

English 11 & 12

Meeting week assignments

Due: 10/17

1. Revise, edit, and complete the final draft of your personal narrative assignment.
2. Write a review of a movie or album of music (see attached assignment sheet).
3. Read the article, "Civil Rights Movement in Postwar Washington DC," and respond to the attached questions.
4. Continue reading your self-selected novel.

NAME:

DATE:

Movie / Music Review

Congratulations! You have landed one of the most coveted jobs on the market today. You are getting paid to give your opinion!

That's right, you're a movie and music reviewer for a weekly magazine called *The Good Stuff*. Your latest work assignment is to write a review of a movie or an album of music of your choice. This means, you need to sit down and enjoy a movie (at least 1hr. long) or an album of music (at least 30 min. long) and write a 1-page review for the magazine.

Important details:

1. The audience of *The Good Stuff* consists mostly of teen and young-adult readers. Make sure you keep the interests of your audience in mind.
2. Your review should be at least 300 words in length.
3. Decorate your review with colors and pictures, printed and/or drawn, like a magazine page.
4. Your reviews will be put up on walls or bulletin boards in the classroom/school, so make sure you are doing your best work.
5. Here are some suggestions to get started writing:
 - What is your overall impression of the movie/album?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the movie/album?
 - Describe some key scenes or songs.
 - Give it a rating out of 10 and explain your reasons for your rating.
 - Who would you recommend it to? Why?

A Local and National Story: Civil Rights Movement in Postwar Washington DC [Abridged]

This essay is provided courtesy of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. It has been abridged by ReadWorks.

[...]During the late 1940s and early 1950s, civil rights activists in Washington waged a battle against racial discrimination in the city that had always been viewed as a symbol of our democracy. Their story reveals the deep connections between social scientists, activists, an emerging web of new and old civil rights organizations, and the nation's liberal elite at the mid-twentieth century. The story also [...] shows the important role of symbolism in the attack on Jim Crow [during the Civil Rights Movement].

Segregation was a powerful institution in postwar DC, just as it was in the rest of the South, but the city's race-relations history was complex and constantly changing. The city boasted a large and influential free black population during the antebellum era. After the Civil War, the relatively benign rule of the federal government made DC a mecca for America's black elite. The men and women who belonged to this elite group created numerous significant institutions to promote their interests, including Howard University. In the early twentieth century, however, DC blacks, like those across the nation, witnessed the erection of many barriers to economic and social progress. During the Taft and Wilson administrations, Jim Crow regulations increasingly restricted the movements and opportunities of the capital's black citizens, and DC's black population became the focal point of actions taken by segregationists in Congress.

African Americans fought these efforts in a variety of ways and with increasing effort. During the 1930s, DC was a leader in the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" movement, and blacks aggressively protested discrimination in employment. While progress was inconsistent, the New Deal provided an

increase in employment opportunities in the federal government to both working-class people and blacks, securing symbolic victories against Jim Crow. During World War II, employment shortages brought significant economic gains to African Americans and spurred them to demand greater political rights.

After World War II, activists stepped up their attacks on Jim Crow in DC. [...] One organization that played a crucial role in the fight against racial prejudice was the American Council on Race Relations. Founded in 1944 with the support of philanthropists Edwin Embree (of the Rosenwald Fund) and Marshall Field, and with the participation of key civil rights leaders including Walter White, Mary McCleod Bethune, and Lester Granger, the organization aimed “to bring about full democracy in race relations,” through the “discovery of fundamental knowledge” about racial problems. University of Chicago sociologist Louis Wirth and African American economist (and future cabinet secretary) Robert C. Weaver led the organization as it sought to promote the scholarly study of racial issues, to develop materials for use by government and private organizations, and to assist local communities in organizing programs of racial cooperation.

One of the council’s first projects focused on segregation in Washington, DC. Because of “the symbolic significance of the Nation’s Capital as the repository of the American Creed,” Embree argued that challenging segregation in Washington could establish a precedent for fighting the institution across the country. In 1946, Embree and Weaver (a DC native) organized the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation’s Capital, gathering support from over one hundred of the nation’s leaders. Over the next two years, Weaver oversaw the preparation of a major study of the capital’s race relations, which he intended to use to promote legal and social reform in the city.

[...]

In 1948, Embree, Wirth, and Weaver released the committee’s 91-page report. Entitled “Segregation in Washington,” it began by focusing on the global implications of discrimination in the District. “Few Americans,” it argued, “appreciate what a shock Washington can be to visitors from abroad.” As

evidence, the report reproduced a letter from a Danish visitor, who noted that “Washington today, despite its great outward beauty, is not a good ‘salesman’ for your kind of democracy.”

