

Theme: Analyzing History

Overview

When it's done right, an historical essay can read like a mystery novel. Trying to figure out what really happened in the distant past requires us to search for clues (primary sources) and listen to expert witnesses (secondary sources). But in the end, all that historical evidence doesn't speak for itself; it's up to the historian to make sense of things.

That's what we mean by historical analysis.

In Theme: Analyzing History, we'll see how historians sift and assess the evidence to come up with—and then refine—their thesis statement and message. Because historical research is an ongoing process, so too is the process of thesis development. In Theme: Analyzing History, you'll have an opportunity to revise your thesis statement to reflect research you've conducted since turning in your writing plan.

The thesis, of course, is just the jumping-off point for the historical essay you're working on throughout this course. Like a good mystery novelist, you've also got to give your readers the lay of the land, with an overview that provides them with background information and relevant historical context.

Another important part of the historian's job is showing how different historical forces and events relate to each other. In this theme, we'll explore the historical concept of contingency, which stresses the interconnectedness of historical events and the difficulty of predicting future outcomes.

Finally, you need to show how the evidence supports your thesis. That's the essence of historical analysis: choosing the most compelling evidence and interpreting it in the most convincing way, to build the strongest possible argument for your thesis. In this theme, you'll see how historians construct an analysis and begin the process of building one yourself.

Course Outcome

After completing this theme, you should be able to:

- Utilize historical evidence in drawing conclusions about the impact of historic events on American society

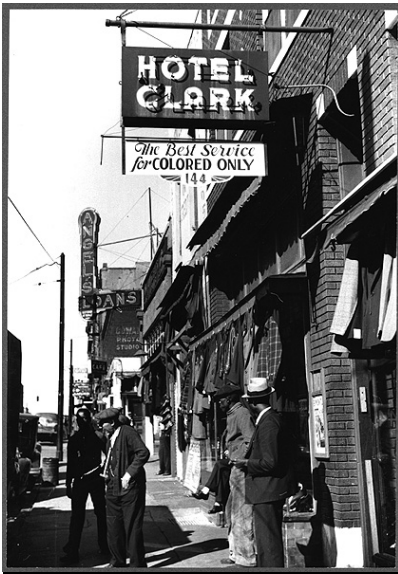


(Click icon for citation) 

Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 5-I: The Struggle for Civil Rights

The Struggle for Civil Rights

From the earliest colonial days, American history has been haunted by the specter of African slavery. Even after its legal abolition in 1865 America's "original sin," as James Madison first called it, lived on through a deeply entrenched system of legal, social, and economic discrimination against African Americans. (Madison, 1820)



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The movement to overturn that systemic discrimination has been ongoing for more than 150 years. The most blatant form of racial discrimination—the system of *de jure* segregation enacted in the South, which legally required the discriminatory treatment of African Americans—was essentially abolished by federal legislation, including the Voting Rights Act, in the 1960s. But the problem of *de facto* segregation has long been a fact of life not only in the South but throughout the nation.

It continued—in the segregated schools of cities such as Boston, and the segregated housing markets of cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles—long after the legal and political battles of the modern Civil Rights Movement had ended. While African Americans, as a group, have made significant gains in income and educational attainment over the last 50 years, *de facto* segregation continues to affect many aspects of American life. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)

In this theme, we will focus on the modern Civil Rights Movement, looking at efforts to affirm and expand African-American rights in two specific areas that have been central to the overall civil rights struggle: voting and public education. The fight to end the disenfranchisement of African-American voters and secure their right to vote, free from intimidation and legal obstruction, culminated with the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The struggle to desegregate public schools and win equal educational opportunities for African-American children—first affirmed in the landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)—has continued for generations. In this theme, we will look specifically at the tumultuous and emotionally charged effort to desegregate Boston's public schools in the mid-1970s.

We will use these two case studies to examine the historical concept of contingency and to learn how to use historical evidence to draw conclusions about the impact of historical events on American society, through the process of historical analysis.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Review the historical context behind the struggle for civil rights for African Americans, the core concept of this theme
- Analyze the relationship between the following key approaches to studying history: research question, historical evidence, and thesis statement

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The Early Struggle for Civil Rights

The end of the Civil War brought the legal abolition of slavery by the Thirteenth Amendment, the first of the three so-called Civil War Amendments. But the end of slavery did not bring equality for the former slaves.

While the southern states had to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment as a condition of their readmission to the Union, most of them quickly enacted laws to close off opportunities to the newly freed slaves and deny them the rights of citizenship. The postwar Black Codes—based on older southern laws that sought to limit the freedoms of freed blacks in the years before the Civil War—barred African Americans from voting, denied them most legal rights, and restricted their ability to find work outside of plantations. Such laws laid the groundwork for the later *Jim Crow laws*, which institutionalized segregation in all walks of life throughout the South. (Dunning, 1907)



The house in Atlanta where Martin Luther King Jr. was born is now part of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site. (Click icon for citation)
©113

In response to the Black Codes, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which formally made African Americans citizens. To further safeguard the citizenship rights of the freed slaves, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment, which was ratified in 1868. The Reconstruction Acts, passed in 1867 and 1868, essentially placed the southern states under military rule for a decade, allowing for a brief period in which freed African Americans in the South enjoyed political rights.

The profound significance of the Fourteenth Amendment was that, through its Equal Protection and Due Process clauses, it prohibited the states from abridging the rights and liberties guaranteed to all citizens under the Constitution. In reality, however, for African Americans through the end of the 19th century (and well beyond), the promise of equal protection and due process went unrealized. The southern states flouted the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Supreme Court refused to interpret it as making the Bill of Rights binding on the states. (Foner, 1988)

The Black Codes also led Congress to pass the Fifteenth Amendment (ratified in 1870), which guaranteed African Americans the right to vote. It did so by decreeing that citizens' right to vote could not be denied or abridged based on race, color,

or prior slave status. Despite the Fifteenth Amendment, southern states continued to deprive blacks of their voting rights by imposing voter-qualification restrictions (e.g., literacy tests and property-ownership requirements) that effectively disenfranchised African Americans. (Valelly, 2009)

The Fifteenth Amendment divided the pioneering women's rights movement, which sought the franchise for women as well as for African Americans. As we saw in Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas,

some leaders in the nascent woman suffrage movement opposed ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment because it did not also extend the voting right to women. Women did not gain the right to vote until ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

Jim Crow Laws and the Segregated South

Unyielding southern resistance to black equality led Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which prohibited racial segregation in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants, and transportation. It also barred the exclusion of African Americans from jury service. But when the federal government ended its military occupation of the South in 1877, marking the end of Reconstruction, the southern states further defied federal efforts to guarantee the civil rights of blacks. (Foner, 1988)

Southern state legislatures enacted Jim Crow laws, which discriminated against African Americans by requiring racial segregation of schools, restaurants, hotels, theaters, and other public accommodations. Under Jim Crow laws, the southern states created separate facilities for whites and blacks in every walk of life, covering all public accommodations. This institutionalization of race-based separation throughout the South, which endured for a hundred years after the Civil War, was known as *de jure* segregation because it was backed by law.



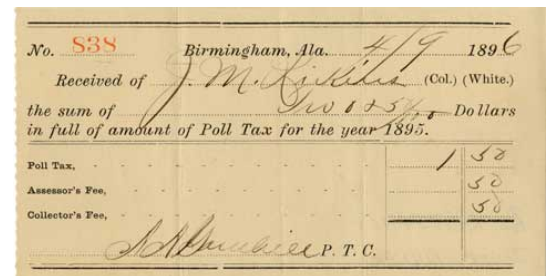
"Colored" water cooler in streetcar terminal, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1939. (Click icon for citation) ©

After Reconstruction, African Americans throughout the South faced state legal systems that denied them equal justice and routinely violated their due-process rights. The courts and law enforcement in the South abided lynching and other white mob violence committed against blacks. And the federal courts, well into the 1900s, proved unwilling or unable to uphold the civil rights of blacks. (Equal Justice Initiative, 2015)

Disenfranchisement Despite the Fifteenth Amendment

After Reconstruction, the southern states devised obstacles to block African Americans from voting *despite* the Fifteenth Amendment, which decreed that the right to vote could not be denied on the basis of race or color. To circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment's intent, southern states employed devices for determining voter eligibility which, though not expressly racial, had the particular effect of disenfranchising blacks, who were overwhelmingly poor and uneducated.

These devices included literacy tests, poll taxes (a tax paid as a qualification for voting), and property-ownership requirements. Many states in the South also imposed a so-called *grandfather clause*, which restricted voting to those whose grandfathers had voted before Reconstruction (i.e., pre 1867). Grandfather clauses effectively denied the descendants of slaves the right to vote. (Valelly, 2009) All of these legally enacted devices represented forms of *de jure* segregation—as opposed to *de facto* segregation, which lacked the force of law.



A poll tax receipt. Image courtesy of the African American Intellectual History Society.

Black disenfranchisement continued in one form or another throughout the South for a century after the Civil War.

Separate but Equal

Legal segregation in the South was validated by the Supreme Court in a landmark decision at the close of the 1800s. Homer Plessy, an African American, defied a Louisiana segregation law by riding in a "whites only" railroad car. He was arrested when he refused to move to a car reserved for blacks as mandated by the state law. Plessy challenged the constitutionality of the law on the grounds that segregation violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court rejected this challenge, ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities are constitutional if the facilities are "separate but equal." The Court's decision ignored the fact that most facilities available to African Americans were not equal but vastly inferior; nonetheless, *Plessy* and the doctrine of "separate but equal" remained the law of the land for more than half a century. (Medley, 2003)

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The Struggle for Civil Rights, 1900 – 1950

The first half of the 20th century saw limited progress in the fight to secure the civil rights of African Americans. Booker T. Washington, president of the Tuskegee Institute and the leading figure in the African-American community in the early 1900s, was an outspoken proponent of black education and entrepreneurship. But Washington was criticized within the African-American community for his strategic decision not to challenge Jim Crow laws and the disenfranchisement of black voters directly.



W.E.B. Du Bois, 1918.
(Click icon for citation) ©

More militant African-American leaders, including W.E.B. DuBois and Ida Wells, founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, with the mission of actively fighting against racial prejudice. The organization focused in its early years largely on efforts to prevent lynchings in the South and on mounting legal challenges to Jim Crow legislation. (Finch, 1981)

The return of thousands of African-American veterans of World War I highlighted the huge divide between America's rhetorical commitment to democracy and individual freedom and the reality of segregation, disenfranchisement, and anti-black violence in the South. This gave rise to the New Negro movement, which sparked the larger cultural and intellectual movement known as the Harlem Renaissance (Gates, H.L., 1988)

Beginning shortly before World War I, the Great Migration saw an estimated six million African Americans move from the deep South to the North, Midwest, and West over the next 60 years. Fleeing segregation and poverty, many of these African Americans found work in industrial cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Gary, Indiana. While many African Americans had previously been suspicious of organized labor, A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, became the leading voice for black workers within the labor movement. As the number of African Americans working in industrial jobs swelled, organized labor became increasingly outspoken in its advocacy for black workers' rights; in the 1950s and 1960s, labor would be a powerful ally of the civil rights movement. (Lemann, 1992)



The Lafayette Theatre, Harlem, 1936. (Click icon for citation) ©

The Great Depression of the 1930s hit African Americans disproportionately hard; the collapse of cotton prices drove thousands of Southern sharecroppers to the brink (Thompson and Clarke, 1935), and the scarcity of factory jobs led to increased racial tensions in Northern industrial cities. The unemployment rate among African Americans was estimated to exceed 50 percent—more than twice the rate among whites. (Wolters, 1970)

African Americans, traditionally supporters of the Republican Party because of its historical opposition to slavery, were initially skeptical of Democrat Franklin Roosevelt, who had won the Presidency with strong backing from the South. Early New Deal programs were not aimed toward the African-American community, and some, such as the Federal Housing Authority, initially reinforced existing patterns of segregation. But other programs, such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, provided jobs to substantial numbers of African Americans, especially in the North. By the end of the decade, many African Americans in the North were strongly behind the New Deal, and urban black voters began a major shift that would eventually make them an integral part of the Democratic electoral coalition. (Reed, 2008)

America's entry into World War II effectively ended the Depression, as factories geared up for the war effort. At the same time, more than a million African Americans joined the armed forces; when they returned from war in 1945, they embodied the argument that African Americans were entitled to the same freedoms for which America had fought in Europe and the Pacific. (Taylor, 2014)

While resistance to the campaign for African-American civil rights was still deeply entrenched, the late 1940s saw a couple of notable victories: Jackie Robinson famously broke baseball's "Color Line" in 1947, and in 1948, President Harry S Truman issued an executive order that desegregated the U.S. military. While these breakthroughs were largely symbolic, more substantive gains were just over the horizon.

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The Modern Civil Rights Movement, 1954 – 1968

The NAACP's strategy of mounting legal challenges to Jim Crow laws had produced minor gains in the first decades of the 20th century. In 1938, the Supreme Court sided with the NAACP in ruling that states that provide a law school for whites had to provide in-state legal education to African Americans as well. And in 1944, the Court struck down the "white primary" system that effectively barred African Americans from voting in Democratic primaries in the South.

