



# This week's big news



## The US civil rights movement



The civil rights movement was a series of protests in the US during the 1950s and 1960s. The protesters were fighting for equality for all black people. One of the movement's leaders was Martin Luther King Jr. At the time, some black people had to live separately from white people – this is known as segregation. Laws were passed to change this, but many argue that discrimination still exists.

# Protesters call for equality, peace and justice across the US

There have been a series of protests across the US in response to the death of a man called George Floyd. People in the US, and in other countries too, are calling for justice, peace and equality.

### Why are people protesting?

George Floyd, who was a black man, died on 25 May, shortly after he was arrested by a white police officer in the city of Minneapolis, in the state of Minnesota. Floyd was treated violently by the police officer, who knelt on his neck which made it difficult for him to breathe. The police officer has since been sacked, arrested and charged with murder. It's not the first time that police officers in the US have been accused of treating black people unfairly. Many of the protesters believe this happens because of racism.

### What is racism?

Racism is treating people badly or unfairly because of their race. It is when words or actions are used to discriminate against people because of the colour of their skin, their culture or ethnic origin. Black people in the US have not always had the same rights as white people, and many people argue that there is still inequality today. This includes differences in income (the money workers are paid), access to education, and treatment by police. Many people at the protests held up placards that read "Black

Lives Matter". Black Lives Matter is the name of an organisation that was founded in the US in 2013, to protest against the mistreatment of black people. It was created in response to the shooting of a black teenager called Trayvon Martin.

### What happened at the protests?

Protests in Minneapolis soon spread across the US. There have been demonstrations in more than 75 cities, including the capital, Washington D.C. Many of the protests were peaceful, but there have also been violent clashes between police and protesters. Some people have damaged cars and stolen goods from shops, and police have fired rubber bullets and teargas. In response, some cities have brought in the National Guard (a part-time branch of the US military) and imposed curfews (restrictions on allowing people outside). Some police officers have called for unity. The Minnesota police chief, Medaria Arradondo, said most police officers want to help and are not violent. He said of Floyd's death, "This was a violation of the oath taken by the majority of the men and women that put this uniform on – this goes absolutely against it."

### What has the reaction been in the US?

People have expressed their anger and sadness at the situation, and have called for change. The mayor of Minneapolis, Jacob Frey, said that, "being black

in America should not be a death sentence". US president Donald Trump says that he has spoken to Floyd's family and has called his death a "tragedy". However, Trump has been accused of encouraging violence, and has threatened to send in the US Army if the clashes don't stop. Joe Biden, who is hoping to be the next US president, said Trump was "part of the problem", and that his response was making things worse. Floyd's brother Terrence has told people not to be violent, saying "my brother was about peace".

### What about elsewhere?

Protesters have taken to the streets in other countries in support of those in the US and to protest against racism in their countries. Demonstrations have taken place around the UK, including in Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham. People have also gathered in Denmark, Germany and New Zealand. At the time *The Week Junior* went to press, thousands had gathered in London's Hyde Park.

### If you're upset by this story

If you're feeling worried or scared by the events described in this report, talk to your parents or another adult you trust. For some advice on dealing with your feelings, visit [theweekjunior.co.uk/TWJ-Protests](http://theweekjunior.co.uk/TWJ-Protests)