

 SCHOLASTIC

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# NEWS

 See the Standards

 Watch a Video

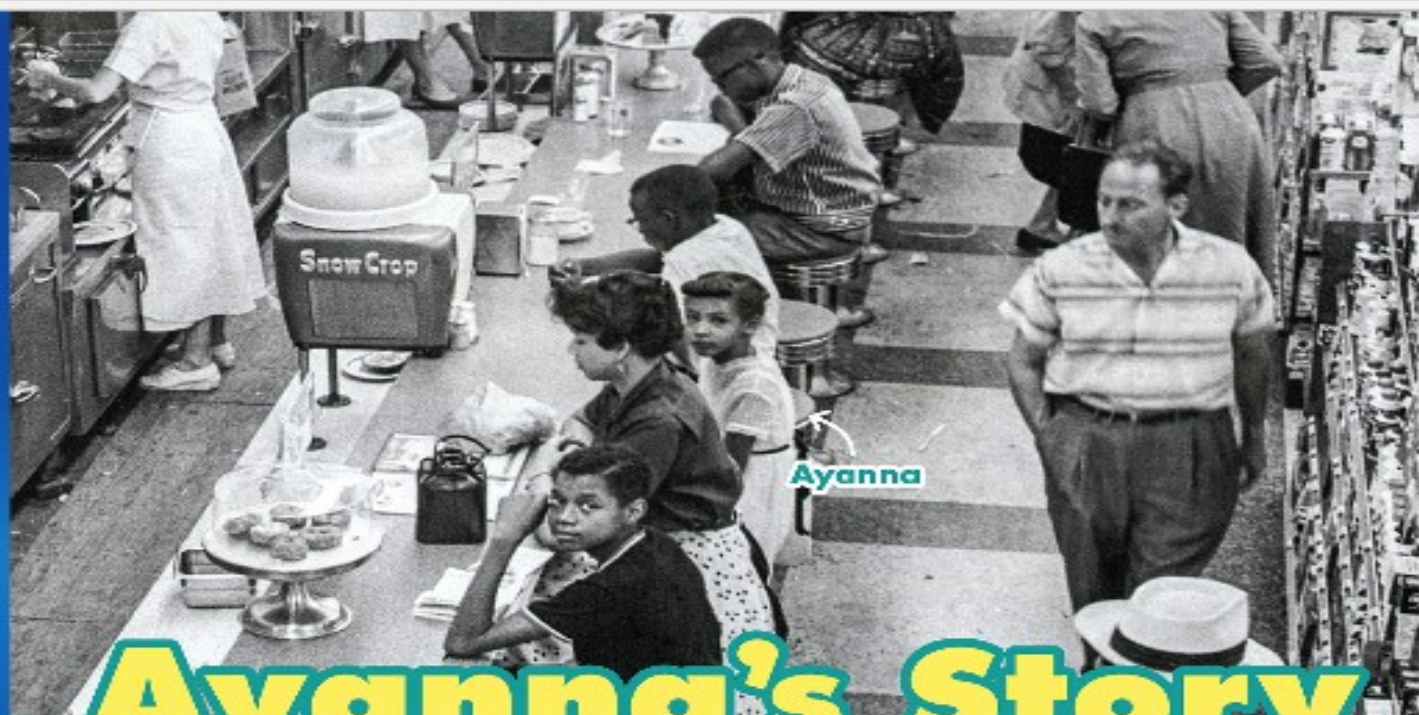
 Skills Game

 Ayanna

## How Kids Changed the World

Sixty years ago, horrible laws kept people apart in our country. In some places, African-American people could not eat in the same restaurants as white people. A brave little girl named Ayanna and her friends helped change that.

PAGE



# Ayanna's Story

**Long ago, some brave children helped make our country better.**

It was a hot August night in 1958. Seven-year-old Ayanna went into a restaurant with her friends. They sat down and ordered.

But the waitress wouldn't serve them. The kids waited for hours, but no one would bring their food.

Why wouldn't anyone help these kids? To answer that question, you need to know what our country was like 60 years ago.

## **Terrible Laws**

Back then, some parts of our country were **segregated**. That meant African-American people were kept apart from white people. African-American people couldn't go to the same schools, live in the same neighborhoods, or eat in the same restaurants as white people. It was terrible, but the law said it was allowed.



Ayanna and her friends were African-American, so they weren't allowed to eat in a restaurant for white people.

Ayanna was young, but she knew segregation was wrong. She and her friends decided to do something about it.

### The First Sit-In

They decided to have a **sit-in**. They put on their nicest clothes and went to a segregated restaurant in town. They sat down at the counter.

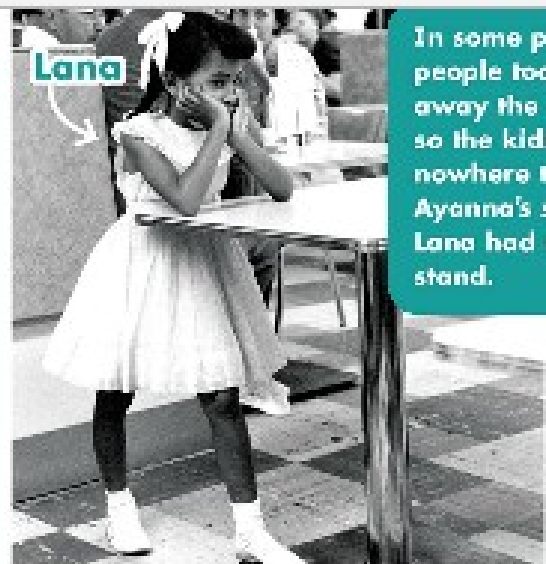
"May I have a hamburger and a Coke, please?" Ayanna asked.

"No," said the waitress.

The kids sat and waited, but no one in the restaurant helped them. They stayed there until the restaurant closed.

The next day, the kids went back to the restaurant. The waitresses still wouldn't bring any food. They just stood there with their arms crossed.

Some adults didn't think African-American people and white people should eat together. They screamed at the kids. They even poured ketchup on them. But



In some places, people took away the chairs so the kids had nowhere to sit. Ayanna's sister Lana had to stand.

Ayanna and her friends didn't yell or fight. They were peaceful and calm. They weren't going to leave until they were served their food.

They came back again the next day. Finally, the owners of the restaurant agreed to serve African-American customers.

Ayanna and her friends had won! But they weren't done yet.

### Change Keeps Coming

For six years, they had many more sit-ins. One by one, the restaurants in the town were **integrated**. African-American people and white people could eat together.

Ayanna and her friends had made a big change. This small group of kids had helped make our country better. —Blair Rainsford

Read the article. Then follow the directions and answer the questions.



This is what Ayanna looks like today.

## Ayanna Today

Ayanna is a grown-up now. She has been working her whole life to make the world better.

She wants to help other kids change the world too. She knows that kids can make big changes. She did it when she was only 7! She says, "Even though I was little, my voice was just as important as everyone else's voice."

1. Drag the ☆ next to the headline.
2. Drag the (circle) to the photo caption.
3. What does Ayanna want to help kids do?  
 change the world     go to restaurants     write books
4. Quotation marks look like this: “ ”. They go on each side of the words a person said. Click on the words that Ayanna said.
5. Read what Ayanna said about what she did when she was little. How do you think she feels about that time in her life?  
 embarrassed     proud     scared