The greatest victory, however, came in a case involving public elementary and secondary schools. In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal"—overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and ushering in an intense period of activism that would, within a generation, tear down the facade of legal segregation. (Cottrol *et al*, 2004)

Because of the magnitude of the *Brown* decision, many scholars consider 1954 to mark the beginning of the modern Civil Rights Movement. During the roughly 15 years following *Brown*, a wide range of African-American leaders and organizations sought to galvanize American public opinion—and, as a result, political will—against the structures of *de jure* segregation in the South: segregated schools, "whites only" lunch counters and restrooms, and separate "colored" sections on public buses, to name only a few.

The movement's tools were civil disobedience and nonviolent protests, including boycotts, sit-ins, and protest marches. Very often, nonviolent civil rights protesters met with violence at the hands of Southern law enforcement officers and civilians; some of these confrontations were covered on the network television news, and the images of police brutally beating peaceful protesters helped generate public sympathy and support for the cause of civil rights. (Bodroghkozy, 2012)

The modern Civil Rights Movement addressed a wide range of issues. While its immediate focus was on the South—the states of the former Confederacy, where segregation actually had the force of law—the movement sought to confront racial prejudice and injustice throughout American society.



Thurgood Marshall, NAACP's chief counsel, who argued the case before the Supreme Court for the plaintiffs.
(Click icon for citation) ©

Public Education



James Meredith, escorted by U.S. marshals, integrated the University of Mississippi.
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The Supreme Court's *Brown* decision outlawed segregation in America's public schools, but the process of school desegregation proved to be difficult, drawn-out, and highly confrontational. In 1957, the governor of Arkansas called out the National Guard to prevent nine African-American students from enrolling at Central High School in Little Rock. President Eisenhower ordered troops of the 101st Airborne to escort the students to school, but a year later, the state closed all four high schools in the city, rather than integrate them. A year would pass before the Supreme Court ordered the schools reopened. (Bates, 1962.)

In 1962, the governor of Mississippi refused to allow an African-American war veteran, James Meredith, to enroll at the University of Mississippi. President Kennedy intervened, ordering 500 U.S. marshals to escort Meredith to class; thousands of white protesters responded with a riot that killed two people and injured more than 300, including 166 marshals and 40 soldiers. A similar but less violent confrontation took place at the University of Alabama in 1963, when President Kennedy had to federalize the Alabama National Guard and order the troops to enforce the integration order.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

One of the seminal moments of the modern Civil Rights Movement occurred in 1955, when Rosa Parks, an African-American seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. Parks was arrested, and the city's African-American community responded with a year-long boycott of the Montgomery bus system; the confrontation made Parks a civil rights heroine and catapulted a young local minister, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., to national prominence.

The Montgomery boycott resulted in a legal victory: the Supreme Court ruled, in *Browder v. Gayle* (1956), that segregation in Montgomery's bus system was unconstitutional, and after the court issued its desegregation order, the boycott was declared over on December 20, 1956. But this victory was short-lived, as white supremacists soon responded by shooting at African-American bus riders and firebombing black churches. By 1963, most black Montgomerians had returned to the pre-boycott practice of riding only in the back of the bus. (Silberman, 1964)



Rosa Parks with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1955. (Click icon for citation) ©

Freedom Rides

A few years after the Montgomery Bus Boycott, in 1961, civil rights activists organized a series of "Freedom Rides" designed to end segregation on interstate buses traveling to the segregated South. The plan was to integrate seating patterns on the buses, to do away with "white" and "colored" sections, and to integrate all bus facilities—including terminals, restrooms, water fountains, and lunch counters. The Freedom Riders included whites from the North, including many college students, as well as African Americans from the South; most were recruited by CORE, though the SNCC was also involved. They met fierce resistance; scores were injured during riots in Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama, and more than 300 were arrested and imprisoned for more than five weeks in Jackson, Mississippi. As public support for the Freedom Riders grew, President Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to fully desegregate all aspects of interstate bus travel. (McMillen, 1977)

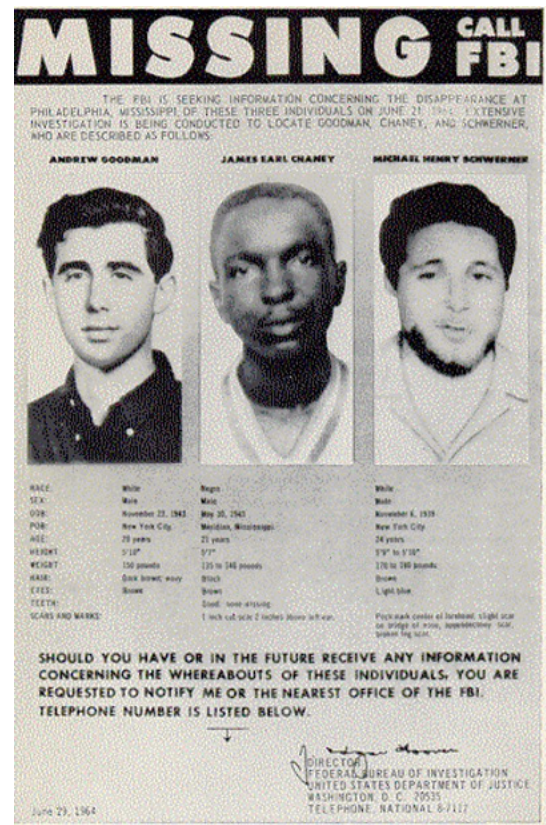
Voting Rights

The legal structures erected to prevent African Americans from voting—including poll taxes, literacy tests, and residency requirements—were arguably most formidable in Mississippi. Efforts to register African Americans to vote were routinely suppressed, and election-related violence against African Americans was common.

When local civil rights activists began a voter registration campaign in 1961, it was met with violent repression by police and white citizens, widespread arrests, and the murder of one voting activist. The situation was so dire that a broad coalition of civil rights groups—many of which had previously seen themselves as competitors—came together to mount a massive joint effort. By the mid-1960s, voting registration drives were underway in virtually every Southern state.

One such drive was part of the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, a campaign in which roughly a thousand mostly white college students joined with local African-American activists to register voters, teach in "Freedom Schools," and engage in political organizing. In late June, three young civil rights workers disappeared; their bodies were discovered weeks later, but it would be more than 40 years before anyone was convicted in their murders.

While the Mississippi Freedom Summer did not, in the end, register a great many African-American voters, public outrage over the murders helped to generate support for the cause of voting rights and contributed to the eventual passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. (Watson, 2010)



A poster asking for the public's help in finding three young civil rights workers—Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner—who disappeared during the Mississippi Freedom Summer. Their bodies were discovered in August 1964. (Click icon for citation) ⓘ

The March on Washington

On August 28, 1963, close to 300,000 demonstrators joined in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, a historic gathering put together by most of the major civil rights organizations, progressive labor unions, and other liberal groups. With network television cameras carrying the event live, Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial, and the civil rights movement had its most iconic moment.

The March's primary purpose was to call for passage of new civil rights legislation that President Kennedy had proposed; after the March, King and other civil rights leaders met with Kennedy at the White House. At that point, however, it appeared that Kennedy did not have the votes in Congress to win passage of the bill. It was only after his assassination the following November in Dallas—and the determination of his successor, Lyndon Johnson, to win passage of the bill in part as a memorial to the slain Kennedy—that the Civil Rights Act would become the law of the land. (Civil Rights Veterans, 2016))



March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Joachim Prinz pictured, 1963.
(Click icon for citation) ©

Fair Housing

In the mid-1960s, civil rights leaders began to focus on the issue of housing discrimination. Efforts to outlaw race-based discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing met with extremely strong resistance, at least in part because this was an issue that affected more than just Southern racists in the old Confederacy: ending housing discrimination would have an impact on homeowners and landlords in every part of the country.

Proposals for Fair Housing legislation languished in Congress until 1968. In March, the Kerner Commission—appointed by President Johnson in response to a series of race riots in major cities during the summer of 1967—called for a sweeping new housing law to help improve conditions in urban areas. A month later Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, and major riots broke out in cities across the country. Congress responded quickly by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which including strong fair-housing provisions. This was the last major piece of legislation passed during the modern Civil Rights Movement. (Ricks, 2013)

Fifty years after the fact, societal perceptions of the modern civil rights movement tend to focus on a few heroic figures, such as Rosa Parks, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and Medgar Evers. And many students who did not live through the era may assume that the movement itself was unified and had a clear-cut agenda.

In fact, there were many prominent civil rights leaders, not all of whom agreed at any given time. And there were a multitude of civil rights organizations; the so-called Big Four included the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); and the NAACP, among many others. Some of these groups were more inclined to compete with each other than to cooperate.

These groups had somewhat different agendas, with some more focused on voting rights, say, and others

more focused on housing and economic issues. Nor did everyone in the movement agree on the principle of nonviolent protest; some leaders, such as Robert F. Williams of North Carolina, believed strongly that African Americans needed to arm themselves and fight back against anti-black violence. Other, more militant leaders, such as Elijah Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, rejected the philosophy of nonviolence and argued that African Americans should separate themselves completely from whites.

While it is not accurate to say that the civil rights movement had any one, single leader, it is nonetheless clear that the movement began to crumble after the assassination of Martin Luther King in April 1968. The loss of King as an eloquent advocate of nonviolent protest definitely hurt the movement. And perhaps more important, the wave of racial violence that convulsed many cities in the wake of King's death shattered whatever fragile political consensus might have been forming behind the idea of comprehensive reforms to address the root causes of racial discrimination and African-American poverty. (Garrow, 2004)

While the modern civil rights movement succeeded, in large measure, in bringing about the end of legal segregation in the Old South, the problems of racism and inequality—the legacy of "America's original sin"—have yet to be fully addressed.



Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, at the podium (right). At left is heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, then known as Cassius Clay. (Click icon for citation) ©

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Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 5-2: Contingency and the Civil Rights Movement

Historical Contingency

Contingency is the fourth of the "5 C's of Historical Thinking" that we first encountered back in Theme: Approaches to History: Change, Context, Causality, Contingency, and Complexity.

To understand the concept of contingency, we need to think of a few more C's: the causes, course, and consequences of a historical event. These three C's help us look at the interrelationship, or contingency, between many historical events:

- The *causes* of a historical event are previous events, all of which have a causal relationship with the later event;
- The *course* of a historical event consists of the many smaller events that make up the larger event; the course of an event is implied by the beginning and ending dates that define the event. The course of the modern Civil Rights Movement, for instance, consists of the many protests, demonstrations, and other political and social events that defined the movement, from 1954 through 1968; and
- The *consequences* of a historical event are the subsequent events that it, in turn, causes.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Explore the concept of historical contingency
- Use historical contingency to help you assess the causes, course, and consequences of historical events
- Analyze the causes, course, and consequences of historical events

What Is Contingency?

Is history inevitable? Are the events of our time predetermined, incapable of being changed by anything we do?

Ask those questions of a philosopher, a physicist, or a theologian, and you're likely to get some interesting—and very convoluted—answers. But ask a historian, and what you'll hear is a clear and simple **NO**.

One of the fundamental principles of history is the concept of contingency, the idea that each historical event depends (or is *contingent* on) previous events. Change one of those previous events, and you may change all the events that come after it. Or, to put it another way: history is not inevitable or predetermined, because everything that happens today can have an impact on what happens tomorrow. (Martin, 2016)

Contingency is an important concept because it shows us how interconnected history really is, and because it requires us to explore those connections to understand the relative importance of different historical events. Such explorations have led to a historical approach known as counterfactual history, in which historians use "what if?" questions (known as *counterfactual conditionals*) to try to figure out which events had a major impact on the course of history.

Not all historians believe counterfactual history is legitimate; as Martin Bunzl points out, a lot of counterfactual history has no real grounding, and is based on speculation rather than historical evidence. (Bunzl, 2004) And there's a real danger of slipping from counterfactual history into alternative history, a literary genre that plays the *what if?* game for its entertainment value and is not a legitimate form of historical scholarship.

Regardless of how you feel about counterfactual history, the concept of contingency is still an important—and very useful—way to look at the relationship among different historical events.

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Exercise: Thinking About Contingency

The following passage is from a chapter in the book *Political Contingency: Studying the Unexpected, the Accidental, and the Unforeseen*. This chapter, by the political scientist David R. Mayhew, looks at the impact of unforeseen events (such as, in the excerpt below, political assassinations) on the course of American political history.

The passage below is excerpted from "Events as Causes: The Case of American Politics," pages 99 to 140. Click on the title of the article to access a PDF of the entire book; scroll down to page 99 and read the entirety of Chapter 4. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *This reading is required. You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials to access this article.*

A Word on Assassinations

I have skimmed on brief or short-term events, although there is no shortage of supremely important instances. In 1865, for example, crucial to the Republicans' emergence as the country's main opposition party were the so-called "Sack of Lawrence [Kansas]" by a pro-slavery mob and the caning of Senator Charles Sumner on the Senate floor. "These two acts, one on top of the other, traumatized the nation." In the 1960s, key to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were the Birmingham and Selma confrontations—the police dogs and the rest—that riveted national attention on deep-southern practices courtesy of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., as impresario.

