1 **Your Culture** Are there any groups of people in your country which are discriminated against now or have suffered from discrimination in the past?

West Indian immigrants in the UK suffered discrimination in the 60s and still have problems.

2 **Listen to a talk and complete the notes.**

**Civil Rights Movement in the USA 1945–1970**

*Early 20th century:* 'Jim Crow' laws in the South meant segregation in public transport, public places. Few Afro-Americans able to ______ and had little protection from ____ extremist groups (e.g. Ku Klux Klan).

*After World War II:* Change of attitude when ______ GIs (soldiers) came home.

1955: Montgomery ______ Boycott led by Martin Luther King. Sit-ins, ______ and ‘freedom rides’ throughout the South.

7 ______: March on Washington with ______ people. Luther King’s famous ‘I have a dream’ speech.

8 ______: Civil Rights Act ended segregation.

9 ______: Voting Rights Act enabled blacks to vote.

1968: Luther King assassinated + race riots in major US ______. Summer Olympics: athletes made ______ Power salute.

3 **Listen again. Answer the questions.**

1 How were Afro-Americans second-class citizens?
2 How did Afro-American soldiers feel after the war?
3 What were the ‘freedom rides’?
4 How did Martin Luther King see the USA’s future?
5 How did many Afro-Americans feel in 1968?

4 Read about Langston Hughes on page 121. Which of these things do you think most influenced his work?

a his family  b his race  c a style of music  d his travels  e his political views

5 **Read and listen to the poem Will V-Day Be Me-Day Too? Check your guesses from Exercise 4.**

6 Read the poem again and answer the questions.

1 Who is the letter written by and who is it addressed to?
2 How have Afro-American soldiers helped the US war effort?
3 Who have they been fighting against?
4 What has the writer promised his dying friend?
5 What is he worried about when he gets home?
6 What is he asking his fellow white soldiers to do?

7 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions about the language in the poem.

1 Find words that rhyme in the first five verses.

Verse 1: letter/better; Yank/tank; through/too

2 What do ‘V-Day’ and ‘Me-Day’ mean?

3 Who is ‘GI Joe’?

4 Who or what is ‘Dixie’? What does Dixie do to black people?

5 Find the four references to ‘Jim Crow’ in the poem. In which of them are these images used?

a a train for carrying prisoners
b an authoritarian person
c a sinister animal

6 Why does the poet use capital letters to say ‘WILL V-DAY BE ME-DAY TOO?’

8 **Work in pairs. Choose a period of your country’s history. Use the Net to find information and write notes under headings like these:**

- the situation
- the issues
- the leaders
- the result

9 **Tell the class about the period in history.**

We chose the mind 19th century, when WW2 broke out...
Will V-Day Be Me-Day Too?

Over There, 45  
World War II.

Dear Fellow Americans, 5  
I write this letter  
Hoping times will be better  
When this war  
Is through.

I’m a Tan-skinned Yank 50  
Driving a tank.

I ask, WILL V-DAY  
BE ME-DAY, TOO?  
I wear a US uniform.  
I’ve done the enemy much harm,  
I’ve driven back  
The Germans and the Japs,  
From Burma to the Rhine.  
On every battle line,  
I’ve dropped defeat  
Into the Fascists’ laps.

I am a Negro American 60  
Out to defend my land  
Army, Navy, Air Corps –  
I am there,  
I take munitions through,  
I fight – or stevedore, too.  
I face death the same as you do  
Everywhere.

I’ve seen my buddy lying 65  
Where he fell.

I’ve watched him dying  
I promised him that I would try  
To make our land a land  
Where his son could be a man –  
And there’d be no Jim Crow birds

Left in our sky.

So this is what I want to know: 70  
When we see Victory’s glow,  
Will you still let old Jim Crow  
Hold me back?

When all those foreign folks who’ve waited – 75  
Italians, Chinese, Danes – are liberated.  
Will I still be ill-fated  
Because I’m black?

Here in my own, my native land,  
Will the Jim Crow laws still stand?  
Will the Jim Crow laws still stand?  
Will I be safe from harm –  
Or will you do me  
As the Germans did the Jews?  
When I’ve helped this world to save,  
Shall I still be colour’s slave?  
Or will Victory change  
Your antiquated views?

You can’t say I didn’t fight  
To smash the Fascists’ might.  
You can’t say I wasn’t with you  
in each battle.  
As a soldier, and a friend.  
When this war comes to an end,  
Will you herd me in a Jim Crow car  
Like cattle?

Or will you stand up like a man  
At home and take your stand  
For Democracy?  
That’s all I ask of you.  
When we lay the guns away  
To celebrate  
Our Victory Day

WILL V-DAY BE ME-DAY, TOO?  
That’s what I want to know.  
Sincerely, GI Joe.

James Langston Hughes was born in Missouri  
in 1901. His parents soon divorced and he lived with his  
grandmother for a few years before going to Illinois to live  
with his mother and her new husband. He began writing  
poetry at school and, after leaving, did different jobs and  
travelled around the world as a seaman. He came back to the  
USA in 1924 and went to university. Langston Hughes lived  
in New York most of his life and wrote poems, plays, short  
stories and novels. He loved jazz and its rhythms can be seen  
in his poems about the lives of working class blacks. In his  
writing, he attacked racial stereotypes and fought for  
Afro-American rights. He died in 1967.

Glossary
- antiquated: (adj) old-fashioned
- buddy: (n) friend (US English informal)
- cattle: (n) cows and bulls
- comrade in arms: (n) someone who has fought with you
- crow: (n) a black bird
- defeat: (n) when you lose a war
- Dixie: (n) south-eastern states of the USA that belonged to the slave-owning Confederacy and the white people living there
- face: (v) deal with something difficult
- folks: (n) people (colloquial)
- glow: (n) soft, warm light
- harm: (n) damage, injury or trouble
- herd: (v) to move animals
- ill-fated: (adj) unlucky
- lap: (n) the upper part of your legs when you are sitting down
- lay: (v) to put something somewhere
- lynch: (v) to kill someone without trial because you think they have done something wrong
- might: (n) power, strength
- munitions: (n) military supplies, like bombs
- native: (adj) your native town/country, etc. is the place you were born
- stevedore: (v) load and unload ships and lorries
- tan-skinned: (adj) with dark brown skin
- Yank: (n) American (informal)