

# *Racial Inequality: Remnants of a Troubled Time:* Teacher's Guide

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Curriculum Focus:** U.S. History

**Lesson Duration:** Two class periods

## **Program Description**

Investigate the United States' early history of slavery and the legacy of the battle for equal rights in this country. Examine the major social and economic challenges facing the North and the South after the Civil War. Take an in-depth look at *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's landmark decision which ended legalized school segregation. And assess the country's progress a half-century later.

- Life on Southern Plantations (3 min.)
  - America's Civil War (4 min.)
  - Rebuilding the South (4 min.)
  - The Fight for Equal Education (35 min.)
- 

## **Onscreen Questions**

- How was life difficult for slaves working on plantations?
  - How did the issue of slavery lead to the Civil War?
  - What challenges did the South face after the Civil War?
  - Why did many Americans find it difficult to accept integration in schools?
- 

## **Lesson Plan**

### *Student Objectives*

- Review the ratification of the 14th Amendment and the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision.
- Read excerpts from the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and explain how it challenged the idea of "separate but equal."
- Investigate one of three events that tested *Brown v. Board* in order to understand the challenges of school desegregation.

## Materials

- *Racial Inequality: Remnants of a Troubled Time* program
- Resources about school integration in the United States during the 1950s and '60s.
- Computer with Internet access

## Procedures

1. After watching *Racial Inequality: Remnants of a Troubled Time*, discuss two important events that followed the Civil War:
  - In 1868, the 14th Amendment was ratified, giving citizenship to former slaves and guaranteeing them equal rights. It states: "No State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."
  - In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that segregation was legal and did not violate the 14th Amendment as long as separate facilities were equal. The decision endorses the law of "separate but equal."
2. Next, have students read excerpts from the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. Excerpts are available online at: <http://www.landmarkcases.org/brown/opinion1.html>.
3. Ask students to summarize the decision and explain how it affected the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. (The decision stated that segregated schools are "inherently unequal" and violate the 14th Amendment. This ruling overturned the "separate but equal" ruling of *Plessy*.)
4. Explain that while *Brown v. Board of Education* made segregated schools illegal, it was a long time before Southern schools were integrated. In 1955, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the ruling and declared that schools should be desegregated with "all deliberate speed." Despite this ruling, many Southern schools remained segregated. Those that did integrate faced many challenges, as did the black students who entered these schools. Tell students that they will be exploring one of three early school integrations that tested *Brown v. Board of Education*:
  - Autherine Lucy and the University of Alabama (1956)
  - Little Rock Nine and Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas (1957)
  - Ruby Bridges and William Frantz Elementary School, New Orleans, Louisiana (1960)
5. In addition to any available print resources, have students use the following Web sites to find background information and personal stories.

### Aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-aftermath.html>

### Autherine Lucy

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/leaders/marshallthrgd/lucy\\_1](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/leaders/marshallthrgd/lucy_1)

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/chronology/details/560206.htm>

<http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/race/030256race-ra4.html>



### Little Rock Nine

<http://www.centralhigh57.org/index.html>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/barrier/hwyf/mpbstory/index.htm>

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/ak1.htm>

[http://pbskids.org/wayback/civilrights/features\\_school.html](http://pbskids.org/wayback/civilrights/features_school.html)

<http://www.teachersdomain.org/9-12/soc/ush/civil/lr9/>

### Ruby Bridges

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race\\_relations/jan-june97/bridges\\_2-18.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/jan-june97/bridges_2-18.html)

<http://www.rubybridges.org/story.htm>

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/history/spotlight\\_september.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/history/spotlight_september.html)

6. Once students have researched their early school integration, ask them to write a personal essay responding to what they read. After summarizing the events and the significance of the integration, their essays should answer these questions:
  - What challenges did these students face?
  - What were some of their most poignant or surprising memories?
  - How do you think you would have felt and responded had you been in their shoes?
7. During the next class period, give students an opportunity to share their essays. Then discuss what students learned about early attempts at school integration. Ask: How were these students' experiences alike? How were they different? Why was the process of integration so slow? What impact did these students' actions have?

### Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were active in class discussions; demonstrated a strong understanding of *Brown v. Board of Education*; wrote a thorough, engaging essay about an example of early school integration.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions; demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of *Brown v. Board of Education*; wrote a clear, complete essay about an example of early school integration.
- 1 point: Students did not participate in class discussions; demonstrated a weak understanding of *Brown v. Board of Education*; wrote a vague or incomplete essay about an example of early school integration.



## Vocabulary

### 14th Amendment

*Definition:* Ratified in 1868, this post-Civil War amendment to the United States Constitution gave American citizenship to former slaves and guaranteed their equal rights.

*Context:* When arguing his case, Thurgood Marshall concluded that the 14th Amendment was intended to prevent racial segregation in public schools.

### integration

*Definition:* The process of opening a place or organization to people from different races

*Context:* Many Americans found it difficult to accept integration in schools.