But assassination may deserve a special word. Not easily subjected to systematic treatment—they are nearly in a category with the Nicaragua and Mexico earthquakes—they have been neglected as causal factors....I do not want to take up familiar speculations here on the order of: what if Lincoln had served out his full second term? I will stop at addressing two particularly energetic bouts of national policymaking—in fact, possibly the two most consequential exercises of American lawmaking since World War II.

One was the "Reagan Revolution" of 1981—that is, the Republicans' program of unprecedented tax and spending cuts enacted that year...[A]s of March 1981 the plan seemed to be headed for the rocks on Capitol Hill. Then John W. Hinckley, Jr. shot and nearly killed President Reagan. That brought on a "display of jaunty courage" by the president (as in his "Honey, I forgot to duck!"),

which "turned Reagan into a national hero and immeasurably helped the passage of his fiscal program." His survey ratings soared. "The legislative payoff was dramatic": Moderate and conservative Democrats, hearing messages from home, signed on. The cuts were approved in a series of showdown votes that spring and summer. All this is entirely believable. Without the assassination episode: no Reagan Revolution.

The other was the Great Society—or, more broadly, the extraordinary harvest of legislation enacted by a left-centered coalition on Capitol Hill during calendar 1964 and in the wake of the 1964 election during 1965. President Kennedy's legislative record had been so-so, but then he was assassinated in November 1963. The impact was enormous, "All that Kennedy had tried to do, all that he stood for, became in some sense sanctified." Lyndon Johnson took over the presidency with a "Let us continue" appeal: "We would be untrue to the trust he reposed in us, if we did not remain true to the tasks he relinquished when God summoned him." As the new president, Johnson "possessed an enormous advantage that liberal predecessors had been denied since the late 1930s: a national mood so eager for strong presidential leadership that even Congress and interest groups had to take heed." That advantage owed chiefly to "the impact of Kennedy's assassination." It helped make 1964 possibly the most productive legislative year since the 1930s....It is certainly plausible that, given the strong impulse toward state expansion in the 1960s and 1970s in this country and elsewhere, much of the content of the Great Society would have found its way into American policy sooner or later anyway. But we cannot know how much or when, and quite possibly a good deal of it would not have.

Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 5-3: The Struggle for Voting Rights

The Struggle for Voting Rights

The Fifteenth Amendment, which specifically guaranteed the right of all male citizens to vote, regardless of their "race, color, or previous condition of servitude," was ratified in February of 1870. Almost a century later, the ability of African Americans to vote in many states—essentially, those of the Old South—was routinely and sometimes violently thwarted.

The obstacles to African-American voting that were erected over the course of the Jim Crow era were formidable: poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and outright physical intimidation. In the 1960 Presidential election, according to estimates by the NAACP, only about a quarter of eligible African Americans cast a ballot. That number increased sharply, to almost 60 percent, in 1964, but African-American turnout in the South—where most blacks were not even able to register to vote—remained very low. (*The New York Times*, 2014)

Civil rights leaders had long recognized that safeguarding the right to vote was essential to expanding African-American rights in other spheres. But previous proposals to pass major voting-rights legislation—the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960—were watered down by Southern opponents in Congress and proved largely ineffectual. (Bardolph, 1970)

In the wake of Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory in the 1964 Presidential election, civil rights leaders began a major push for a tough new voting-rights law. Johnson was sympathetic to their cause but wary of the political implications of a major fight for new civil rights legislation. But the brutal mistreatment of peaceful voting-rights protesters in Alabama, including the now-famous confrontation in Selma that became known as "Bloody Sunday," galvanized public opinion and forced Johnson to act. (Issacharoff *et al*, 2012)

This learning block uses the history of the Voting Rights Act as the vehicle to hone your understanding of causality and contingency and to help you begin thinking about the use of historical evidence.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Assess the causes and consequences of a historical event
- Consider the types of evidence you will need to understand the significance of a historical event

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The Voting Rights Act of 1965

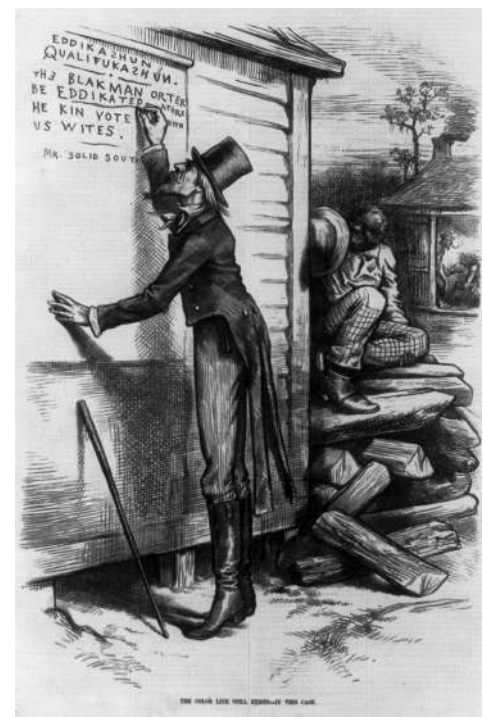
From the beginning, supporters and opponents of African-American civil rights both understood the critical importance of *voting rights*. Supporters strove, after the Civil War, to ensure that freed slaves would have the political power that comes with voting; toward that end, they passed the Fifteenth Amendment, to guarantee voting rights, and the Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871, to combat the Ku Klux Klan's efforts to suppress black voting through intimidation and violence.

But federal enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment effectively ceased with the end of Reconstruction in 1877. Opponents knew that allowing African Americans to vote would threaten the structure of white supremacy on which the Jim Crow South was founded. In addition to physical intimidation, then, Southern whites erected an imposing set of legal obstacles to deter blacks from voting: poll taxes, whites-only primaries, literacy tests, property qualifications, and grandfather clauses.

In 1957, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. talked about those legal obstacles in his "Give Us the Ballot" speech; in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson spoke about them in an address to Congress:

King: "Give Us the Ballot"

[A]ll types of conniving methods are still being used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters. The denial of this sacred right is a tragic betrayal of the highest mandates of our democratic tradition. And so our most urgent request to the president of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote. [Audience:] (Yes)



An 1879 cartoon criticized the use of literacy tests to deny African Americans the right to vote. (Click icon for citation) ©

Give us the ballot, and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights.

Give us the ballot (Yes), and we will no longer plead to the federal government for passage of an anti-lynching law; we will by the power of our vote write the law on the statute books of the South (All right) and bring an end to the dastardly acts of the hooded perpetrators of violence.

Give us the ballot (Give us the ballot), and we will transform the salient misdeeds of bloodthirsty mobs (Yeah) into the calculated good deeds of orderly citizens.

Give us the ballot (Give us the ballot), and we will fill our legislative halls with men of goodwill (All right now) and send to the sacred halls of Congress men who will not sign a "Southern Manifesto" because of their devotion to the manifesto of justice. (Tell 'em about it)

Give us the ballot (Yeah), and we will place judges on the benches of the South who will do justly and love mercy (Yeah), and we will place at the head of the southern states governors who will, who have felt not only the tang of the human, but the glow of the Divine.

Give us the ballot (Yes), and we will quietly and nonviolently, without rancor or bitterness, implement the Supreme Court's decision of May seventeenth, 1954. (That's right)

Johnson: "Our Duty Must Be Clear"

Every device of which human ingenuity is capable has been used to deny this right. The Negro citizen may go to register only to be told that the day is wrong, or the hour is late, or the official in charge is absent. And if he persists, and if he manages to present himself to the registrar, he may be disqualified because he did not spell out his middle name or because he abbreviated a word on the application.

And if he manages to fill out an application he is given a test. The registrar is the sole judge of whether he passes this test. He may be asked to recite the entire Constitution, or explain the most complex provisions of State law. And even a college degree cannot be used to prove that he can read and write.

For the fact is that the only way to pass these barriers is to show a white skin. Experience has clearly shown that the existing process of law cannot overcome systematic and ingenious discrimination. No law that we now have on the books—and I have helped to put three of them there—can ensure the right to vote when local officials are determined to deny it.

In such a case our duty must be clear to all of us. The Constitution says that no person shall be kept from voting because of his race or his color. We have all sworn an oath before God to support and to defend that Constitution. We must now act in obedience to that oath.

Video Transcript: Lyndon Johnson Voting Rights Speech

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the Congress:

I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy.

I urge every member of both parties, Americans of all religions and of all colors, from every section of this country, to join me in that cause.

At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama.

There, long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans.

Many were brutally assaulted. One good man, a man of God, was killed.

There is no cause for pride in what has happened in Selma. There is no cause for self-satisfaction in the long denial of equal rights of millions of Americans. But there is cause for hope and for faith in our democracy in what is happening here tonight.

For the cries of pain and the hymns and protests of oppressed people have summoned into convocation all the majesty of this great Government--the Government of the greatest Nation on earth.

Our mission is at once the oldest and the most basic of this country: to right wrong, to do justice, to serve man.

In our time we have come to live with moments of great crisis. Our lives have been marked with debate about great issues; issues of war and peace, issues of prosperity and depression. But rarely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation.

The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation.

For with a country as with a person, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem.

The modern Civil Rights movement that arose in the wake of the *Brown* decision placed a high premium on winning federal legislation to enforce voting rights. The movement focused its efforts on the states of the South, because the *de jure* denial of voting rights was a uniquely Southern issue; virtually no such legal structures had been erected in the North or West to deny blacks the franchise. Three efforts to pass voting-rights legislation were derailed by Southern opposition in Congress: voting-rights provisions of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1963 were watered down to the point of ineffectiveness.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was passed in the wake of President Kennedy's assassination, included some voting-rights provisions but not the broad prohibition of literacy tests for which civil rights leaders had hoped. The Act's primary focus, rather, was on ending segregation in public accommodations and in public education.

Following his landslide victory in the 1964 Presidential election, which also produced huge Democratic majorities in Congress, President Lyndon Johnson determined to push for a tough new voting-rights law. But his political advisers, concerned about the political impact of another civil rights battle so soon after passage of the Civil Rights Act, urged him to wait. (May, 2013)

In early 1965, Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders, including James Bevel of the SCLC, began organizing voting-rights protests in Selma, Alabama, where the local sheriff had violently suppressed African-American voter registration efforts. In February, King and hundreds of other protesters were arrested for violating the city's anti-parade ordinance. King responded by writing "A Letter from a Selma Alabama Jail," which ran as an advertisement in *The New York Times*; the letter famously noted that, "This is Selma, Alabama. There are more negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting rolls." (King, 1965)

Shortly after King's arrest, another voting-rights protest in Marion, Alabama, turned deadly when Alabama state troopers attacked the demonstrators; an African-American Army veteran named Jimmie Lee Jackson was fatally shot by police. At his funeral, James Bevel suggested that protesters march from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery to dramatize their cause. (May, 2013)



Alabama police attack Selma-to-Montgomery Marchers on Bloody Sunday, 1965. (Click icon for citation) ©

Two weeks later, on March 7, 1965, about 600 protesters, led by John Lewis and Hosea Williams of the SCLC, began marching out of Selma. As they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the demonstrators met a small army of state troopers and county deputies; the law officers began beating the unarmed protesters with nightsticks, fired tear gas into the crowd, and charged the protesters on horseback. A total of 17 protesters were hospitalized, and another 50 were treated for injuries in what became known as "Bloody Sunday." (Reed, 1966)

The violence on the Edmund Pettus Bridge was captured by newspaper photographers and television news crews; the image of peaceful protesters being savagely beaten by the police outraged public opinion outside the South, and abroad. Eight days after Bloody Sunday, amid continuing violence against voting-rights demonstrators in Alabama, President Johnson addressed Congress and called for swift passage of his voting-rights proposal. Echoing the old spiritual that had become the anthem of the civil rights movement, Johnson declared that "We shall overcome" in the struggle for voting rights.

Despite fervent Southern opposition and a 24-day filibuster in the Senate, the Voting Rights Act received final Congressional approval on August 4, 1965. Two days later, with Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks in attendance at the White House, Johnson signed the bill into law. (May, 2013)

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The Impact of the Voting Rights Act

The immediate effects of the Voting Rights Act were quickly felt. Voter registration surged among African Americans in the states of the Old South, the region directly targeted by the law's "special provisions." By 1970, a majority of eligible African Americans had registered to vote in nine of the 11 former Confederate states. In Mississippi, black voter registration increased from just 6.7 percent in 1964, to 59.8 percent in 1967. (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001)

This surge in voter registration has led some legal experts to characterize the Voting Rights Act as "the single most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever passed by Congress." (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009)

Two key factors contributed to the effectiveness of the Voting Rights Act. The first was its limited scope: the "special provisions" of the Act applied to only those states and localities with a demonstrated history of discrimination against African-American voting rights. This limited scope allowed the Justice Department to use its enforcement resources most effectively, in areas where the potential for discrimination was greatest. The second was the Act's preclearance provision, which prevented any changes in voting laws from taking effect unless they were approved by the Justice Department or a federal court. [The Supreme Court suspended the preclearance provision in 2013.]



