

# OGT TEST PREP: US HISTORY CRASH COURSE

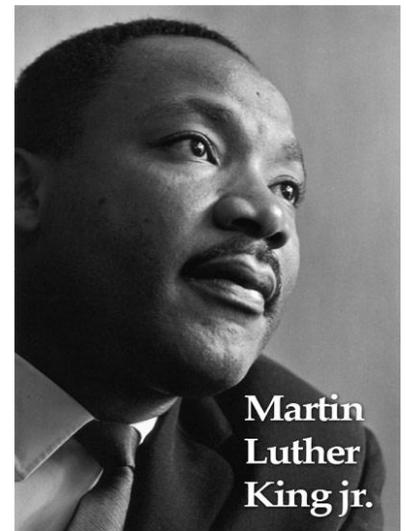
## THE COLD WAR

- An epic 40+ year struggle between the free, democratic, capitalist/market West (including the United States), and the totalitarian, communist Soviet Union.
- Europe was divided between free, democratic countries (“West”) and communist countries (“East”). Winston Churchill described it as an “**Iron Curtain**” that ran between the two sides.
- Both sides formed alliances. The United States and allies formed **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)**. They all pledged to defend each other if they were attacked. The Soviet Union’s alliance was the **Warsaw Pact**.
- Germany and Berlin were both divided. Because the free, democratic West Berlin was isolated inside communist East Germany, the Soviets tried to cut off access by land. The Western powers responded with the **Berlin Airlift**, sending in food and supplies by airplane around the clock. This lasted for YEARS!
- American policy was to **CONTAIN COMMUNISM** – keep it from spreading to other countries.
  - It did this with the **Marshall Plan** – sending money and aid to Europe so it would not turn communist.
  - It did this with the **Truman Doctrine** – promising military aid to help countries fight communism inside.
  - It did this by actually sending American forces to fight communist forces – first in the **Korean War** in the early 1950s, and then in **Vietnam** during the late 1960s and early 1970s.
  - The **Domino Theory** held that if one country would fall to communism, it would lead to another country, and then another country – like dominoes knocking each other down. This led to the **Vietnam War**.
  - During the **Vietnam War**, Americans as young as 18 were **drafted** – or required to go fight. Many young Americans began to protest the war. Some refused to fight on religious grounds. They were known as **conscientious objectors**. They were given jobs that did not involve actual fighting, like being a medic.
- The closest the country came to nuclear war occurred after Cuba turned communist and the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles there. President Kennedy cut off access to Cuba during this **Cuban Missile Crisis**, and eventually negotiated a peaceful deal – to remove American missiles from Turkey if the Soviets pulled theirs out of Cuba.



## THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

- After the 1896 **Plessy v. Ferguson** case made racial segregation legal and constitutional (as long as it was “separate but equal”), the south set up many different laws requiring separation between blacks and whites. These were called “**Jim Crow Laws,**” named after a racist character that mocked African Americans.
- In 1954, Oliver Brown challenged a law in Kansas requiring his daughter to go to a poor, black school. In this case, known as **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas**, the Supreme Court reversed their decision in Plessy, declaring that segregation was *unconstitutional* in public schools.
- When whites resisted *integration* (bringing blacks and whites together in the same schools), President Eisenhower called in the army to enforce the court’s decision and let the **Little Rock Nine** into the school.
- Segregation was challenged in other areas. **Rosa Parks** refused to give up her seat to a white person, was arrested, and triggered a *boycott* of the Montgomery, Alabama public bus system.
- **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** helped organize the boycott, as well as other protests. He urged **nonviolent resistance** and **civil disobedience** to racist segregation laws. Those who participated were often met with violence, including fire hoses and police dogs. Public opinion began to turn against the racist laws.
- Some civil rights leaders grew impatient with Dr. King’s nonviolent methods, and argued for more forceful protest. These included groups like the **Black Panthers** and people like **Malcolm X** and **Stokely Carmichael**.
- In the late 1960s, the movement turned violent. Race riots broke out in cities all across America, in inner-city areas like the Watts neighborhood in Los Angeles. This violence turned many Americans off to the movement.
- Sadly, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated during this time as well.



## OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

- The struggle for black civil rights inspired other groups of people to fight for freedom and equality as well.
- **Women** began fighting for equal pay for equal work, and the **National Organization for Women (NOW)** was formed. This divided women, though, once abortion became legal, since many women opposed abortion which NOW ended up supporting.
- **Native Americans** began demanding equality and government help for decades of suffering on poor reservations. Some formed the **American Indian Movement (AIM)** to help fight for this.
- **Mexican Americans** and migrant workers began demanding more fair treatment and higher wages. Led by **Cesar Chavez**, they created the **United Farm Workers (UFW)** to fight for this.

