

WARM UP

1 What do you know about the civil rights movement in the USA?

MORE ABOUT...

The two men met in person only once (26 March, 1964). King had just finished a press conference regarding the Senate debate on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when he met Malcolm X in the corridor. The two shook hands.

KING AND MALCOLM X

Two of the many figures involved in the civil rights movement in the USA were Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X. In spite of their opposing ideologies, they were both dedicated to the fight for racial advancement.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

Born in Atlanta in 1929 to a Baptist minister and his school teacher wife, King studied at Morehouse College in Atlanta and Boston University's School of Theology, receiving his doctorate in 1955. He became the minister of a Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, and was chosen as the head of a new group to support the Montgomery bus boycott, where the town's black citizens boycotted the bus system for 13 months, a protest that ended with the ruling by the US Supreme Court that segregation on the city's public buses was unconstitutional. During this time King developed his leadership techniques and non-violent protest strategy, taken from Gandhi, that he combined with Christian social gospel ideas. He quickly emerged as a national civil rights leader and in 1963 he led the Birmingham campaign, the largest civil rights protest yet, with mass meetings, sit ins, marches and a boycott of city shops. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King was arrested 13 times, his home was bombed on more than one occasion and attempts were made to kill him. He was assassinated in Memphis on 4th April 1968 while he was in the city to support a strike by sanitation workers.



MALCOLM X

Malcolm Little was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on 19th May 1925. After his father's death and his mother was put in an institution, he was raised in various reform schools and foster homes. While he was in prison for burglary, Malcolm joined the Nation of Islam. After prison he moved to Chicago, became a minister for the Nation of Islam and changed his name to Malcolm X. He soon became the leading spokesman for the Nation of Islam, an organisation of black nationalists, led by Elijah Muhammad, who were in favour of black separatism regulated by a version of the Muslim faith. This ideology was quite the opposite of King's and in the beginning Malcolm X was critical of King and his non-violent activism and cooperation with whites. The support for black nationalism grew as many activists felt that non-violent resistance to the white-dominated power structure was no longer sufficient to get results. In 1964 Malcolm X broke away from the Nation of Islam and later formed his own group, the Organization of African American Unity, which was ready to support any action, including violence, which would get significant results. Malcolm X was assassinated on 21st February 1965.

ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the texts and tick which civil rights leader (or both):

- 1 had a more difficult childhood
- 2 obtained a PhD
- 3 changed his name
- 4 was a minister
- 5 won the Nobel Peace Prize
- 6 believed in non-violence
- 7 supported black nationalism
- 8 was assassinated

	King	Malcolm X
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SPEAKING

3 Have a class debate on the following statement.

'The election of the first African American President, Barack Obama, in 2008 shows that racial equality has been reached in the USA.'