

The Civil Rights Movement: Birmingham and the March on Washington
“No Easy Walk” from *Eyes on the Prize* (55 minutes)
Viewing and Discussion Guide

Birmingham (00:00-43:05)

Birmingham Activists- Note the actions of each of the following activists as you view this segment.

Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth

Charles Sherrod

Bernice Johnson Reagon

Dr. William G. Anderson

Andrew Young

Dr. Martin Luther King

Wyatt Walker

1. Why did the SCLC choose Birmingham, Alabama for a major desegregation effort named Project C?
2. Why did the desegregation efforts in Albany, Georgia fail?
3. What lessons were learned in Albany and how did the events there impact the SCLC's efforts in Birmingham?
4. How did Dr. Martin Luther King respond to the criticisms of the SCLC efforts to confront Birmingham's segregation policies?
5. Why were children used in Project C? Was this a morally courageous strategy or a risky desperate one? Would you have voluntarily been a part of this "Children's March?" Why or why not? How would your friends and family have responded?
6. How did Commissioner of Public Safety, Bull Connor, respond to the children's demonstration?
7. Note the effect his response had on:
National and international media

National and world opinion

The demonstrators

The Justice Department

8. Why was it so difficult to reach an agreement in Birmingham?
9. List the many effects of the bombing of the Gaston Hotel.

March on Washington (43:05-55:00)

March on Washington Activists- Note the actions of each of the following activists as you view this segment.

A. Philip Randolph

Bayard Rustin

John Lewis

James Forman

Dr. Martin Luther King

Rev. Ralph Abernathy

10. Why was a mass march on Washington planned for August 28, 1963?
11. Describe the controversy behind the scenes between young activists like John Lewis and the older activists like A. Philip Randolph. Can the backing down of the younger generation of black activists be seen as an act of courage? Explain.
12. What were the effects of the oratory of Dr. King and the March on Washington? Did the speech and the march make an impression on you? Explain.

13. How was the nonviolent movement shaken to its core? How would you respond to the murder of a friend?

Key Questions

Taken from the *Eyes on the Prize Study Guide* (page 53) written by Facing History and Ourselves. Register for *free* access to the guide *and* its primary sources at

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resources/eyes-prize-study-guide>

1. How did participants evaluate the success and failure of the events in Albany, Birmingham, and Washington? How would you evaluate them?
2. What strategies did movement activists employ in their efforts to transform Albany, Birmingham, and the nation? What kinds of resistance did they meet?
3. What compromises were civil rights leaders pressured to make in pursuit of a common goal?
4. Must a nonviolent movement provoke a backlash in order to achieve its goals? What other strategies could the protestors have used to expose the violence and injustice of segregation?
5. What is the role of the media in exposing injustice and influencing public opinion?
6. This episode tracks the expansion of the Southern civil rights campaign into a true mass movement. What events and factors contributed to this change?