this, organization members shot and killed him in February 1965. Although Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam before his death, his speeches and ideas from those years with the Black Muslims have influenced African Americans to take pride in their own culture and to believe in their ability to make their way in the world.

Malcolm X’s ideas influenced a new generation of militant African American leaders who also preached black power, black nationalism, and economic self-sufficiency. In 1966 in Oakland, California, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and Eldridge Cleaver organized the Black Panthers.

The Black Panthers believed that a revolution was necessary in the United States, and they urged African Americans to arm themselves and prepare to force whites to grant them equal rights. Black Panther leaders called for an end to racial oppression and control of major institutions in the African American community, such as schools, law enforcement, housing, and hospitals. Eldridge Cleaver, who served as the minister of culture, articulated many of the organization’s aims in his 1967 best-selling book, Soul on Ice.

Describing What disagreements split Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the black power movement?
King Is Assassinated

**MAIN Idea** After Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Do you know someone who remembers Dr. King’s assassination? Read about the events surrounding King’s death.

By the late 1960s, the civil rights movement had fragmented into dozens of competing organizations with differing philosophies for reaching equality. At the same time, the emergence of black power and the call by some African Americans for violent action angered many white civil rights supporters. This made further legislation to help African Americans economically less likely.

In this atmosphere, Dr. King went to Memphis, Tennessee, to support a strike of African American sanitation workers in March 1968. At the time, the SCLC had been planning a national “Poor People’s Campaign” to promote economic advancement for all impoverished Americans. The purpose of this campaign, the most ambitious one that Dr. King would ever lead, was to lobby the federal government to commit billions of dollars to end poverty and unemployment in the United States. People of all races and nationalities were to converge on the nation’s capital, as they had in 1963 during the March on Washington, where they would camp out until both Congress and President Johnson agreed to pass the requested legislation to fund the proposal.

On April 4, 1968, as he stood on his hotel balcony in Memphis, Dr. King was assassinated by a sniper. Ironically, the previous night he had told a gathering at a local church, “I’ve been to the mountaintop. . . . I’ve looked over and I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land.”

Dr. King’s death touched off both national mourning and riots in more than 100 cities, including Washington, D.C. The Reverend Ralph Abernathy, who had served as a trusted assistant to Dr. King for many years, led the Poor People’s Campaign in King’s absence. The demonstration, however, did not achieve any of the major objectives that either King or the SCLC had hoped it would.

In the wake of Dr. King’s death, Congress did pass the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The act contained a fair-housing provision outlawing discrimination in housing sales and rentals and gave the Justice Department authority to bring suits against such discrimination.

Dr. King’s death marked the end of an era in American history. Although the civil rights movement continued, it lacked the unity of purpose and vision that Dr. King had given it. Under his leadership, and with the help of tens of thousands of dedicated African Americans, many of whom were students, the civil rights movement transformed American society. Although many problems remain to be solved, the achievements of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s dramatically improved the lives of African Americans, creating opportunities that had not existed before.

**Vocabulary**

**Main Ideas**
2. **Describing** What were the findings and the recommendations of the Kerner Commission?
3. **Assessing** How did Malcolm X’s ideas about the relationship between African Americans and white Americans change by the time of his murder?
4. **Explaining** What was the general effect of Dr. King’s assassination?

**Critical Thinking**
5. **Big Ideas** How was the Civil Rights Act of 1968 designed to improve the economic status of African Americans?
6. **Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the main views of each leader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldridge Cleaver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. **Analyzing Visuals** Study the cartoons on page 643. Together, what do they imply about government response and responsibility for the problems of the inner cities?

8. **Expository Writing** Assume the role of a reporter in the late 1960s. Suppose that you have interviewed a follower of Dr. King and a member of the Black Panthers. Write a transcript of each interview.

**Reading Check**

**Summarizing** What were the goals of the Poor People’s Campaign?
Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

Long-Range Causes
• Widespread racial segregation in the American South
• Lack of voting rights for African Americans in the American South

Immediate Causes
• The arrival of large numbers of African Americans in the North after the Great Migration gives them increased political influence and greater voting power.
• African American contributions during World War II lead many African Americans to believe it is time to take action to demand change.
• NAACP strategy of using lawsuits to weaken segregation scores a major victory in 1954 with the Brown v. Board of Education ruling.
• African American churches serve as organizational bases, and pastors rally African Americans and organize protests.

