
Civil Rights Movement || Impact of Discrimination

Goals & Objectives

Students will understand how legal discrimination negatively impacted the social mobility of African Americans.

Students will be able to discuss how the “American Dream” did not necessarily apply to all Americans equally because of legal discrimination.

California State Content Standards

11.10.5 Discuss the diffusion of the civil rights movement of African Americans from the churches of the rural South and the urban North, including the resistance to racial desegregation in Little Rock and Birmingham, and how the advances influenced the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of the quests of American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans for civil rights and equal opportunities.

Common Core Literacy Standards

Reading:

7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Driving Historical Question

How has the history of legal discrimination in the United States had a direct and negative impact on the lives of racial minorities?

Lesson Introduction (Anticipatory Set/Hook/Accessing Prior Knowledge) || Time: 15 mins

The teacher has the students write down their own definition of discrimination. The teacher has student volunteers present their definitions and the teacher writes his/her own definition on the board.

The teacher then reads the Dr. Seuss story “The Sneetches” to the students.

After the reading, the teacher asks the students which character was discriminated against in the book, and most often in the real world. The teacher writes the students’ answers on the board.

Vocabulary (Content Language Development) || Time:

The teacher will scaffold essential key terms, like American Dream and social mobility, within the main body of instruction. Also, this discussion based lesson is not text-heavy allowing the students to put their learning in their own words.

Content Delivery (Method of Instruction) || Time: 15 mins

The teacher introduces the idea of the American Dream to the class. Part of the American Dream is the idea that if you work really hard then your children will have a “better” life than you, and their children will have a better life than them and so on down each generation. This idea specifically means that each generation will have more opportunities offered to them than the previous generation, and therefore can enjoy a better quality life. The teacher has students focus on the idea of “social mobility” and how it becomes a reality, and for whom.

The teacher has the students form small groups of 3-4 students and writes three questions on the board, which the teacher poses to the students:

- How exactly does social mobility occur?
- What must one generation do to help the next generation be “better off”?
- What must the next generation accumulate or accomplish to become more successful than the last generation?

In their small groups, the students discuss the questions and collectively write down their responses on one large piece of paper.

The teacher goes around the room and a representative from each group discusses some of the points brought up in the discussion and the group wrote down. The teacher is quick to distinguish between accomplishments that apply to only a few people, like “becoming famous,” and those that apply to the masses, like “getting healthcare.”

Student Engagement (Critical Thinking & Student Activities) || Time: 15 mins

The teacher has students randomly partner up. One student is assigned Family A and the other student is assigned Family B. Each student is given a separate questionnaire that corresponds to his/her family assignment. The teacher reads the instructions to the students:

Think about your family and your family's roots. For this exercise you are going to imagine that this is the story of your family starting with your great great great grandfather. That is five generations back! Listen as your teacher reads the answers to each statement and circle yes or no to mark whether this event could have happened in your family or not. While you are learning about your family's history think about how these events shaped the life of your family from five generations ago and the consequences they had on your family all along their journey.

Students then go through the questionnaire answering “yes” or “no” as it applies to their family. The student pairs are encouraged to collaborate and discuss the answers to the questions.

The teacher reveals that all of the answers for Family A are “no” and all of the answers for Family B are “yes.” After revealing the answers, the teacher poses the following questions to the students to discuss in partners and answer on their own paper:

- How hard or how easy it was for their family to “move up” from one generation to the next?
- What were some of the main rights that allowed or stopped your family from being able to improve from one generation to the next?

Lesson Closure || Time: 3 mins

After students have finished discussing and answering the questions for the comparison between the two families, the teacher summarizes the distinction between the two families and illustrates the compounding negative impact discrimination has.

Assessments (Formative & Summative)

Formative: The student engagement activity uses critical thinking questions that relate back to the driving historical question. It’s an informal assessment that students will complete in partners.

Formative/Progress-Monitoring: Students will also be assessed on their discussion participation within their small groups and within their partners for the student engagement section.

Accommodations for English Learners, Striving Readers and Students with Special Needs

In order to accommodate English Learners, Striving Readers, and Students with Special Needs, I will provide a written transcript of “The Sneetches” for these students to follow along with while I read it aloud to the class. I will provide a translated version of the Family questionnaire for ELs classified as beginners. For students who have difficulty focusing on task, I will use proximity monitoring to help keep these students engaged during the student discussions.

Resources (Books, Websites, Handouts, Materials)

The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss