The American Civil Rights Movement developed as many worked to ensure equality and civil rights for many groups, mainly African Americans. Despite being citizens in theory, many black citizens were not granted the same constitutional rights as other American citizens. Public transportation and education were often segregated and blacks were banned from taking place in elections.

In an effort to reduce segregation, particularly in the South, many groups formed in protest. While many of these groups used non-violent methods, some organizations employed aggressive tactics. Martin Luther King Jr. was one leader of the Civil Rights Movement who demonstrated civil disobedience and non-violent protest. Malcolm X and the Black Panthers are two examples of leaders and groups who at times used violence to express their beliefs.

The Civil Rights Movement was both supported and opposed by those in government. President Kennedy was a significant supporter of integration and civil rights; after his assassination there was question as to whether or not governmental backing would continue.

While the Civil Rights Movement lasted many years, African Americans were finally given the same constitutional rights as all American citizens.