

Civil Rights and the ADA

You are going to read two oral histories — one by a person with a disability and the other by a participant in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s. As you read, think about the similarities and differences between the two stories in terms of obstacles faced and strategies for change. Answer the following questions:

1. If the 14th Amendment guaranteed equal protection for all citizens and the 15th protected voting rights, why do you think Congress had to keep passing laws to reinforce those rights? What kinds of attitudes and stereotypes about race or ability affected society, then and now?
2. What do you think influenced each author to participate in the movement?
3. What kind of prejudiced behavior did each author encounter?
4. What do you think motivated people to treat the author (or people in the movement) unfairly?
5. What strategy did the authors or others in each movement use to break down barriers?
6. If you decided to participate in one of these movements or another civil rights movement, what kind of rights would you want to work toward? What changes would you like to see in terms of justice, equality, and freedom?

WRITING OR DRAWING EQUALITY

Think about what you've learned about Civil Rights and equality in U.S. history. You might know of symbols ranging from the universal symbol for access, various peace signs, the black power symbol, or the Teaching Tolerance icon. Reconsider question 6, thinking of two or three symbols of rights that you find important. Then, draw a poster using those symbols or write an essay that describes the significance of those symbols as they represent the struggle for equality and justice.