### Reconstruction

*Definition:* The period after the Civil War (1865 to 1877) during which Southern states were governed and administered by the federal government

*Context:* Despite the changes that followed Reconstruction, the South remained segregated.

### segregation

*Definition:* The separation or isolation of people by race, social class, or ethnic group

*Context:* During the late 1940s and early '50s in communities across the country, a movement of individuals was gathering to fight segregation in American society.

### unanimous

*Definition:* Agreed to by all members

*Context:* The Supreme Court concluded unanimously that the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place.

## Academic Standards

### Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- U.S. History: Era 5 – Understands how various Reconstruction plans succeeded or failed
- U.S. History: Era 9 – Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties
- Civics: What Are the Basic Values and Principles of American Democracy – Understands the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity; Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life

## The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
  - Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
  - Power, Authority, and Governance
  - Civil Ideals and Practices
- 

## Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
- 

## DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

### *How to Use the DVD*

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

**Play Video** – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

**Video Index** – Here the video is divided into four segments (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

**Curriculum Units** – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total

running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

**Standards Link**—Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

**Teacher Resources**—This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

## Video Index

### I. Life on Southern Plantations (3 min.)

Slavery was an important part of the South's economic infrastructure until the Civil War. Explore the conditions under which African-American slaves lived on Southern plantations.

### II. America's Civil War (4 min.)

The world's first industrial war, the Civil War took a terrible toll on a sharply divided nation. Explore the origins, outcome, and consequences of the Civil War.

### III. Rebuilding the South (4 min.)

By 1900 the South had rebuilt its economy, but the promise of equality for African Americans had faded into a distant memory. Explore the era of Reconstruction.

### IV. The Fight for Equal Education (26 min.)

Hailed as separate but equal, the U.S. system of racially segregated education was anything but equal. See how African-American students, parents, and sympathizers gained the right to integrate.

## Curriculum Units

### 1. The Southern Way of Life

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What aspect of slavery do you find the most disturbing?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What factors governed the treatment of slaves?

A: The location of a plantation, the type of work, and a slave's relationship with an owner affected the way slaves were treated. The most inhumane treatment typically occurred in the Deep South. Some states had laws to protect the slaves, which were enforced inconsistently. For example, in Missouri a white slave owner would face conviction for murdering a slave, but other states did not have or enforce such a law.



## 2. North vs. South

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Do you think the Civil War could have been avoided?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What made the Civil War different from any previous wars?

A: It was the world's first industrial war – mass-produced weapons and trench warfare resulted in huge losses on both sides. Northern victory came at a huge cost, much of the South lay in ruins, and more than 600,000 soldiers had died – more than the American losses in World War I and II, Korea, and Vietnam put together.

## 3. Reconstruction

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What do you know about the era of Reconstruction?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Compare the experiences of slaves and sharecroppers?

A: Answers will vary.

## 4. Segregated Schooling

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What might parents want for their children's education?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Describe schooling for African-American students in Clarendon County.

A: These students did not have the educational opportunities of white students. Many lived in families of sharecroppers, and their education was sometimes secondary to the farm work; they would attend school only after finishing farm chores. Their classes taught them how to be maids, farm workers, or other subservient workers. They had to walk to school because school buses were not made available.

## 5. Civil Disobedience

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Have students ever instigated changes in your school?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What might have happened if Barbara Johns' plan had failed?

A: Answers will vary.



## 6. Petitioning for School Buses

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Have you ever been pressured to do something you felt was wrong?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Would you have signed the school bus petition despite the possible dangers?

A: Answers will vary.

## 7. Briggs v. Elliott

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Do you think all students at your school are treated equally?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: How did Judge Waring help the plaintiffs in Briggs v. Elliot?

A: Judge Waring informed Thurgood Marshall that his lawsuit should challenge the institution of segregated education, instead of filing a suit for school buses under the "separate but equal" system. Although unsuccessful, the case for the plaintiffs laid the groundwork for Brown v. Board of Education, and the notion that separate but equal school systems could never result in equality.

## 8. Petition for Integration

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What organizations or people do you turn to for help?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: How do you think the parents in Farmville felt as they signed a petition for integration?

A: Answers will vary.

## 9. Brown v. Board of Education

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What do you think might be some of most important Supreme Court decisions?

A: Answers may include the decision to desegregate schools, legalize abortion, and uphold the voluntary right to pray in school.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: How did Thurgood Marshall and John W. Davis conclude their Supreme Court arguments?

A: Marshall argued that based on extensive legal and historical research, the 14th Amendment was intended to prevent racial segregation in public schools. Davis argued the contrary, warning of the practical problems involved in desegregating.



## 10. A Supreme Court Decision

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What has been the proudest moment in your life so far?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What might have happened if the Supreme Court decision had not been unanimous?

A: Answers will vary.

## 11. Desegregation

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Have you ever resisted some form of change?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Do you think the words "deliberate speed" created more resistance to integration?

A: Answers will vary.

## 12. Inequality in Schools

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Do you think all students in the United States have the same educational opportunities today?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What remains to be done in the struggle for racial equality in the United States?

A: Answers will vary.