Major Results of the Civil Rights Movement
• Civil Rights Act of 1957
• Civil Rights Act of 1964
• Voting Rights Act of 1965
• Civil Rights Act of 1968
• End of legal segregation in schools and public facilities
• Restoration of voting rights for African Americans
• Ban on discrimination based on race in the workplace
• Increased federal power to protect civil rights

Major Events of the Civil Rights Movement
• African American community in Montgomery, Alabama, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., organizes the Montgomery bus boycott.
• African American students are blocked from entering Little Rock High School. President Eisenhower sends in federal troops and asks Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1957.
• Sit-ins begin in Greensboro, and soon young people are staging sit-ins across the South to integrate public facilities.
• Freedom Riders end segregation on interstate bus travel.
• Martin Luther King, Jr., leads a march in Birmingham, then a March on Washington to support the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
• Martin Luther King, Jr., leads a march in Selma to pressure Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence.

1. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court overturned the precedent of _______ established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
   - A reading requirements
   - B de facto segregation
   - C “separate but equal”
   - D discrimination

2. Some Southern senators used a _______ to try to prevent civil rights legislation from passing.
   - A filibuster
   - B cloture
   - C closed vote
   - D walk-out

3. Prejudice and discrimination against a person because of his or her race is called
   - A black power.
   - B cloture.
   - C segregation.
   - D racism.

4. The concept of _______ was supported by militant African American leaders.
   - A racism
   - B black power
   - C nonviolent resistance
   - D freedom marches

Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answer to the following questions.

Section 1 (pp. 622–629)

5. Which event led to the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama?
   - A a riot in Montgomery
   - B the CORE sit-in
   - C the arrest of Rosa Parks
   - D a church bombing

6. In 1957 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) set out to
   - A march on Washington and pass a civil rights bill.
   - B encourage demonstrations and boycotts.
   - C increase church attendance and promote brotherhood.
   - D end segregation and encourage voter registration.

7. *Brown v. Board of Education* was a significant case because
   - A it declared it illegal to prevent African Americans from voting.
   - B it declared it illegal to segregate restaurants.
   - C it declared it illegal to segregate public schools.
   - D it declared it illegal to discriminate in the selling of a house.
Section 2 (pp. 630–639)

8. “Bloody Sunday” occurred in reaction to which event?
   A the Selma march
   B the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
   C the March on Washington
   D the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

9. How did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 help African Americans?
   A The act authorized the U.S. attorney general to send federal employees to register voters.
   B The act suspended literacy tests in counties where less than half of all adults had been allowed to vote.
   C The act outlawed discrimination in housing sales and rentals.
   D The act gave the federal government more power to force school desegregation.

Section 3 (pp. 642–647)

10. In response to the race riots in the mid-1960s, the federal government established which of the following?
    A SNCC
    B EEOC
    C Chicago Movement
    D Kerner Commission

11. What did the Nation of Islam, or the Black Muslims, advocate?
    A African Americans should use nonviolent resistance to fight for civil rights.
    B African Americans should separate from whites and form their own self-governing communities.
    C African Americans should use violence to overthrow the government and establish their own nation.
    D African Americans should sue the federal government to establish equality among the nation’s citizens.

Critical Thinking

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

12. Which group worked to fight segregation and other inequalities primarily through the courts?
    A NAACP  C SCLC
    B SNCC  D CEEO

Base your answers to questions 13 and 14 on the map below and on your knowledge of Chapter 18.

Route of the Freedom Riders, 1961

13. The route of the Freedom Riders focused on which region of the United States?
    A the Midwest
    B the South
    C New England
    D the West

14. The final destination of the Freedom Riders was
    A Montgomery, Alabama.
    B Washington, D.C.
    C Selma, Alabama.
    D Jackson, Mississippi.
15. Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, and Bobby Seale founded which militant African American group?
   A the Black Muslims
   B the Black Panthers
   C SNCC
   D the Chicago Movement

16. In this cartoon, American cities are represented by
   A riots.
   B water.
   C mines.
   D ships.

17. Which of the following describes the main idea of this cartoon?
   A American cities are being destroyed by racial issues.
   B American cities are much like ships.
   C American cities need to change direction.
   D American cities should avoid racial issues.

18. According to Johnson, what are the origins of racism?
19. What does Johnson say forbids the continuation of racism in the United States?

Extended Response

20. Select one of the African American leaders who advocated a more militant approach to the problems of racism in America than did Martin Luther King, Jr. Write an essay comparing and contrasting the ideas of that figure with King’s ideas, providing your views on which approach was more effective and why. Your essay should include an introduction and at least three paragraphs with supporting details from the chapter.

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 18 at glencoe.com.