



American Citizenship and the 14th Amendment: Conflicts and Resolutions in Education

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.03.08

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The Civil Rights era occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, and some textbooks would have you believe that this was the only time that Civil Rights existed. This, however, ignores the true history. African Americans fought for their civil rights since the end of Reconstruction and were often met with hostile and repressive responses. Jim Crow and segregation often appear in our textbooks without mention of African American resistance. Yet resistance did occur. This unit endeavors to introduce students to that resistance with a focus on education. Students will start with the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling that sanctioned the idea of "separate but equal." They will learn about the story of Homer Plessy and how his involvement led him to challenge a practice of separate rail cars for whites and blacks. Students will then begin research projects on their own about the different cases involving "separate but equal" and education. These cases will include *Sweatt v. Painter*, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*, *Gaines v. Canada*, *Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Regents*, and *Brown v. Board*. Through this research project, students in U.S. History II or Civics classes will learn about how laws function, how courts work, and how civic action can bring about change.

(Recommended for U.S. History and Civics, grades 11 and 12)

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