

Sample B

This is answering CA6

Turning points in the Civil Rights Movement

- The significance of Little Rock High School, 1957–59

Little Rock High School was a key event during the civil rights movement. Before this event happened, schools were segregated and massively unfair. It helped President Eisenhower to get schools desegregated and allow blacks to go to the white schools. Elizabeth Eckford, a black student, tried to enter Little Rock on a day that was supposedly planned to allow blacks into the school. However, all the other students had been sent in the back to avoid crowds and violence; Elizabeth did not receive this information. Because of this she was unable to get into the school as she was stopped by guards and attacked by angry mobs. This proves that the desegregation of schools was a slow, difficult process. This was hugely significant as it showed how difficult the plan was. This particular event was a major boost for the civil rights movement as this still allowed some blacks into white schools for the first time. Certainly the blacks had achieved something but they still had a long way to go.

Little Rock became such a famous event mainly through the media. The school had many national television crews onsite and reporting pioneered there. This made the event far more significant as it was then something that was forced upon people and made them think. The media were such an important part to this event as it gave black people chances to show how they really felt without any real effort of getting their word out. The media coverage was less helpful towards the whites as it portrayed them as unfair, racist people, which they were at the time. The media also showed all the violence that happened against black students, which was important as it gave people the impression that whites were in the wrong and created opinions against segregated schools.

Another man to have helped Eisenhower in the Civil rights movement was Oliver L. Brown, who argued against the board of Education to get desegregated schools. This had a huge importance as it managed to reach the Supreme Court. Brown used help from the NAACP to go to court and argue his point and opinion but people refused him at first. He used legal and non-violent ways to voice his opinion, but mostly argued his case in court. It then ended up at the Supreme court and forced the court to think about what was being said. The fact that the case managed to get to the Supreme court, made Brown's event a lot more significant to the Civil Rights Movement, because as it is the highest court, it proved to people the segregation and discrimination was a massive problem overall, not just in schools. The supreme court did not accept Brown's case at first but they then agreed to equal rights. This was then a major importance to the Blacks in the Civil Rights Movement as the court had then agreed to desegregate schools. The only problem being, the court never told schools when to desegregate so they still refused. Brown had to take the case back to court for a second time, this time it got a lot more media coverage and was definitely made overly significant.

A major significant symbol would have been when federal troops were sent in to help blacks enter white schools. This all happened because of Governor Orval Faubus struggling to get elected so he turned against blacks. Eisenhower's plan to get schools desegregated was then scheduled to happen not long after, which made it all the more difficult to get blacks into white schools. On the day that Eisenhower sent Black students, including Elizabeth Eckford to Little Rock, Faubus sent storm troopers in to guard the school and make sure there were only whites in the school. This then led to Eisenhower sending in Federal troops to the school and help allow the black to enter Little Rock. When people had seen that federal troops had taken action, it became a lot more important, as just like the Supreme Court, they are the top of their jobs, this being a major police force. After the blacks had entered the school, it became important and forced the opinion of de-segregation upon schools firmly.

Overall, getting schools to de-segregate was such a slow process, afterwards blacks realised that they needed to do more than rely on court decision. Little Rock High School de-segregated in 1972, about 12 years after Central high School was de-segregated. This shows how adamant the whites were about keeping the schools segregated. Little Rock obviously had a major impact on the Civil Rights Movement and definitely helped black rights to some extent. The fact that it was such a long process, tears its significance down as it obviously was not as strong an argument as it should have been. However, the amount of time that the case took, proves how dedicated President Eisenhower, Oliver L. Brown and the blacks were. The outcome of this event was that schools had to be de-segregated as segregated schools became illegal. I feel then that as they achieved what they aimed for, Little Rock High School had huge significance towards the Civil Right Movement.