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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2004 Volume I: The Supreme Court in American Political History

The Legacy of the Warren Court

Guide for Curriculum Unit 04.01.07
by Joan Rapczynski

This unit examines and analyzes some of the major decisions of the Warren Court, which dominated American politics to varying degrees from 1953-1969. Teachers will be able to use this unit in their Civics course when examining the Constitution or chronologically when studying United States History.

The unit has three objectives. The first objective is to examine the background of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Earl Warren. Students will come to understand how your background and life experiences may often reflect on behavior and attitudes in later life. What experiences in the life of Earl Warren might have influenced his decisions on the Supreme Court? The second objective is to have students trace and understand the development of the *Brown I* and *Brown II* cases. Teachers will find an explanation of the phrase "separate, but equal." The final objective of this unit is to have students analyze and understand some of the landmark cases of the Warren Court that affected criminal procedure. Cases to be examined include *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Escobedo v. Illinois*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, and *In Re Gault*. The Warren Court is known for its active defense of the rights of people accused of crimes, and teachers should find these case studies helpful when studying the Bill of Rights.

(Recommended for U.S History and Civics, grades 10-11.)

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