

Topic Page: [desegregation](#)

Definition: **desegregation** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

(1935) **1** : the state of being desegregated **2** : the action or an instance of desegregating



Image from: [In 1957, nine black students enrolled at Central... in Encyclopedia of Politics](#)

Summary Article: **desegregation**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

The process of ending separation or isolation of a group who were restricted by law or custom to separate living areas, public facilities, educational institutions, etc. Desegregation often refers to this process in the context of black Americans. (See civil-rights movement.)

Beginning in the early 20th century, after most southern blacks had been disenfranchised and the US Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) sustained a statute for 'separate-but-equal' schools, civil-rights groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began fighting for desegregation. The NAACP led successful campaigns against disenfranchisement of blacks during the 1910s and against school segregation beginning in the 1930s. Future Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall led many of these legal battles.

In 1948, presidential Executive Order 9981 integrated the armed forces (blacks had traditionally served in segregated units). After the 1954 US Supreme Court Case *Brown v. Board of Education*, school desegregation became federal law, though integration was a gradual and sometimes violent process, as in the case of the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1955 the refusal of Rosa Parks to yield her seat on a bus to a white person, her subsequent arrest, and the ensuing boycott of buses by blacks in Montgomery, Alabama, brought renewed national and international pressure for desegregation. The Reverend Martin Luther King emerged during this time and went on to lead campaigns for desegregation during the 1950s and 60s. Finally, the Civil Rights Act 1964 banned discrimination based on colour, race, religion, or national origin, and guaranteed freedom to vote and access public facilities.

Despite the legislative measures for desegregation that have been achieved in the USA, black Americans still often live in segregated areas, with inferior facilities and high crime rates, and with limited access to opportunities such as higher education. Social and economic circumstances and persistent racial prejudices still prove strong forces against integration.

documents

Eisenhower, Dwight: The Serious Situation in Little Rock

[APA](#)

[Chicago](#)

[Harvard](#)

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desegregation. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/desegregation>



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