The report then examined several aspects of segregation in the city, describing the almost complete exclusion of blacks by eating establishments in the downtown area and the restrictions imposed on black customers in commercial operations. It also described the vise-like grip that housing discrimination placed on black residents. Excluded from newly developed areas in the outlying sections of DC, blacks were forced to find accommodations in the declining and overcrowded interior. In addition, the report detailed the continuing restrictions on employment despite the explosion of civil service jobs. Although new agencies like the Office of Price Administration proved that integrated offices could function efficiently, many federal agencies—the worst example was the State Department—still practiced a rigid discrimination that limited blacks to the lowest-ranking positions.

The final section of the report focused on education and recreation in DC. “Every September,” the report stated, “the Superintendent of Schools makes two speeches. They are identical in content, but one is made to Negro teachers and the other to white teachers.” This separation was enforced throughout all parts of the public school system. Moreover, separate did not mean equal in the District’s schools, as Negro schools received far less funding and had less qualified teachers and older facilities than their white counterparts. Segregation also applied to after-school programs, run by the recreation department, where the system was so rigidly imposed that the city even named two annual champions (one white, one black) in marbles tournaments.

The report concluded with a call to action: “For more than half a century, DC had been building ghettos of mind, body and spirit. They are ghettos that cramp the soul of the nation. In the Nation’s Capital, we must mean what we say, and give people of all races and colors an equal chance to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

The report received significant national and local attention. [...]The report and the increasing attention it brought to discrimination in DC resulted in significant and immediate reforms. Just days after the report's release, the Civilian Aeronautics Administration declared that it would bar any discrimination at facilities of the National Airport (now Ronald Reagan Airport). J.A. Krug, the Secretary of the Interior Department, which was negotiating to turn over operation of several District facilities to the local recreation department, declared that his department would not complete the transfer until the recreation department eliminated its requirement of racial segregation in its facilities.

The most interesting outcome of the report was an effort to resuscitate the District's nineteenth-century "lost" discrimination laws. During their research, committee members discovered that in 1872 and 1873, the Council of the District of Columbia had passed laws giving blacks equal rights in all places of public accommodation, including restaurants and hotels. These laws had never been repealed, but had been surreptitiously removed from the DC code sometime in the early 1900s. To push the local government to acknowledge the validity of the laws, a group of District activists formed the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of DC Anti-Discrimination Laws (CCEAD). Led by Mary Church Terrell, an 88-year-old African American, who was virtually an institution in the District and was the scion of one of its most famous families, the group directed a three-prong attack on public segregation, which consisted of lobbying the DC government, initiating legal action to secure the enforcement of the statutes, and protesting at those commercial facilities that refused to integrate.

After some pressure, the commissioners who ran the city agreed to enforce the laws, partly as a matter of civil rights, but in large part because they viewed the effort as an important precedent for the home-rule independence they had lobbied Congress to grant the local government. Activists initiated a test case in which Terrell, along with two other African Americans and one white person, attempted to get service at Thompson's Restaurant, a downtown business. When they were refused, they immediately filed charges in the DC corporation counsel's office. In July 1950, a DC district judge dismissed the charges, declaring

the antidiscrimination laws “repealed by implication.” Later that year, a local appellate court reversed the decision and the restaurant asked the United States Court of Appeals to intervene.

[...]

While the courts were considering the matter, CCEAD organized protests at several downtown stores to push them to integrate. During 1950 and 1951, activists secured the signatures of 4,000 DC residents, who pledged not to patronize Woolworth’s, Hecht’s, Kresge’s, Murphy’s, and other major department stores that refused to serve blacks at their lunch counters. Within the year, each of these establishments capitulated to the pressure and agreed to provide full services to African American customers.

Activists also won in court, after a long battle. In 1952, a divided federal bench declared the antidiscrimination laws invalid. Ignoring the content of the laws, the five judges in the majority focused on the question of the government’s authority to pass and enforce them. However, in an eight-to-zero decision, the US Supreme Court reversed, declaring that the laws had been authorized by the District’s home-rule powers when adopted and that they remained valid. The decision was a major victory for local activists, providing a rallying point to attack segregated institutions across the city, and serving as a harbinger of other civil rights battles that would take place in the near future.

The efforts of national and local civil rights activists to draw attention to the practice of segregation in the District of Columbia provided a powerful framework for mounting an attack on school segregation. By the early 1950s, segregation in the District was a national disgrace, and one that could not be met with arguments of states’ rights. The efforts of local and national activists reveal the multifaceted approach of civil rights lawyers, activists, and liberal institutions to promote civil rights in the postwar years. By highlighting the corrosive effect of segregation on the nation’s capital, a vital symbol of democracy, activists were able to change the terms of debate and, therefore, the law.

