The Civil Rights in the 1960’s

Working through the court system and mass protest, public opinion was changed which secured passage of Civil Rights legislation.
The March on Washington 1963

- JFK had sent a civil rights bill to Congress, which had tabled it.
- Dr. King organized a march on Washington to bring pressure on Congress to pass it.
- August 28, King appeared before a crowd of 250,000 at the Lincoln Memorial.
The March on Washington 1963

- Participants and viewers were moved by the speech “I Have a Dream.”

- Public opinion began to support Civil Rights legislation.

- This proved the power of non-violent protest.
JFK was assassinated in November, 1963 in Dallas.

Lee Harvey Oswald was believed to be the lone gunman.

This did not stop the Civil Rights Movement...

BROTHERS

John Kennedy (right) was the first of these two brothers to be assassinated. Bobby (left) was the Attorney General in 1963. He was assassinated in 1968 as he was running for president!
Lyndon Johnson; New President

- LBJ was more of an advocate for Civil Rights than JFK
- Johnson coerced (pushed) Congress to pass two key civil rights acts
- LBJ saw equal rights as part of his program called the “Great Society”
Civil Rights Act of 1964:

- Pressure from the march and LBJ forced Congress to sign the measure:
- The act prohibited discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, and gender.
- It also integrated public accommodations.
- Using the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution, the law was enforceable.
A March for Voting Rights:

- Dr. King organized a march to raise awareness for voting rights in Selma, 1965.
- The non-violent protesters were attacked by the police with fire hoses and dogs.
- This raised public opinion to support a new voting rights law.
The Voting Rights Act of 1965:

- Outlawed literacy testing as a voting qualification.
- Federal registrars were sent to South to register the voters.
- Provided for marshals to investigate actions of discrimination.
- Resulted in large increase in black voting in the South.
- LBJ again used coercive tactics to get Congress to pass this law!
Civil Disobedience: refusal to obey an unjust law and accept consequence (advocated by MLK)

Non-violence: peaceful protest (advocated by MLK)

Black Power: more militant movement of late 1960’s which lost patience with non-violent protest (advocated by Black Panthers and Malcolm X)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

- Organized in 1909 by many Americans, including W.E.B. DuBois, worked for political, social and economic equality.
- The organization challenged segregation in the courts.
- Through congressional lobbying and challenging laws in courts, the NAACP continues to work for all Americans “of color”
LEGACY OF THESE PROTESTS:

• By interpreting its powers broadly, the Supreme Court can reshape American Society.

• Changing public opinion was necessary in order for the government to respond with new legislation.

• Non-violent protest seems to get the most positive results from American society.

• The concepts of civil rights are still issues in politics today.