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965 while Martin Luther King, Jr. and others look on. (Click icon for citation) ©

Increased voter registration did not, however, translate immediately into increased *political power* for African Americans in the South. White-dominated state legislators responded to the Voting Rights Act by enacting new measures to limit the *effectiveness* of African-American voting: turning some formerly elective offices into appointive ones and changing many other elective offices to "at-large" seats, which diluted the impact of new black voters. Those same legislators also engaged in racial gerrymandering, redrawing legislative and Congressional districts to maximize white voting power and limit the effectiveness of African-American votes. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001)

Over time, Justice Department lawsuits reversed many of these political ploys. Key Supreme Court rulings, including *Wesberry v. Sanders* (1964), sought to reduce the impact of racial gerrymandering by applying the concept of "one person, one vote" to the issue of legislative redistricting. And later amendments to the Act required states, under certain circumstances, to create majority-minority districts to increase the odds that African Americans and other minority-group candidates would be elected to Congress.

At the same time, the overall increase in African-American voter *registration* was not matched by a similarly sharp rise in African-American voter *turnout*. Nationally, the proportion of African Americans who actually cast a ballot in a Presidential election peaked at 58.5 percent in 1964—the year *before* the Voting Rights Act was passed—and did not return to this level until Barack Obama's first presidential campaign in 2008. (Flippen, 2014) Obviously, African-American turnout increased in Southern states, where registration had increased so sharply, but it declined in non-Southern states.

Relatively low turnout among African-American voters is attributable to many different factors, including differences in income and education, as well as a perception that the political process is less relevant to their lives. (Fulwood, 2014) And relevance is, in some ways, related to race: like many other racial and ethnic groups, African Americans are significantly more likely to vote when a member of their own group is on the ballot. (Laney, 2011)

Without question, the Voting Rights Act has led to sharply increased representation of African Americans in Congress, state legislatures, and local offices. In 1964, for instance, only five African Americans served in Congress; by 2015, that number had increased to 48. (U.S House of Representatives, 2016) And between 1965 and 1985, the number of African-American state legislators in the former states of the Confederacy had increased from three to 176. (Grofman and Handley, 1991)

What remains open to question is whether increased African-American political representation has led to an improvement in the lives of most African Americans. On this point, there is conflicting evidence. Mississippi, for instance, in the mid-1990s had more African-American elected officials than any other state—yet *per capita* income for blacks in Mississippi was less than half that for whites, and levels of

educational attainment were also significantly lower among blacks than among whites. At that same time, however, state spending on public housing and education had increased sharply in the years previous, and incidents of racial violence had decreased greatly. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001) This mixed record is in fact typical of many states.

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The Voting Rights Act: Further Reading

What effect has the Voting Rights Act had on American politics in general? While the Act has clearly had an impact on voter registration and representation among African Americans, has it affected the political system more broadly?

While race is certainly not the *only* factor affecting voter turnout and voting patterns in American politics, political scientists and pollsters have long recognized that it is one of the most highly consequential. (Junn, 2000) To the extent that the Voting Rights Act opened up the political system to many more African Americans, it is reasonable to conclude that it had a significant impact on that system.

One theory that's popular among political scientists is that the Act, by bringing more African Americans into the political system as voters and as candidates, has made white voters more comfortable with the idea of voting for African Americans. Certainly, it seems reasonable to conclude that Barack Obama could never have won the presidency had the Voting Rights Act not been passed in 1965—or to put it another way, that Obama's election was *contingent* on passage of the Voting Rights Act.

But the historical record is a bit more complicated than that. While the Voting Rights Act certainly brought more African Americans into the political system, it also produced negative reactions among some white voters; in the states of the former Confederacy, for instance, African Americans by and large win election to the state legislature only from districts where the electorate is overwhelmingly African-American, while majority-white districts rarely if ever elect African Americans. (Grofman and Handley, 1991) And it's worth remembering that President Obama received only 43 percent of the white vote in 2008, and just 39 percent in 2012. (Roper Center, 2008; 2012)

Indeed, some political scientists believe that this pattern of "racially polarized" voting has contributed to more systemic changes in American politics. On the largest level, passage of the Voting Rights Act led to a major party realignment. After passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act by a Democratic-dominated Congress, white Southerners—who had previously identified strongly with the



President Jimmy Carter meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus, 1978. (Click icon for citation) ⓘ

Democratic Party—shifted towards the Republicans, a move encouraged by President Richard Nixon's "Southern Strategy." Over time, Southern voters began to replace conservative Democratic members of Congress with Republicans; this meant more Republicans in Congress but it also meant fewer conservative Democrats, which had the effect of making Congressional Democrats more liberal as a group. As a result, Congress has become more sharply polarized along conservative-liberal lines. (Barber and McCarty, 2013)

Finally, the requirement that states create majority-minority districts has also had an impact on the political system. While the creation of majority-minority districts resulted in the election of more African Americans and others to Congress, it also concentrated the minority voters in only a few districts and left surrounding districts with a higher proportion of white voters. As a result, majority-minority districts in the South send more minorities (who tend to be liberal Democrats) to Congress, but the majority-white districts tend to send more conservative Republicans. This factor, too, has contributed to the polarization of Congress. (Hill, 2013)

Scholars disagree about the extent to which the Voting Rights Act has contributed to the polarization of Congress.

Pildes: Blame the Voting Rights Act

The following excerpt, from a scholarly article on the impact of the Voting Rights Act, or VRA, focuses on the effect that the VRA had in ending the long-time Democratic Party dominance of Southern politics. It is excerpted from "Why the Center Does Not Hold: The Causes of Hyperpolarized Democracy in America," by prominent political scientist Richard Pildes. Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *This reading is required. You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials.*

The 1965 VRA, and related changes in the era in constitutional doctrine and law, began the process of unraveling this system. The VRA began what might be considered the "purification" or "maturation" of the American political system. Put another way, the VRA initiated the rise of a genuine political system in the South, which meant the destruction of the one-party monopoly and the emergence, eventually, of a more normal system of competitive two-party politics. Just as the peculiar structure of the one-party South had projected itself onto the shape of national political parties, so too this dramatic transformation of Southern politics in turn reshaped the essential structure of the national political parties. As the VRA and related measures broke down the barriers to electoral participation in the South—literacy tests, poll taxes, manipulative registration practices, and durational residency requirement—a massive infusion of new voters, mostly black but white as well, entered and reconfigured Southern politics.

These voters were, on average, much more liberal than the median voting white Southerner had been before 1965. No longer could conservative, one-party political monopoly be maintained. Over the next generation, these new voters ripped asunder the old Democratic Party of the South, eventually fragmenting it into two parties: a highly conservative Republican Party, into which many of these formerly Democratic Southern voters fled, and a new, moderate-to-liberal Democratic Party that was more in line ideologically with the rest of the Democratic Party nationwide. There was, of course, a self-reinforcing feedback dynamic to this whole process as well; as the Democratic Party became more liberal in the South, more conservatives fled; as more conservatives fled, the Democratic Party became

even more liberal. At the national level, the progressive strands on racial issues that had existed in the Republican Party diminished, to be replaced by a more conservative stance on racial issues, while the Democratic Party at the national level became the party of racial liberalism.

Kennedy: Don't Blame the VRA

The following excerpt, from a scholarly rebuttal to Pildes's analysis of the effects of the Voting Rights Act, argues that today's political polarization is caused in large part by the divisive nature of the issues being debated. It is excerpted from "What Pildes Missed: The Framers, the True Impact of the Voting Rights Act, and the Far Right", by prominent political scientist David M. Kennedy. Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *This reading is required. You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials.*

Professor Pildes has perhaps focused too much on institutional factors and too swiftly cast out of the discussion the substantive content of American politics today. For example, I referred earlier to the Civil War. One would have a heavy burden of proof to carry if one wished to explain that systemic breakdown of the usual political process without mentioning slavery.

Similarly, we cannot fully grasp the divisiveness of our own political moment without acknowledging the salience of issues that are by their very nature polarizing. These issues elude the capacity of a political system designed to reconcile differences and have many of the properties that slavery had in the nineteenth century. They include abortion and gay marriage, to take the two most conspicuous examples, though one might easily add issues of war and peace. These matters are all highly emotionally charged and ideologically grounded. They simply do not lend themselves to the kind of compromising that is the stuff of "normal" politics. They might be called Solomonic issues, where the interests at stake are indivisible and the only solutions acceptable to stakeholders are unitary, not comprehensive.

Additionally, polarization affects different political camps differently. What we have today might be characterized as "asymmetric polarization." The conservative right is much more demographically and culturally homogenous and much less inclined to compromise on value-laden social issues than the much more heterogeneous Democratic Party.

Finally, among the factors that underwrote the halcyon days of harmony and bipartisanship in the post-war era was a phenomenally well-performing economy. It is no accident that the substantial fulfillment of the civil rights agenda, after a century of postponement, took place in that context of shared affluence, raising expectations all around, and great national self-confidence. Conversely, much of the acrimony that crept into our political culture after the 1960s has reflected the much more constrained economic circumstances of that later period.

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Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 5-4: Historical Writing

If you tried to start writing your essay without any preparation, you would probably get discouraged and give up. Up until this point, you have been learning about the different pieces that go into your essay. These steps have been broken down to make the essay seem less daunting.

Now that you have completed your writing plan, you have the framework for your essay in place. At this point, you will need to start drafting the actual content of your essay. This learning block will explain the various parts of the essay, as well as the best way to approach each one. You will be given the chance to practice drafting parts of an essay before you start on your own.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Define the different parts of a historical analysis essay
- Draft the introduction of your historical analysis essay
- Revise a thesis statement for your historical analysis essay

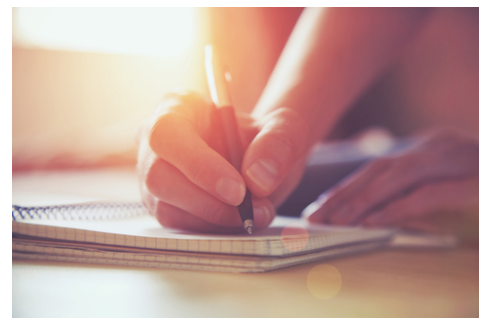
Introduction of the Paper

From your writing plan, you have a solid topic, research question, thesis statements, and sources outlined. Before you begin drafting your actual historical analysis essay, let's review the different components of an essay, starting with the first paragraph.

Introductory Paragraph

An essay should begin with an introduction paragraph. The introduction presents the audience with a general overview and background of your topic, a short summary of the evidence that will be presented to support your argument, and your thesis statement, which outlines the argument of your essay.

One important function of an introduction paragraph is to engage the audience and draw the reader in. So, you should introduce the topic you will be writing on in the most interesting and appealing way possible. The introduction also allows you to set the tone of the paper and catch the reader's attention. A brief outline of what information, claims, and evidence you will touch on in your essay will let your audience know what they can expect.



After introducing the general topic of your essay, you should go on to provide an overview of how the rest of the paper will proceed. This brief overview of the structure of the essay should show the audience how the subsequent sections of the essay are supposed to relate to one another.

It is important that introduction paragraph be as clear as possible, so it is usually a good idea to reread and revise an introduction paragraph once the rest of a paper has been written. Sometimes during the writing of a paper, an author might change how he or she chooses to present or defend his or her position. When this happens, the introduction paragraph must be revised to reflect those changes.

In the introduction, you should also introduce your thesis statement, which can be the last sentence or two of the paragraph. This one or two sentence version of your argument should not come out of nowhere. Your introduction should lay the groundwork for your thesis.

Writing an Introduction

The passage below is excerpted from "'The Fight Was Instilled in Us': High School Activism and the Civil Rights Movement in Charleston".

Remember, this passage is a sample of an introduction written by a professional historian writing for a specific audience. The audience had an impact on the way this passage was written.

"The Fight Was Instilled in Us": High School Activism and the Civil Rights Movement in Charleston

"I remember people standing and staring at us like we were trouble makers and were trying to upset Charleston," Harvey Gantt, a graduate of Burke High School in Charleston, recalled of the student led sit-in on April 1, 1960. "We at least got the attention of the community. We were feeling young and gifted and ready to tear down a broken social system. We felt like we were pioneers that day," Gantt said. Gantt was one of twenty-four Burke High School students who marched to S.H. Kress & Co., a segregated five-and-dime store on King Street in downtown Charleston. The students occupied nearly one-half of the lunch-counter seats, humming, singing freedom songs, and reciting prayers. The students maintained their composure as the manager of the store asked them to leave, white patrons cleared the premises, and bystanders circulated rumors of a bomb threat. Police arrested the students, charged them with trespassing, and put them in jail. By examining the effort to desegregate public facilities through the lens of the first sit-in in Charleston, this article will illustrate how a small, committed group of local high school students and teachers played an integral, though overlooked, role in the civil rights movement.



