

Civil Rights

The year is 1959. You are 20 years old. You live in the state of Alabama. You have heard the stories that your grandparents have told about how they lived and had to work as slaves on plantations. They told you how they were taken from their parents when they were young and sold to a different owner. You have heard how they were whipped if they didn't perform correctly. You have heard the stories of how they fought for their freedom by escaping to the North and fighting in the Civil War. Now it is almost 100 years later.

You look at your life and compare it to that time. You are not a slave. You can make your own decisions. You live in a country that guarantees freedom to all its citizens. However, you get the feeling that something isn't right. You are told by society that you have to eat in different restaurants and sleep in different hotels and go to different schools. You can't even go into the same bathrooms. When you get on a bus, you can never sit in the front, but must sit in the back.

1. Of course you are not a slave, but do you have the same freedoms as everybody else? Why or why not?
2. How does it make you feel to know that you have to sleep, eat, ride and even go to the bathroom in a different place from other people?
3. Do you think that society is better now (1959) than it was 100 years ago? Why or why not?
4. What kind of improvements do you think that there have been?
5. What kind of improvements do you think that there should be?
6. If you had the power to change society's mind and make them see you differently, what would you do?
7. What can you do personally to help change people's minds and make this country a better place?
8. The argument could be made that you have the same opportunities as the other people. The only difference is you must make those opportunities in a different location. Separate but equal. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
9. If you could talk to your future family many years from now, what do you think they would say about their current conditions? Would they say it is better or worse and why would they say that?