

No Turning Back Glossary

As students play MISSION US: “No Turning Back,” they will encounter many of the terms and historical figures below. Some of the terms, listed in this document in purple, are included as “smartwords” in the game. Additional terms are included for teacher and student reference.

15th Amendment - One of three constitutional amendments passed after the Civil War concerning rights of formerly enslaved people. It prohibits federal and state governments from denying a citizen the right to vote based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Bill Russell - African American basketball superstar; he played center for the Boston Celtics in the 1950s and 60s, where he won eight consecutive championships beginning in 1959.

blues - A musical form originated by African Americans in the South after slavery. Many musicians from the Mississippi Delta migrated to urban areas where they recorded blues songs that were sold across the country.

Bo Diddley - A singer, guitarist, and songwriter from Mississippi, who moved to Chicago. His use of African rhythms and five-accent beat became a cornerstone of hip hop, rock, and pop music.

boycott - A coordinated refusal by a group of people to do business with a particular person or business, intended to pressure that person or business to change their actions.

Brown decision - Brown v. Board of Education, a landmark 1954 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court stating that U.S. state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional, even if the segregated schools were otherwise equal in quality.

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Castro - Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro, who assumed power over the country in 1959. He then allied Cuba with communist countries and criticized the poverty and racism faced by African Americans in the United States.

Chicago Defender - An influential African American newspaper founded in 1905. It reported extensively on violations of African Americans' rights and the civil rights movement and urged African Americans to move North.

Citizens' Council - A private group of white doctors, lawyers, and businessmen initially formed to prevent the integration of schools. They used their social and economic power (including state funding) to oppose civil rights groups.

Citizens' Councils - A national network of pro-segregation organizations formed by white professional workers and businessmen. They used their social and economic power to oppose civil rights groups.

civil rights - The rights belonging to an individual by virtue of citizenship, such as freedom of speech, right of assembly, and right to privacy. They ensure that one can participate in civil and political life without discrimination or repression.

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colored - A commonly used term in the 19th and early 20th century for non-white people, places or things. The term is no longer used in the United States and is now considered offensive.

coloreds - A disrespectful term for non-white people used in the 19th and early 20th century. This term is no longer used in the United States and is now considered offensive.

Commodity / Commodities - A product of agriculture, such as corn, cotton, and wheat. To protect farmers' income, the federal government sometimes purchases commodities from farmers and then distributes them to people through county welfare agencies.

Congress of Racial Equality - An interracial civil rights organization founded in Chicago in 1942, which sought to use nonviolent protests as a tactic for challenging racial segregation in the United States.

CORE - The Congress of Racial Equality, an interracial civil rights organization founded in Chicago in 1942, which sought to use nonviolent protests as a tactic for challenging racial segregation in the United States.

custard - A frozen dessert similar to soft ice cream.

Delta - A 200-mile-long fertile plain in the Northwest of Mississippi, where many Black people cleared land and settled after the Civil War. By the 1930s, the majority of Delta residents were Black sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The area is famous for its rich Black musical heritage.

Delta tamales - Meat wrapped in corn meal dough and steamed in a corn husk. In the Mississippi Delta they were often called hot tamales or Delta tamales.

Diahann Carroll - African American actress and singer; she began performing in nightclubs and Broadway as a teenager and made her film debut in the mid-1950s.

diaspora - A community of people who leave their place of origin but maintain a distinctive culture when settled in many new lands.

Dick Gregory - African American comedian known for his pointed social and political commentary. He rose to fame in the early 1960s and became deeply involved in the civil rights movement.

double features - Movie programs showing two feature films back to back or with a newsreel or cartoon screened between them.

Double V - A drive by African Americans during World War II for the United States to achieve both a V for victory against fascism abroad and a second V against racial prejudice at home. The campaign had over 200,000 members by July 1942.

Earl Hooker - An early player of the electric guitar, known for his skilled slide guitar playing and flashy showmanship. His family moved from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago shortly after he was born.

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Elmore James - Influential guitarist, singer, songwriter, and bandleader from Mississippi, known for his distinctive and raw electric guitar tone as well as his expressive vocals and attitude.

food surplus - Extra crops. When farms produce more crops in a season than people need to buy (resulting in financial hardship for farmers when it happens for years in a row), the federal government will purchase and distribute these extra crops.

Freedom Riders - Interracial protestors who, as part of an organized campaign, sat in bus seats and used waiting areas and restrooms not designated for their race. They received national publicity as they nonviolently endured attacks by white mobs and were imprisoned.

freedom songs - Songs used for spiritual support in the 1960s civil rights movement. They were often based on familiar, easy-to-learn hymns or pop songs, with lyrics improvised to fit the circumstances.

Friends of SNCC - Northern supporters of SNCC's work who sent money, supplies, cars, and volunteers to help SNCC organizers in the south.

gospel - A popular music genre rooted in African American churches that often uses a call and response singing style.

Greenwood High - The all-white public high school in Greenwood, Mississippi, prior to 1969.

homegoing - An African American Christian funeral tradition celebrating the life of the deceased and marking the soul's going home to heaven or glory.

human rights - Rights that belong to all people. A Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Civil rights groups asserted that the rights of African Americans to freedom and equality were based on human rights.

integrated - Schools, government buildings, or other spaces that allow unrestricted and equal access by people from different racial or ethnic groups.

integration - The practice of ensuring that different racial or ethnic groups have unrestricted and equal access to schools, government buildings, or similar spaces used by the public.

interrogate - To question formally or officially.

interstate laws - Laws relating to businesses that cross state lines, including railroad and bus transport.