The S.H. Kress & Co. building in Charleston, SC. (Click icon for citation)
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Body and Conclusion of the Paper

The introduction to your paper is exactly that, an introduction. Your argument, evidence, and the meat of your essay all come into play in the body of the paper, and the conclusion wraps up what you have argued.

Structure

It is necessary to organize your paper in a way that makes sense for your argument. Often your thesis can influence the structure of how you present your examples.

Flow

In the body of your paper, you should move from the general (your thesis) to specific (examples and evidence). You should support any general statements you make about your topic with detailed examples.

Paragraphs

Each of the paragraphs in the body of your essay should be at least 4 sentences. The first sentence of each paragraph is the topic sentence.

Topic Sentences

The topic sentence tells your reader what that paragraph is about. It should relate back to the thesis. Your topic sentences also allow you to break down your argument into more specific pieces.

Support

You will support your topic sentence with evidence and analysis. The information you find in your primary and secondary sources will not stand on its own, which is why you might provide an explanation of how each source supports your thesis. You will learn more about incorporating historical evidence in **Theme: Analyzing History, Learning Block 7**.

Argument

Scholarly arguments rely on facts, and you should attempt to convince your audience of the validity of your thesis through reason, not emotion.

Transitions

The ideas in your paper should flow smoothly. Connect your ideas with transitional phrases. The final sentence of each paragraph should sum up what was said, as well as guide the reader to the next piece of the argument.

The body should make up the bulk of your paper. This is where you argue your thesis and elaborate on the outline you presented in your introduction. Your introduction and thesis statement should give you an idea of how the paper will be organized, such as which pieces of your claim you will argue first.

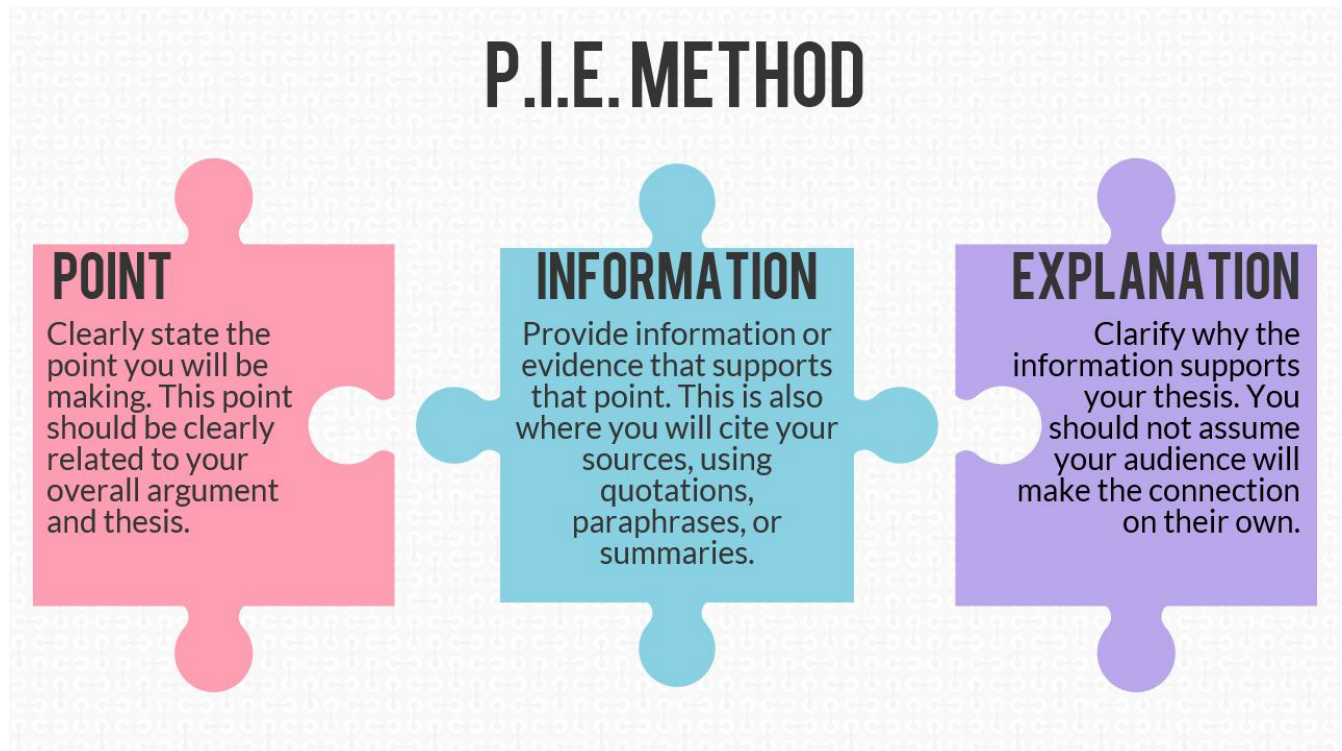
Body Paragraphs

The thesis statement presented in the introduction paragraph is the main idea of the entire paper, and each subsequent paragraph should work towards supporting that thesis statement. The majority of an essay is made up of supporting paragraphs that serve this purpose.

Each supporting paragraph should begin with a topic sentence, contain supporting sentences that back up the main idea presented in the topic sentence, and end with a summary sentence that reiterates that main idea.

Each of the topic sentences in your supporting paragraphs should relate back to your thesis statement. You should also dedicate at least one supporting paragraph to addressing counterarguments. Identify reasons someone might object to your argument, and respond to that objection using evidence you gathered during your research.

When constructing your supporting paragraphs, keep in mind the P.I.E. method. The following graphic reviews the P.I.E. method.



Conclusion Paragraph

Your conclusion is the final paragraph, and this is where you pull your argument together. You should reflect on your thesis statement, and the topic sentence of your conclusion should be a specific rewording of your thesis. In your conclusion, you can also state what the argument means within the context of the study of history. This is an opportunity to remind your readers of the most important points you made in your paper, reiterate your thesis statement, and briefly mention the arguments you used to support it.

You shouldn't introduce new arguments or positions in the conclusion paragraph, because you won't have time or space to support any new material. The only time you should make an exception to this is if your instructor specifically asks you to do something different.

Even though the primary purpose of a conclusion paragraph is to review material you've already presented earlier in the essay, it is important not to simply repeat yourself. You should try to restate your thesis in a new, fresh, and interesting way. Otherwise, you might lose your audience's interest in the last few sentences of your essay.

Tips for Writing a History Paper

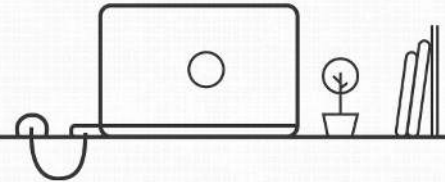
Historical writing has certain conventions that you should pay attention to as you begin to draft your historical analysis essay. Although historians might disagree about how they evaluate the past, in general, you can expect that they will follow certain "writing rules." Of course, in this class and in every course, you should confirm what writing style and format your instructor prefers for your assignment.

When writing a history paper, it is important to write in the past tense when speaking about historical events, since they happened in the past. Your entire paper will not be in past tense, however. Avoid

generalizations and be specific as possible. Phrases like "some people believe..." have no place in historical writing. Always maintain a formal, academic voice, and never use first person ("I, me, we, us," etc.) or second person ("you").

When studying the past, it is easy to project our own present day values onto events that happened before us. Try not to relate all historical events back to the present, and do not jumble the order of chronological events with anachronisms. Provide context for events, information, and evidence that you present in your writing. Most importantly, proofread your work!

TIPS FOR WRITING A HISTORY PAPER



- ☒ Write in past tense when speaking about historical events
- ☒ Avoid generalizations
- ☒ Provide context
- ☒ Use a formal, academic voice
- ☒ Respect the past
- ☒ Avoid anachronisms
- ☒ Proofread!

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Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 6-I: Analyzing Historical Texts

By now, you have encountered many scholarly articles that you will be using in your historical analysis essay. You have probably skimmed them using the A.R.I.A. criteria you were introduced to in Theme: Communicating Historical Ideas, but now it is time to dive in and critically analyze them. As you begin to examine these sources more closely, you might find that you will not need to use some of them in your essay. That's okay! Historical research and writing is not meant to be static. The sources you chose at the beginning might not be relevant if your argument changes as you write your paper.

The active reading strategies you encounter in this learning block will help you become a more critical reader and researcher. You should plan to revisit the databases in the Shapiro Library as you begin drafting the pieces of your essay in order to use these strategies.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Explore active reading strategies
- Describe the importance of critically analyzing historical texts
- Apply active reading strategies to historical research

Active Reading

Reading comprehensively is important in order to understand and process the information presented in text, especially in scholarly sources. Active reading is one strategy that will help you read critically in this course and others.

Active reading refers to a process of reading in which you approach the text with an intention to understand not simply what it says but also *how it says it*. In passive reading, we read simply for information, or sometimes we read only to be entertained or distracted for a short time. After engaging in passive reading, the content doesn't always stick with us. And most of the time, it doesn't matter.

But if we want to remember and learn something while we read, active reading practices will help us get a better grip on the reading, and what we have read will stick with us later on. Up until now, you have been reading excerpts of texts and finding sources for your historical analysis essay. You should apply active reading strategies as you begin to read your sources closely.



Active Reading Strategies

Pre-Reading Inquiry

Before reading the text, take a look at the title, the author, and any other descriptive information that is provided. Then ask yourself questions like: "What will be the subject of this reading?" "Have I read anything else on this topic?" "Have I read anything else written by this author?" "What do I hope to learn from this reading?" "What will I be expected to do or know after I finish this reading?"

Take Notes

While you read the text, use a highlighter or a pen to mark up the page. (If you are unable to print a hard copy of the text, you may be able to cut-and-paste the text into a Word document and use the "Comments" tool.) Highlight or underline key terms and ideas. Jot down questions and observations in the margins. Here is a guide to several of the most widely used note-taking systems.

Make Connections

Make text-to-self connections as you read. Can you personally relate to the subject of this reading? Are there any characters in the reading that remind you of yourself or people you know? Also make text-to-text connections. Does this reading remind you of another text that you have encountered? Finally, make text-to-world connections. Does this text relate to any real-world people, places, or events from the past or present?

Summarize

After reading the text, take some time to digest what you have read. Consider the overall meaning of the reading. Reread any sections that may have been confusing. Summarize larger sections of the text and then summarize the entire reading in one or two sentences.

Apply What You Have Learned

Tell another person about this reading and what you learned from it. Consider how you would explain this reading to different audiences.

Critical Analysis

As you engage in active reading, you should also be critically analyzing the texts. This approach will ensure that you are not a passive reader. As you read your sources, you should consider questions like:

- What is the author's main argument?
- Is the author's argument supported with evidence?
- Can you find evidence from the text itself to support your argument?
- What connections can you make to this text and others you have read on this topic? What differences do you see?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author?

Keep these strategies in mind in this course and your future classes, and you will become a more active and critical reader.

Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 6-2: Desegregating Boston's Schools

Desegregating Boston's Schools

In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that racial segregation in the public schools is unconstitutional. What it did not provide was an answer to the practical question: *How do we do that?*

A year later, in a decision that became known as *Brown II*, the court provided an answer to that question—sort of. It delegated the task of carrying out school desegregation to federal district courts and said that schools in segregated districts should be integrated "with all deliberate speed." The ambiguity of that phrase was seized on by many opponents as a license for delay, and for close to a decade, there was little progress in integrating many segregated districts. (Civil Rights Movement Veterans, 2016)

The passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, coupled with later Supreme Court decisions ordering school districts to speed up the pace of desegregation, lent the process more urgency. But resistance to school desegregation—not just in the South but in many cities of the North and West as well—remained a formidable obstacle to the goal of achieving racial balance in public schools.

In Massachusetts, the state legislature in 1965 passed a law requiring the integration of all segregated schools in the state, the vast majority of which were in the capital city of Boston. (Levy, 1971) But the Boston School Committee resisted, and it was not until 1974—when a federal court ordered a citywide school busing plan to end segregation of the Boston schools—that the process of integration finally began.

That process did not go smoothly. Fierce resistance in several of the city's predominantly white neighborhoods forced state police and National Guard troops to escort African-American students into the schools, and the ensuing "Boston busing crisis" roiled the schools, and the city, for years. (Lukas, 1985) The Boston public schools were not declared fully desegregated until 1987.

This learning block uses the events of the Boston busing crisis as a prism for looking once again at the concepts of cause and consequence, and as a way to illustrate how you can use historical evidence to make an argument that supports your thesis.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Describe the causes, course, and consequences of a historical event
- Use historical evidence to support the development of an analytical thesis statement

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Boston, Busing, and Backlash

The struggle for voting rights, which we looked at in Theme: Analyzing History, Learning Block 3, was a struggle against *de jure* segregation that existed in just one part of the country: the states of the Old South. But the problem of *de facto* segregation was one that existed throughout the country, and its effects were perhaps seen most clearly in the nation's public schools.