*The full text can be found on the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History website. The website requires registration for a free subscription.
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A Local and National Story: Civil Rights Movement in Postwar Washington DC [Abridged]

Comprehension Questions

1. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, civil rights activists fought racial discrimination in Washington, DC. What was that city a symbol of?

- A. equality
- B. democracy
- C. prosperity
- D. peace

2. The text describes a series of events in the Civil Rights Movement in postwar DC. What development during World War II preceded these events and may have been a cause of them?

- A. DC became a leader in the “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” movement
- B. employment shortages brought significant gains to African Americans
- C. the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation’s Capital was organized by Edwin Embree and Robert C. Weaver
- D. the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation’s Capital released a report on race relations

3. The “Segregation in Washington” report concluded that “DC had been building ghettos of mind, body, and spirit.”

What paragraph contains information that best supports the report’s conclusion?

- A. paragraph 6 (“In 1948...”)
- B. paragraph 7 (“The report then...”)
- C. paragraph 9 (“The report concluded...”)
- D. paragraph 10 (“The report received...”)

4. The “Segregation in Washington” report resulted in significant and immediate reform.

What evidence from the article supports this statement?

- A. “Just days after the report’s release, the Civilian Aeronautics Administration declared that it would bar any discrimination at facilities of the National Airport (now Ronald Reagan Airport).”
- B. “‘Every September,’ the report stated, ‘the Superintendent of Schools makes two speeches. They are identical in content, but one is made to Negro teachers and the other to white teachers.’”
- C. “‘Every September,’ the report stated, ‘the Superintendent of Schools makes two speeches. They are identical in content, but one is made to Negro teachers and the other to white teachers.’”
- D. “In addition, the report detailed the continuing restrictions on employment despite the explosion of civil service jobs. Although new agencies like the Office of Price Administration proved that integrated offices could function efficiently, many federal agencies—the worst example was the State Department—still practiced a rigid discrimination that limited blacks to the lowest-ranking positions.”

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Although DC had a large and influential free black population in the 19th century, segregation had become a powerful institution in postwar DC.
- B. A report released by the American Council on Race Relations in 1948 criticized the deep segregation found throughout DC.
- C. After a DC restaurant refused to serve a group of three African Americans and one white person, legal charges were immediately brought against it.
- D. Civil rights activists successfully fought racial inequality in postwar DC by using a multifaceted approach to draw attention to discrimination.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

“The most interesting outcome of the report was an effort to resuscitate the District’s nineteenth-century ‘lost’ discrimination laws. During their research, committee members discovered that in 1872 and 1873, the Council of the District of Columbia had passed laws giving blacks equal rights in all places of public accommodation, including restaurants and hotels. These laws had never been repealed, but had been surreptitiously removed from the DC code sometime in the early 1900s.

Why might the author have put the word “lost” in quotation marks?

- A. to show that he is quoting the words of a committee member
- B. to indicate that the discrimination laws were not really lost
- C. to draw attention to the long period of time during which the discrimination laws had been lost
- D. to question the validity of the discrimination laws

7. Read this sentence from the text: “The decision was a major victory for local activists, providing a rallying point to attack segregated institutions across the city, and serving as a harbinger of other civil rights battles that would take place in the near future.”

How could this sentence be rewritten without changing its meaning?

A. “The decision was a major victory for local activists because it provided a rallying point to attack segregated institutions across the city and served as a harbinger of other civil rights battles that would take place in the near future.”

B. “The decision was a major victory for local activists although it provided a rallying point to attack segregated institutions across the city and served as a harbinger of other civil rights battles that would take place in the near future.”

C. “The decision was a major victory for local activists; nevertheless, it provided a rallying point to attack segregated institutions across the city and served as a harbinger of other civil rights battles that would take place in the near future.”

D. “The decision was a major victory for local activists; in contrast, it provided a rallying point to attack segregated institutions across the city and served as a harbinger of other civil rights battles that would take place in the near future.”

8. Mary Church Terrell and the CCEAD directed a three-prong attack on public segregation. What did the three prongs of that attack consist of?

(written answer)

9. Give an example of how legal action was used to advance the cause of civil rights in postwar DC.

(written answer)

10. Give an example of a protest or other civilian action that was taken against commercial facilities to advance the cause of civil rights in postwar DC.

(written answer)

11. Why might activists have preferred a three-prong approach in their fight for civil rights to a one-prong approach? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

(written answer)