Jackson - The capital of Mississippi, and its most populous city.

James Meredith - A Black Mississippian with an accomplished academic and military record, he was twice denied admission to the University of Mississippi. In 1962, the Supreme Court ruled that he had the right to be admitted.

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Jim Crow - The extensive system of legal, social, and economic control of African Americans by white Americans after they regained political power in the late 1870s and continuing until the 1970s. The system included, but went far beyond, segregation laws and customs.

Kennedy - John F. Kennedy, a Democrat, was narrowly elected in 1960 as 35th president of the United States. On the campaign trail, he promised voters he would uphold and protect the civil rights of African Americans. His brother, Robert F. Kennedy, was Attorney General and his advisor.

KKK, Klan - The Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist organization founded after the Civil War. Beginning in the 1950s, local groups calling themselves the KKK used violence, including murder, to terrorize African Americans.

Lena Horne - African American actor, dancer, singer, and civil rights activist; she became famous for starring roles in two early Hollywood movie musicals to feature Black casts, *Stormy Weather* and *Cabin in the Sky*.

literacy test - Elaborate questionnaires that were administered unequally and were part of the Jim Crow system to limit African Americans' voting in many Southern states.

lynched - A killing committed by a group without a trial or other legal process, such as when a mob captures and hangs a suspected person.

Mahalia Jackson - African American singer; one of the first singers to take gospel music out of the church and popularize it for Black and white audiences. In her long career she sold millions of records and became one of the key voices of the civil rights movement.

Mass Meeting - A large group gathering, often used in the civil rights movement. At such gatherings, usually held in churches, local people, clergy, political organizers, and others might testify, sing songs, and work out a course of action.

Medgar Evers - The NAACP's first field secretary for the state of Mississippi. A U.S. Army veteran and college graduate, Evers sought to bring national attention to injustice and unequal treatment of African Americans.

NAACP - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a national interracial organization founded in 1909 to fight for equality and justice for African Americans.

Negro - A term used by both Black and non-Black people until the 1960s, in a manner similar to "Black" today, to refer to people, places, or things of or relating to Black African ancestry. It is now considered offensive if used by non-Black people outside of its historical context.

Negroes - A term used by both Black and non-Black people until the 1960s to refer to people of Black African ancestry. It is now considered offensive if used by non-Black people outside of its historical context.

Parchman - Mississippi State Penitentiary, a notoriously brutal state prison where inmates were forced to work on chain gangs, overseen by other inmates with rifles, picking cotton from dawn to dusk.

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petition - A document signed by people demanding some action from the government or another authority.

plantation - A large estate or farm requiring many laborers to cultivate and harvest crops, for the primary benefit of the landowner.

Racial integrity - An idea, promoted by the Citizens' Council and other white supremacist groups, that the intermarriage of white and non-white people was a threat to the white race and needed to be prevented.

reminiscing - Thinking about or telling of past experiences or events.

Rosa Parks - An NAACP worker who was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give up her seat to a white customer as the bus filled up. The Black boycott of the bus system that followed her arrest led to the Supreme Court's ruling that segregated public transportation was unconstitutional.

Ross Barnett - A trial lawyer and proponent of racist ideas and segregation policies who became governor of Mississippi in 1960, with support from the Citizens' Council. Part of a wave of politicians elected to protect white power across the deep South in the 1950s and 60s.

Sam Cooke - An influential African American singer and songwriter born in Mississippi who grew up in Chicago. The son of a pastor, he initially sang in a gospel quartet. As a solo artist, his hit songs were popular with both Black and white audiences.

segregated - Spaces used by the public (such as schools, government buildings, bus stations, etc.) in which people are required to stay in separate designated places according to racial or ethnic categories.

segregation - The enforced separation of people according to racial or ethnic categories in schools, government buildings, or similar spaces used by the public.

sharecroppers - Tenant farmers, especially in the southern United States, who are provided with credit for seed, tools, living quarters, and food, in exchange for working the land. At harvest, they are supposed to receive an agreed share of the value of the crop.

sharecropped - Farmed land owned by another person, in exchange for seed, tools, living quarters, food, and an agreed share of the value of the crop.

sit ins / sit downs - A form of protest against segregation, in which protesters peacefully occupy a space, such as a library or lunch counter, that is open to the white public but denied to other racial and ethnic groups.

SNCC - The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a youth-led national civil rights organization mentored by Ella Baker. Singing, independence from authority, and the use of nonviolent tactics such as sit ins and boycotts were key parts of its culture.

the Congo - The Republic of the Congo, like many African nations, gained independence from colonial European rule in mid-20th century. Some white families lost property or faced violence in the struggles for independence.

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W.E.B. Du Bois - Prominent Black scholar and historian; one of the founders of the NAACP. His writings in the early twentieth century became a cornerstone of African American literature.

Wesley United Methodist Church - Among the first Black churches in Greenwood to allow civil rights groups to hold meetings. Wesley was the main location in Leflore County where SNCC distributed food, held citizenship classes, and led groups of people to the courthouse to attempt to register to vote.

white supremacist - Those who believe that people can be grouped into categories according to "race," and that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people, are superior to those of other "races."

Woolworth's - A national chain of inexpensive department stores, most of which included a lunch counter serving sandwiches and drinks. In the South, only whites were allowed to sit at these lunch counters.