A series of Supreme Court cases in the early 1960s made it clear that *de facto* school segregation was unconstitutional and that segregated schools would be integrated by court order if necessary. Beginning in the early 1970s, the Court began requiring school busing plans, which would send African-American students to largely white schools and send white students to largely African-American schools, as a means of achieving greater racial balance.

In Boston, the city's small but growing African-American community began protesting the quality of public schools in largely black neighborhoods in the early 1960s. In 1965, in response to a federal investigation of possible segregation in the Boston public schools, the Massachusetts legislature passed the Racial Imbalance Act. The new law outlawed segregation in Massachusetts schools and threatened to cut off state funding for any school district that did not comply. (Levy, 1971)

Of the 55 Massachusetts schools identified as racially imbalanced, 45 were in the City of Boston. But the Boston School Committee, an all-white elected body led by Louise Day Hicks, refused to acknowledge the segregation and balked at any plan to remedy the situation. Hicks's opposition to school desegregation boosted her popularity, particularly in the city's working-class, heavily Irish-American neighborhoods; in 1967, she narrowly missed being elected mayor, but in 1969, she was elected to the city council, and in 1970, she was elected to Congress to represent her home neighborhood, the Irish-American enclave of South Boston. (Lukas, 1985)

The School Committee continued to stonewall demands to implement a meaningful desegregation plan. But in June 1974, federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity, deciding a lawsuit brought against the School Committee by the NAACP, ruled that Boston's schools were unconstitutionally segregated. He ordered that any school whose enrollment was more than 50 percent nonwhite must be balanced according to race.

To achieve that balance, Garrity ordered the schools to adopt a widespread busing plan by the first day of school in September. That announcement triggered a powerful backlash among white parents and students. Hicks formed an anti-busing group called Restore Our Alienated Rights (ROAR) that spearheaded much of the opposition to Garrity's desegregation order.

While the plan involved the busing of thousands of students from different neighborhoods across the city, the greatest attention was focused on the high schools in South Boston—a heavily working-class and overwhelmingly Irish-American part of town—and Roxbury, an overwhelmingly African-American neighborhood. Garrity's order effectively paired the two schools, by requiring that they essentially swap hundreds of students.

Decades after the fact, Garrity's busing order is still hotly debated in Boston. Supporters say that his unyielding approach was the only way to overcome white resistance and achieve racial balance in Boston's schools. Critics say Garrity focused too much on the goal of achieving *mathematical* balance,



A R.O.A.R button opposing Boston's desegregation. (Click icon for citation) ©©©

rather than focusing on a plan to improve school quality for both African-American and white children. (Gellerman, 2014)

Robert J. Allison, chair of the History Department of Suffolk University in Boston and author of *A Short History of Boston*, describes the causes and consequences of the Boston busing crisis in this video:

Video Transcript: Boston Busing Crisis

Robert Allison

Before World War II, most people did not go to college. Before World War I, most people did not go to high school. High schools were created in the early 20th century as an idea of extending an education. People ordinarily would have finished school in the 8th grade, gone to work...now we go to high school to learn some academic skills but also some industrial skills. For example, at South Boston High School, which opened in about 1900, the primary major was sheet metal work. At Charlestown High School, the primary major was auto mechanics. If you went to Brighton High School in Boston, you would learn to be an electrician. Boston's schools were not segregated by race. They were, however, very much organized by class. The blue collar students went on to blue collar careers through the educational trajectory, the children of stockbrokers or of accountants or of ministers, lawyers, doctors, would go to the exam schools.

The second World War changes much of this with the GI Bill of Rights, which opens college education to all. Now through much of the 20th century, Boston's population was declining as it's blue collar industrial base was fading. In fact, as the industrial base of all of New England was disappearing, with the disappearance of the textile mills and the shoe factories. You no longer could earn a good living in one of these blue collar jobs. GI Bill opens up college to everyone.

Now at the same time that this is happening, as Boston's population is in a period of decline, we have a migration of African Americans into Boston, and expanding the black population, primarily in the South End and in Roxbury. And the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s draws attention to the disparities between services and schools for African Americans and for white students. The truth in Boston was, the schools really weren't very good for anyone. The school system really operated to provide jobs for the people who voted for members of the school committee: five member, unpaid, elected board, elected city-wide. And members of the school committee were in a great position to help award patronage jobs to custodians, teachers, others who would work in this very large enterprise, the Boston Public School System.

And this collides in the 1950s and 60s with a number of other unanticipated things. One is the demise of Boston's blue collar economy. There's no longer a need for the sheet metal jobs you could have gotten out of Southie High, and the electricians work you would get at Brighton High. There is a need instead for people to go into managerial jobs, to get a white collar education. Also the state of the schools, the school, there'd been a spate of building of schools in the 1850s and in the 1890s and in the early 1900s. Not much since then. So the schools themselves are quite old. And another part of this is the African American population of Boston is growing as other parts of the population are shrinking. Boston's black community wants to know why the schools in their neighborhoods are not very good. Students throughout the city could have asked the same question. At the same time, you have an energized Civil Rights Movement raising questions of racial disparity throughout the country. And in the late 1950s and early 1960s groups of reformers, African American and white, are trying to change the makeup of the Boston school committee, to bring the school system generally in line with prevailing educational trends and provide a quality education for all of the students.

And this runs into resistance from the existing school committee, which does pretty well, awarding patronage jobs to its friends and not rewarding those who are its...not its friends. So you have these

changes going on in Boston, and the black community in the early 1960s is really protesting the nature of the schools. Martin Luther King visits Boston in 1965, and there's an attempt to have him meet with the school committee which falls through. There's a recognition that the schools aren't very good, and the school committee isn't doing anything about it.

And then the African American community raises this very good point, that many of the schools in this city are racially segregated. Children in Roxbury and the South End are going to primarily black schools, students in the rest of the city going to primarily white schools, and this was one of the pieces of a reform movement emanating in the 1960s. And in the early 1970s the black parents in Boston bring a law suit against the school system charging that the school system in Boston is racially segregated. And after a series of Supreme Court ruling in the 1950s and 60s, the court had said that having schools which are segregated by fact because this is a white neighborhood / this is a black neighborhood, is as discriminatory as having a school system that is segregated by law, saying white students can only go to white schools, black students can only go to black schools. That is, the Supreme Court has said: defacto segregation is just as much a violation of the civil rights of students as is de jure segregation.

And in the early 1970s black parents brought suit against the Boston public schools and Judge Arthur Garrity ruled that Boston, in fact, was running a segregated school system, and it had... Judge Garrity, in June of 1974, said that Boston is in fact running a segregated school system and by September of 1974 Boston's schools will have to be desegregated. Now, the plan that Judge Garrity sponsored or created is one that said, okay, what we'll do is we'll take the 11th grade from South Boston High School and the 11th grade from Roxbury High School, and switch them. Instead of having Roxbury High School / South Boston High School, we will have the Roxbury/South Boston Educational Complex. In other parts of the city, and in other parts of the country, having desegregation plans that worked more organically and combining students in elementary schools worked better than taking 11th graders, who sometimes can be a contentious group, and simply switching them. One of the political leaders from South Boston said that Judge Garrity had the foresight of a mackerel and the subtlety of a chainsaw. And the plan that he creates is one that is almost guaranteed to provoke violence, which it does.

There was rioting here in South Boston High School. Many white students, as the black students are bused in from Roxbury, white students tended not to want to opt in to going to Roxbury, which was perceived as being an area with crime and with other problems. And despite the valiant efforts of teachers, administrators, parents, to inculcate peace, places like this become a center for violence, for protest. As angry people who feel they're cut off from any source of power. The political system to which they have been part has abandoned them. The churches to which they have been a part has abandoned them. And they feel powerless. So we see here in front of South Boston High School are ugly riots as the children being bused in from Roxbury are the targets. I should say that buses carrying white children to Roxbury also were subject to attack.

The news media, of course, focuses on this, looking at the racial violence here in South Boston and in Charlestown as part of this larger narrative about racial unrest in the country. In the 1960s, there had been a heroic civil rights movement, and there had also been urban riots in places like Detroit, Newark, Washington DC, Los Angeles. And so this is something very much on the nation's mind, and with the death of people like Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders, moderate voices for social justice, we see a nation in deep trouble in the 1970s. And what happens here in Boston is very much emblematic of this bigger story.

So what does all of this mean? For Boston, for the nation. The nation is part of a broader story about race relations, the quality of education. Unfortunately, the educational piece of this is often subsumed by political considerations of one group or another. That's how political systems work, or our political system works. For Boston, the school system doesn't really become desegregated as the plan had been. Today, 90% of the students are minority students. The city's population is probably

about 50% minority, 50% non-minority. Well, however we determine that. Racial minority is the term we generally use, so Asian, African American, Latino. Those are the primary groups of students in the Boston Public Schools as opposed to white students.

Now, for Boston itself and Massachusetts, it's still an ugly mark on the city's history. And one thing that this agitation does is the protestors are not able to implement change in the school department, and the change that is implemented is not one to the benefit of the black parents who wanted a better education for their students. As one of them said, we wanted better schools and what we got was busing. And for 30 years, these school departments simply looked at the numbers of students in classrooms, the racial balance on day 1 to determine whether they were meeting the mandate of the federal court. In the 1990s, the federal court said it no longer needed to supervise this, and by that time there really wasn't much to supervise. The school population, also, had fallen from about 90,000 in the 1970s to somewhere in the 50,000s today. So there's an exodus of families from this city, from white neighborhoods, also from black neighborhoods as black families can move into Randolph or other surrounding towns, something they would not have been able to do in the 1960s or 1970s. So we have those changes, and those who are here protesting saw themselves as disempowered from a political system, but they actually wind up having a great deal of power in other areas. So the protests here also energize a number of political groups. Here in South Boston, the primary group was Restore Our Alienated Rights. In East Boston and Charlestown, it was the Powder Keg, with the implications you can see of that. These two groups didn't really get along. In the African American community there were also different groups competing for attention or competing for power. And the real tragedy in all of this is that these groups don't see, too often don't see what they have in common.

1983 was a pivotal mayoral race in Boston, and the two finalists were Ray Flynn, who had been a state representative from South Boston, son of a longshoreman from South Boston. He himself had worked as a longshoreman. And Mel King from the South End: community activist. One of the big differences between them, I suppose, is that Mel King's parents insisted that he go to college. Children of West Indian immigrants. Mel King becomes probably the leading community activist in the black community in Boston, elected to the State House of Representatives. And he and Ray Flynn face off against each other in the mayoral race in 1983. And both Flynn and King recognize the similarities of their communities, that neither one has the political power that someone else does. And each one is vying for improvements in their communities.

And Ray Flynn is elected mayor and really devotes himself to heal this huge racial schism in Boston, and is successful in some ways, unsuccessful in others. In the late 1980s, Mel King is part of a group that wants the black neighborhoods to seceded, creating the neighborhood of Mandela. What they really want is to be more included in the political process in the city of Boston. And another implication or effect of this is that it does turn many of the opponents of having the court determine where children will go to school into political activists. 1980: Ronald Reagan carries Massachusetts. You'll recall that in 1972 Massachusetts was the only state that supported the democratic nominee for president. So the Reagan democrats were born here in South Boston.

As a response to the federal court's decree about where their children will go to school. It's really only now when some of the explosive racial animosity, political animosity, that arose in the 70s, has cooled, that we can look back and try to interpret what exactly happened, what caused this. Why did people react in this way? So the story of busing in Boston is really ripe for political interpretation or historical interpretation as we try to understand why this happened and what were the long term implications.

When school opened in September, resistance to the busing plan was fierce. A throng of white protesters greeted the buses rolling into South Boston High School that September with jeers and epithets; some of the protesters began throwing bricks and rocks at the buses and at the state police escorting them. The

incident marked the beginning of two years of angry and often violent confrontations between white and black parents, students, police, and protesters. (Wolff, 2015)

From 1974 through 1976, the process of public education in Boston was turned into an ongoing tableau of state troopers and National Guardsmen in riot gear, escorting children into schools past jeering crowds; fights both inside and outside of schools, leading to hundreds of arrests; thousands of high-school students, both white and African-American, boycotting classes on a regular basis; and angry confrontations between protesters and public officials, such as Mayor Kevin White and Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who were deemed to be "pro-busing." (Lukas, 1985)



Anti-busing protesters attack attorney Theodore Landsmark as he exits Boston City Hall, 1976.

(Click icon for citation) ©📷

All of this did not leave a lot of time for actual *education*. In the 1974-75 school year, school officials estimated that 12,000 of the school system's 93,000 students were chronically or permanently absent; in the following year, that figure was estimated at 14,000. (Wolff, 2015) The average rate of absenteeism during the 1974-75 school year was approximately 50 percent. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975)

The Boston protests, taking place in the heart of what was presumed to be one of the most "liberal" cities in America, attracted widespread media attention. They exposed sharp racial divisions in the city, and they also highlighted divisions based on class: many of the white protesters in working-class neighborhoods such as South Boston and Charlestown felt aggrieved that *their* neighborhoods had been singled out for busing, while schools in Boston's more affluent suburbs were unaffected. (Lukas, 1985)

The worst of the violence and protests was over by the end of 1976, but the city and its schools were permanently changed. By the time Boston's schools were declared desegregated in 1987, the student population had declined by almost 40 percent and the overwhelming majority of students were nonwhite. (Hoover Institution, 1998) While historians still debate whether the Boston busing crisis was a necessary cause of these sharp demographic shifts in the city's public school system, the events of 1974-1976 clearly contributed to changing perceptions of the school system among parents and students.

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The Consequences of Boston's Busing Crisis

Forty years after the fact, it's worth asking the obvious question: what were the effects of Boston's tumultuous school desegregation effort? To put it another way: *What were the consequences of this historical event?*

In assessing the consequences of any event, we first need to identify the groups or institutions that might have been affected. We could, for instance, look at the effects of busing on individual students—by tape-recording interviews with former students who were actually on the buses, to see what effect the experience had on their later lives. This type of research is known as oral history.

We could also look at the impact of busing on the public school system itself. A few relevant statistics:

- In 1971-72, three years before busing began, there were 93,000 students in the Boston public schools; 61% were white; 32% were African-American; and 7% were other racial minorities. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975)
- In 1990, three years after the schools were declared desegregated, there were 60,000 students in the Boston public schools; 22% were white; 48% were African-American; and 30% were other racial minorities. (Boston Studies Group, 2010)
- In 1971-72, Boston public schools had one of the highest dropout rates in the country. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975) In 1990, the dropout rate had dropped below the national average. (Boston Studies Group, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2015)
- In 1970, 10 percent of Boston public school students went on to graduate from college; in 1990, 30 percent did so. (Boston Studies Group, 2010)

Do these statistics tell us all we need to know about the impact of busing on the public school system? Are there factors, other than school busing, that might have caused some or all of these statistical shifts? Are there other ways that we might be able to measure the *quality* of the Boston public schools, both before and after busing?

What about the impact on the city itself? In the early and mid-1970s, there was a lot of discussion about the possibility of white flight, the phenomenon in which white residents move out of mixed-race urban areas and relocate to largely white suburbs. In a narrower sense of the term, *white flight* can refer to the decision by white parents to take their children out of public schools and send them to largely white private or parochial schools.

Again, consider a few statistics:

- In 1970, Boston's population was 641,071, and approximately 82% of residents were white. (U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 1975)
- In 1990, Boston's population was 574,283; approximately 59% of residents were white. (Boston Redevelopment Authority, 2011)

Do these statistics suggest that Boston experienced a period of white flight between 1970 and 1990? Would it affect your thinking if you knew that Boston's overall population had declined by 20 percent between 1950 and 1970—well *before* school busing began? (Kennedy, 1992)

Are there any other factors that might have caused these demographic changes? It's worth noting that this was a time of strong suburban growth all around the country: between 1970 and 1990, the proportion of Americans living in suburbs rose from 37.6 percent to 46.2 percent. (US Census Bureau, 2002) Was Boston simply following the national trend toward suburbanization—a trend spurred by increased automobile ownership, expanded access to home mortgages, job growth in suburban areas, and the coming of age of the Baby Boom generation, among many other factors? Or was Boston a special case, with the busing crisis serving as the driving force behind suburbanization in the region?

Next, consider one more statistic:

- In 2010, Boston's population was 617,594; approximately 47% of residents were white. (Boston Redevelopment Authority, 2011)

Long after the end of busing, then, the city's population was increasing, but the proportion of white residents was still declining. Do you think that's evidence of white flight or some other demographic trend—or maybe a combination of factors?



Mel King. Image courtesy of the South End Historical Society.

Finally, let's look at the impact of busing on the city's leadership and institutions. One of the leaders of the resistance to busing was Raymond L. Flynn, an Irish-American state representative and city councilor from South Boston. One of the strongest supporters of the desegregation plan was Mel King, an African-American state representative from Boston's South End. In 1983, Flynn and King ran against each other for mayor.

King was the first African-American candidate for mayor ever to make it past the preliminary round and into the November final election. Although Flynn won the mayoralty with 65 percent of the vote in 1983, King's emergence as a strong and credible candidate was seen as evidence that Boston was at least beginning to move past the racial



Ray Flynn speaking in Boston. (Click icon for citation) ©111

animus that marked the busing era. And Flynn, as mayor, devoted a great deal of time and effort to cooling racial tensions and promoting housing and economic development in largely African-American neighborhoods. (Walker, 2015)

Among Flynn's significant accomplishments as mayor: in 1991, he sponsored, and Boston voters approved, a referendum to abolish the elected school committee and replace it with a panel appointed by, and directly answerable to, the mayor. The old School Committee that was, throughout the busing era, a defiant symbol of opposition to school desegregation, is now a long-gone relic of the distant past.

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Boston's Busing Crisis: Further Reading

This page offers you two readings that provide very different views of the Boston busing crisis.

The first article argues the need for busing as a means to desegregate the schools; the second argues that busing hurt the quality of Boston's schools. Both readings are required, to help you gain a better understanding of both sides of this issue.

The first reading is excerpted from "Deep Are the Roots: Busing in Boston". This article was written in 1976, while the busing crisis was taking place. Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials to access this article.*

"No Other Alternative"

Frightening scenes have been observed in streets and schools. Caravans of buses have been escorted by squads of motorcycle police. Other police, all the force could supply, stood elbow to elbow to protect black youngsters. Still, violence was not prevented. Stones and bottles thrown at buses broke the windows and cut children's skin. High school students beat each other with fists and clubs. A black man who happened to be parked near a gang of white youths was dragged from his car, kicked and beaten until rescued—and only because he was black.

...The[se] episodes seem to be most incongruous with the state which originated the nation's first open-housing law and subsequently passed an admirable racial imbalance law to assure equal educational opportunity for all of its children. Indeed, such hostile acts do not seem consistent with Boston—the "cradle of liberty"—the city that desegregated schools in 1855! Dan Richardson, a former Federal housing official, has provided a possible explanation: "We pass great laws here, but when it comes to Boston, there's never any enforcement. This must be one of the most segregated cities anywhere in housing and in schools, North or South."

...On Monday night, protesters firebombed the birthplace of former President John F. Kennedy and scrawled "Bus Teddy" on the front sidewalk. One of the 94 persons arrested during the first four days of school was a South Boston youth who was carrying 15 firebombs in his car. A school bus had disappeared, but 69 per cent of the students were in attendance and there were no serious injuries. School authorities were anticipating a successful school year. Busing is an unpopular term in Boston and many white parents are asking why it is necessary. They feel that if all schools had quality education busing would be unnecessary. Busing is not totally accepted by black parents, but they realize that segregated housing, in many instances, leaves no other alternative to quality integrated education.

The second reading is excerpted from "Busing's Boston Massacre". This article was written in 1998, long after the crisis had ended. Click on the title of the article to read, download, and print a copy of the text. These readings are provided by the Shapiro Library. *You will have to log into Shapiro Library with your SNHU credentials to access this article.*

"Cause for a Revolution"

"Eighty percent of the people in Boston are against busing," said Mayor Kevin White. "If Boston were a sovereign state, busing would be cause for a revolution." On the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, [Federal Judge] Arthur Garrity ruled over Boston like a reincarnated

King George. In the school system, his word was law and integration without representation had become the new tyranny.

...Busing has not only failed to integrate Boston schools, it has also failed to improve education opportunities for the city's black children. When Boston introduced Stanford 9 testing to the public schools in 1996, 94 percent of seventh-graders at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School scored "poor" or "failing" in math, as did 73 percent of fifth-graders at Brighton's Alexander Hamilton School. At Dorchester's William E. Endicott School, 95 percent of the fifth-graders scored "poor" or "failing" in reading and 100 percent scored "poor" or "failing" in math. Yet all of these students were promoted to the next grade.

On the statewide Iowa Reading Test, the Boston Public Schools ranked 275 out of the 279 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Even the working-class city of Lawrence, with a large immigrant population and a high crime rate, outscored the Boston Public Schools despite the fact that Lawrence teachers make almost \$15,000 less on average than Boston teachers.

...On the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Boston fares even worse. On average, SAT test takers in the city's high schools scored 845 (out of 1600) in 1996, surpassing only those in Chelsea. If you exclude the three exam schools, Boston would surely be last. With pathetic standardized test scores and an average promotion rate of 94 percent, it is hard to imagine the Boston Public Schools have improved since busing began. In fact, the evidence suggests they are probably worse.

Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 6-3: Using Historical Evidence

You have decided on a topic, done the research, crafted your research question and preliminary thesis statement, and submitted your writing plan. In order to support your claims as you write your historical analysis essay, you need to incorporate evidence from your research.

In this learning block, you will practice extracting the most relevant information from primary and secondary sources to support a claim or an argument about the Civil Rights Movement. These skills will be important as you begin to write your essay, since you will have to decide what information to include from your sources and what is not as important for your argument. Understanding how to incorporate evidence, historical or otherwise, will also be necessary in future courses at SNHU.

Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Analyze a historical event
- Integrate evidence from sources to support your historical analysis
- Use primary and secondary sources to answer a research question

Evidence in Your Essay

Evidence does not speak for itself. Once you introduce a piece of evidence from one of your sources, you need to explain why and how it supports your argument. You have to make the link between the evidence and your argument for your audience.

Even if your audience is familiar with the topic, you cannot assume that it is familiar with the connections you make in your essay. Do not be afraid to be overly specific when incorporating evidence. You can always edit your draft later if you feel like you are being too obvious. The clearer you make your connections, the stronger your argument will be.

Types of Evidence

It's important to remember that your evidence is only as good as the sources where you found it.

There are a number of ways to present evidence for your argument in your essay. In this course, evidence will usually come in the form of text in the body of your paper. However, you can also include tables, photographs, or illustrations, for example. Click on the tabs below to learn more about the different ways to present evidence to support your argument.

Quotations

A quotation is the most precise way to tell your reader what a source said. When you quote a source, you use the exact words of the original author, and you include these words in quotation marks to show your reader that they originated with your source. You also create an in-text reference, and you include documentation for the source on the list of references at the end of the essay. You will learn more about citations in **Theme: Thinking About History**.

Quotations show your reader the flavor of the original source, and they should be used only if you couldn't possibly state the information as concisely as the original author. You should always provide commentary before and after a quotation—don't just throw data at your reader without escorting the reader through the data. Quotations are bulky, so your use of quotations should be limited. (Usually no more than 10% of your research paper should be direct quotations.)

Quotations longer than four lines should be set as a block quotation. Block quotations should only be used if the phrasing of the entire passage is not only relevant to your argument but also essential. After the block quotation, especially, you should discuss the quotation and explain why those words are so important to your argument.

When you quote a text, you are reproducing an author's words exactly as they appear in the source text. When deciding whether to directly quote a text, consider the following:

- Are the author's words particularly interesting or distinctive?
- Do you need the author's expertise to reinforce your claim?
- Does your argument require the audience to understand exactly what another writer says about your topic?

Introduce each quote and provide some context. Make sure to cite the source of the quote (more about that in Theme: Thinking About History). It is necessary to discuss the relevance of the quotation for your argument. Don't simply drop the quotation into your essay without an explanation.

Paraphrase

A paraphrase is more concise than a quotation. It is similar to a quotation in that it covers the limited ground of the original, but it is different because you don't use the same words or sentence structure as the author. You don't use quotation marks around the words, but it is essential that you cite the source, including the name of the author and the date of publication.

Paraphrasing a text means that you take a specific piece of your source material and put it into your own words. This does not mean that you rearrange or change a few words. To paraphrase well, you should

write your own explanation of what the writer is saying. A paraphrase should involve a short piece or section of text. In your essay, it is necessary to indicate when you have paraphrased by citing the original source in the same way that you would cite a quotation.

Your paraphrase should cover the same subject matter or idea as the original passage, using your own words. Unknowing plagiarism (and sometimes knowing plagiarism) occurs when paraphrases are phrased too closely to source materials, so be sure that your phrasing is sufficiently different. Even though you can change the emphasis of the original writing, you cannot add to or change the meaning! You should not mix your own ideas with your paraphrase.

When deciding whether to paraphrase, considering the following:

- Are you drawing from a certain paragraph or section in the source text to support your point?
- Do you want to explain an author's position on a topic, but the exact wording isn't important?
- Are you using an author's specific example as evidence for (or against) your claim?
- Are you presenting an author's point of view because you want to refute it in your essay?

Summary

To summarize, you use the same skills that you use when you paraphrase—but you summarize the main idea of the original work instead of the main idea of a few sentences. Summaries can vary in length, and the length of the summary will determine the level of detail that your summary should provide.

You don't need quotation marks in your summary because you will not be quoting directly from the author. However, you do need to create an in-text reference after every distinct idea in your summary so that your reader can tell when you are summarizing an author's ideas and when you are presenting your own or those of a different author. A good standard is to provide at least one in-text citation at the end of each paragraph.

Notice that the summary does not *evaluate* the argument at all—it simply describes it.

