Standing Up for Equality: The Civil Rights Movement

Learning objective: To understand the significance of the Civil Rights Movement and the importance of equality in society.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

In the mid-20th century, the United States faced a period of intense struggle for Civil Rights. At that time, many states practiced legal segregation, where people were separated based on the color of their skin. This meant that public facilities, such as schools, buses, and parks, were often divided, with facilities for Black citizens frequently being of a much lower quality. Ellie, who loves history, explains that this was a time of great unfairness and systemic discrimination.

Courageous activists, including Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, led peaceful protests to demand equality. They believed in the power of non-violent action to change laws and minds. Their persistence helped to highlight the injustice of the system to the entire world. Eventually, their efforts led to landmark changes, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin. This movement serves as an important reminder that standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult, is essential for building a fair and just society for everyone.

Word bank: segregation · equality · discrimination · protest · justice · legislation

1. What was the purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1964? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, which public facilities were affected by segregation? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author describe the activists as 'courageous'? (2 marks)

4. What does the phrase 'non-violent action' suggest about the methods used by the protestors? (2 marks)

5. Do you think peaceful protest is the most effective way to change laws? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a poster that represents the theme of equality and community, inspired by the peaceful messages of the Civil Rights Movement.

Extension challenge: Research one other civil rights activist from history. Write a short paragraph explaining why their contribution was important to the movement.