

'I HAVE A DREAM'

Dreamgirls takes place in the 1960s and 1970s. These were times of huge political change in the USA.

Segregation

In the early 1960s, nearly one hundred years after the end of slavery, black people still did not have the same rights as white people. In 1954 the high court in the USA said that racial segregation in schools was against the law. However, there was still segregation on buses and in restaurants, theatres and other public places.



Black people had to ride at the back of buses.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



The Civil Rights Movement

Martin Luther King, Jr. was an important civil rights leader. King believed that non-violent protest was the best way to make changes. He organized marches for black people's rights. In August 1963 he led the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. About 250,000 people were on the march. At the end of the march, King made his famous 'I have a dream' speech. Unfortunately, King was killed in 1968 before he could see his dream come true.

What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.

segregation **slavery** **non-violent** **protest** **speech** **rhythm**

Race Riots

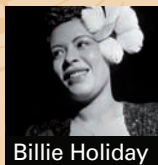
Not everyone believed in non-violent protest. In the 1960s there were race riots in many U.S. cities. Probably the worst riot was in Detroit. This is the riot that C.C. talks about in *Dreamgirls*. It started on 23rd July 1967 and lasted five days.



The Sounds of the Times

Black music changed very quickly during these years. Some artists used music to make political messages. Others just wanted their music to be popular with both white and black audiences.

1950s Jazz and the Blues were very popular sounds. Billie Holiday was a famous singer.



Billie Holiday



James Brown

1960s Soul and R&B ('Rhythm & Blues') became very popular. Important artists at this time were James Brown and Aretha Franklin.



The Jackson Five

1970s Disco arrived! Singers like Donna Summer and groups like the Jackson Five were big hits.

Do you know any singers / groups from the 1960s and 1970s? Do you like them? How are they different from singers / groups today?