Visuals: Photographs, Illustrations, Charts, and Graphs

You might want to include a primary source photograph or other visual in your historical analysis essay. As with all evidence, cite where you found these sources. Although you probably won't be using statistics in your essay for this course, the same rules apply. If you make your own chart or graph for a paper, cite where you got the data.

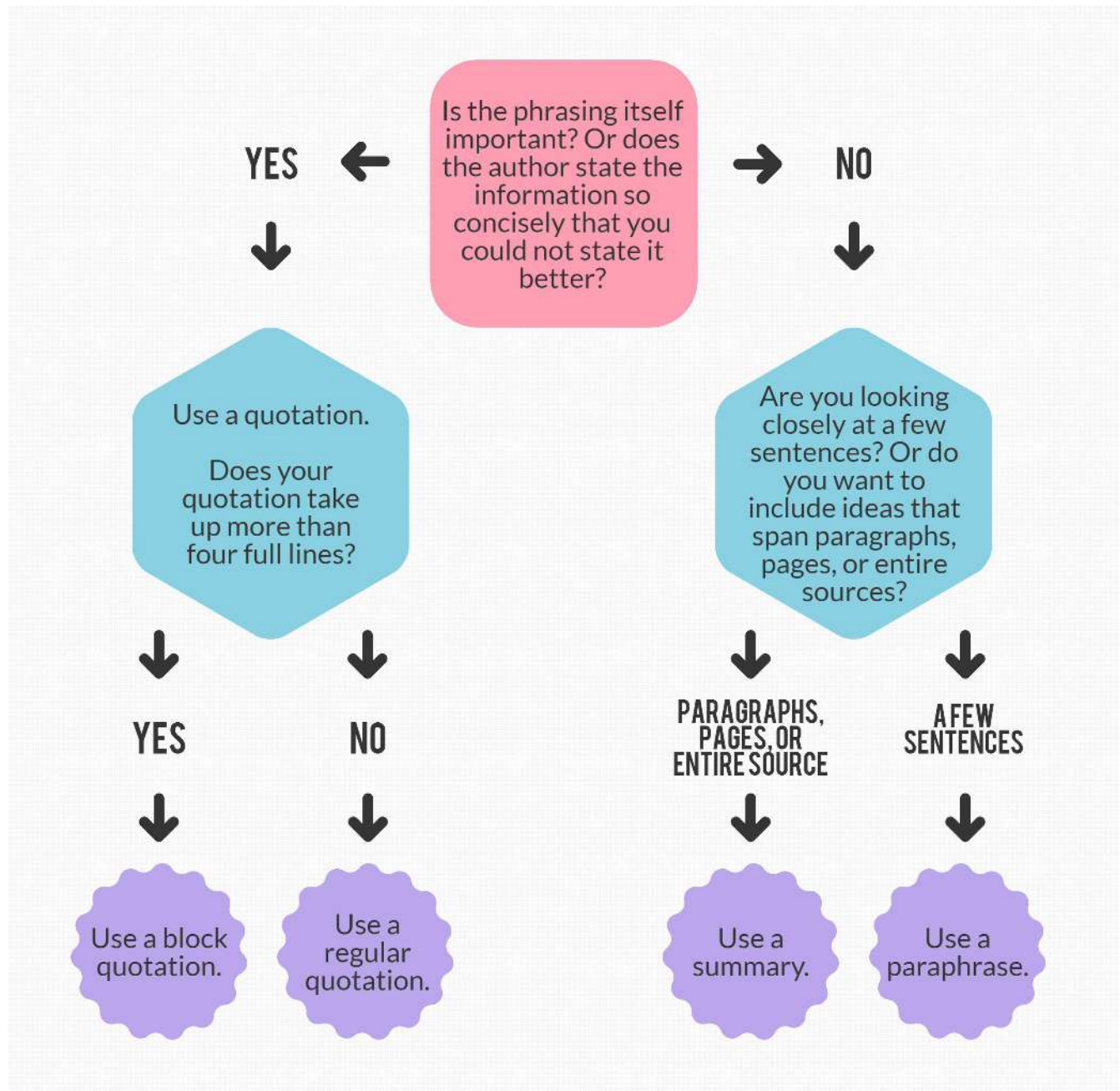
In this course, you might find it useful to include the image of your primary source, such as a photograph or a poster, for example. If you do, you still need to explain to your audience the connection that you want them to make. You can also describe a photograph of an event, with the proper citations, and explore how that primary source document supports your thesis.

Integrating Text From Sources

Source integration is a skill that you will use beyond this course. As you take more classes in your field of study, you will be required to conduct research and incorporate your findings into your assignments for those courses.

You will also find that source integration is important in many real-world job situations. Educators, health care professionals, businesspeople, etc. are constantly learning about the latest research in their fields and will often be asked to cite this research properly in a memo or some other written form.

The flowchart below will help you determine the best way to present a piece of **text** from your sources in support of your argument.



Consider the following excerpt from an essay about the Boston busing crisis, which incorporates direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary.

Arguably the finest portrait of Boston during the school busing crisis is J. Anthony Lukas's *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York: Knopf, 1985). Lukas tells the story of the busing crisis through the eyes of three Boston families—an idealistic young Yankee couple from the gentrified South End, a working-

class Irish-American family from Charlestown, and a working-class African-American family from Roxbury—as they confront and respond to the turmoil that convulsed the city in the mid-1970s.¹ While Lukas peppers his account with historical anecdotes and vivid profiles of key players, including Mayor Kevin White and Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, he keeps coming back to a few key ideas. One of the most important, and also the most controversial, of these is the idea that in Boston, as in America, conflicts about race are, inescapably, also conflicts about class.² Near the end of the book Lukas drives home this point as he recounts the musings of Colin Diver, the idealistic young lawyers and aide to Mayor Kevin White: "Only by providing jobs and other economic opportunities for the deprived—black and white alike—could the city reduce the deep sense of grievance harbored by both communities."³

¹ The student provides a very brief summary of the book.

² The student paraphrases one of the central points of the book.

³ The student illustrates the point with a direct quote from the book.

A Brief Review

When incorporating quotations, it's important that their inclusion still fits grammatically into the overall sentence. Direct quotes work best for unique or powerful passages that would be difficult to communicate in your own words. Use direct quotes judiciously, as too many can overwhelm your paper.

Paraphrasing, on the other hand, helps your paper flow smoothly while integrating source material. A paraphrase restates the essential content of a short passage in your own words but clearly attributes that content to the author or authors who originally created that content. In other words, you put the expert's ideas into your own words to convey critical points and to avoid using too many quotations. It's important to note, though, that you want to make sure your paraphrase does not too closely resemble the original text. Both direct quotes and paraphrases require proper in-text citation in order to avoid plagiarizing the material you are using in your essay.

Summarizing is different than paraphrasing, because it offers an overview of an entire text or source, rather than one specific piece of it. Summaries are effective when you have a lot of sources to support your argument. If you summarize someone else's ideas, make it clear in your essay and cite the source.

Theme: Analyzing History | Learning Block 6-4: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

Now that you've identified your argument, researched supporting evidence, received peer feedback on your writing plan, and constructed your thesis statement, it's time to begin writing the first full draft of your paper. All of the work you've done so far will make constructing the first draft much easier.

It can be overwhelming to think about where to start your draft, so it's important to take the drafting process one step at a time and to allow yourself the space to make errors. The point of drafting is to see what works and doesn't work—to see what is working well and what needs to be fixed. Although the draft should demonstrate the direction your final paper will go and contain the components required of the assignment, it's important to remember that it's a work in progress.

Learning Objectives

In this learning block, you will:

- Draft body paragraphs for a historical analysis essay
- Assemble an introduction, revised thesis statement, and three body paragraphs to produce a historical analysis essay

Drafting an Essay

State Your Argument Clearly

Be clear with your argument and avoid vague language.

Use Evidence

Support your opinion with detailed evidence from the text. This means that you will quote, paraphrase, and summarize direct phrases and sentences from the text throughout your essay.

Focus on the Text, Not on Yourself

Avoid using phrases like "I think" or "in my opinion." It is obvious that these are your thoughts and opinions, since you are writing the essay. Make the event and the argument the subject of your essay.

Be Open to Revision

One of the most important steps in the writing process is the final one—revision and editing. When you revise your essay, you use feedback from your instructor and peers to improve the quality of your product.

Sample Submission

The sample submission below is part of an essay on the integration of African Americans into the movie and television industry. It includes an introduction and three body paragraphs; those paragraphs provide historical context for the effort to "integrate Hollywood." Read it over as a reminder of what's expected in your own submission; pay particular attention to the thesis statement and the structure of the body paragraphs. But remember, this is a finished submission; you may not be this far along in your research at this point in the course.

Jane Doe

HIS 200: Applied History

Southern New Hampshire University

May16, 2016

Draft Submission: Integrating the Movie Industry

In 1988 Eddie Murphy, the African-American comedian and actor, presented the Oscar for Best Picture at the 60th Academy Awards—but not before chiding the assembled Hollywood movers and shakers about the lack of diversity in Oscar's past. As this video of Murphy's speech shows (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtph_KfsoiE),¹ when he was first approached about presenting the award his initial reaction was "I'm not going, because they haven't recognized black people in the motion picture industry." (Murphy, 1988) Fast forward 28 years, and the same complaints were heard about the lack of African-American representation among 2016's Oscar nominees. But the continuing argument about the underrepresentation of African-Americans in Hollywood misses a crucial point. Despite years of often-fiery debate over the lack of diversity in Oscar nominations and alleged racism on the part of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, history shows that when it comes to dealing with racial themes and issues, the movie industry is motivated primarily by economic concerns.² As the African-American Oscar winner Morgan Freeman once noted, "I don't think Hollywood is racist; I think Hollywood lives and dies on greed."³ (Miller, 2016)

There can be little doubt that the movie industry, as an economic

institution, has long lacked diversity.⁴ While the proportion of African-American actors cast in movie and television roles has in recent years roughly mirrored the African-American share of the nation's population (12.2 percent)—this figure has in fact fluctuated in a narrow range from 13 percent to 15 percent over the last 15 years (SAG/Afra, 2009)—the proportion of blacks in influential non-acting roles has been much lower. Recent statistics show that only 5 percent of the writers in the film sector of the Writers Guild of America (West) were African-Americans. And for movie directors in the Directors Guild of American, the comparable figure was just 3.6 percent. (Historical data show that the proportion of African-American writers and directors was even lower in past years.) (WGAW, 2014; DGA, 2015) The number of African-American producers (aside from actors and directors who establish their own production companies) is difficult to determine, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it is quite small.⁵ (Lee, 2014) Taken together, these statistics clearly show that, among the people who directly influence the content of the movies and the types of roles that will be available to black actors, African-Americans have been significantly underrepresented.⁶

It is unclear what impact, if any, this underrepresentation has had on Hollywood's artistic choices. But the historical record is very clear when it comes to another point: from its earliest days, the content that Hollywood created—"the movies" themselves—has typically reflected only what its audiences have been willing to pay for.⁷ At the beginning of the 20th century, before the Great Migration that drew millions of African-Americans out of the rural South, the potential African-American audience for Hollywood movies was extremely small (U.S. Census Bureau: American FactFinder), and the fledgling movie industry accordingly produced virtually no content for that audience.⁸ At the same time, overtly racist attitudes were common among many American whites, particularly in the South, and the movie industry catered to that potential audience

with overtly racist films such as D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. As the potential audience for films about African-Americans began to grow, small independent producers began to make "race films" aimed specifically at African-American audiences; these films did not receive wide distribution because the major Hollywood studios, which owned thousands of movie theaters across the country, declined to show them. It was only after the Supreme Court ruled that the studios would have to give up their ownership of theaters—forcing them to compete for the theaters' business and for a share of the growing African-American market—that Hollywood began to incorporate more African-American characters into mainstream films.⁹ (Leab, 1975) This major change in movie content came about in direct response to changing market forces.¹⁰

Other forces also influenced changes in Hollywood's approach to African-American characters and themes, but most were rooted in economics, not ethics.¹¹ One major factor: the outlawing of segregated public facilities during the civil rights era meant the end of "blacks only" theaters, which in turn helped put an end to "race films" and forced the studios to find ways to appeal to African-American audiences.¹² (Caddoo, 2014) At the same time, the Civil Rights Movement itself generated increased public sympathy for the cause of African-American rights; this in turn boosted the marketability of films with African-American actors¹³ such as Sidney Poitier, or those that dealt with themes of racial tolerance, such as *Lilies of the Field* or *To Kill a Mockingbird*. (Bristor et al, 1995) Again, what America saw on the silver screen was a reflection of Hollywood's bottom line.¹⁴

¹ The student incorporates a primary source to introduce the topic of her essay.

² The student states her thesis.

³ The student illustrates her thesis with a direct quote.

⁴ The student's topic sentence states the point of this paragraph.

⁵ The student provides information to support her point.

⁶ The student explains how the information supports her thesis.

⁷ Point.

⁸ Information.

⁹ Information.

¹⁰ Explanation.

¹¹ Point.

¹² Information.

¹³ Information.

¹⁴ Explanation.