

Diane M. Boucher  
Unit: Segregation

Industry, Immigration and the Progressive Era

Grade Level: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Standards: USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African Americans to gain basic civil rights.

Topic: Racial Color Line – Segregation

Statement of purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to expose students to primary documents including: court decisions, Jim Crow laws that developed in U.S. states following the Civil War, editorials from white and African American publications from the late 1890s to early 1920s, census figures, public reports, and maps to have students consider why segregation became legalized, and how segregation impacted the social, political, economic, and demographic reality of whites and African Americans.

Unit Learning Objectives:

- Students analyze Jim Crow laws to understand the extralegal restrictions placed upon African Americans.
- Students perform internet research on PBS site The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow to learn about post-Civil War segregation laws enforced in southern and border states.
- Students brainstorm the reasoning behind the creation of Jim Crow laws.
- Students write a perspective from three groups impacted by the Jim Crow laws.
- Students create a fictional news account detailing the treatment of a member of a segregated group that has broken a specific Jim Crow law.

### **Jim Crow Internet Research Lesson**

**Two 45-minute periods**

**Introduction:** Preview question – answers to be written in the first five minutes of class in student notebooks using four to five complete sentences,

You are the mayor of French Fry Village, home of the Freedom Fries. Recently, Raw Potatoes have been attempting to attend French Fry movie theatres, restaurants and garden centers. There are currently no laws preventing Raw Potatoes from using these facilities. French Fry residents are extremely upset – Fries and Raw Potatoes have never mixed. Raw Potatoes are considered dirty, smelly, inferior, and a threat to French Fry social order. As mayor what can you do to stop this intrusion by the Raw Potatoes?

**Debrief** students' preview answers.

**Activity - Part I: Introduction to Plessy**

Write the term “Black Codes,” “Jim Crow” and “segregation” on the board. Ask students what they know about the terms. Be sure to explain that prior to the Civil War, African

American living in the South were subject to *de facto* segregation - accepted practice and custom to segregate people by race. Following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and under the administration of Andrew Johnson, Southern states violated African American rights through “Black Codes” - laws which prohibited African Americans from voting, testifying in courts, sitting on juries, carrying weapons, and even working in certain occupations. Write a brief definition of the terms on the board for students to copy in their notebooks.

Hand out the copy of *Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896*

Explain to students that several Supreme Court decisions in the late 1870s through 1896 allowed states to enforce *de jure* segregation – segregation protected by law. One of the more important decisions was *Plessy*.

As a class, actively read the decision by underlining key ideas and taking notes in margins. Stop frequently to clarify language and review understanding.

In a class discussion, ask students to answer the following questions:

- 1) Who is involved in the case and what are the facts (the story) behind the case?
- 2) Which Constitutional laws are being called into question by the case?
- 3) How does Justice Brown explain the conflict with the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment?
- 4) What are three reasons Justice Brown gives to support his decision?
- 5) In his dissent, what are three arguments Justice Harlan offers to refute the constitutionality of the Louisiana state law?
- 6) How do they think this decision will impact future state decisions in regard to segregation?

Explain to students that *Plessy* and other important cases led to Jim Crow laws developing in states throughout the United States which enforced legal punishments for people consorting with members of another race from the 1880s to 1960s.

### **Part Two: Internet Research**

1) Explain activity – students will be searching the PBS site: the Rise and Fall of Jim Crow to learn about some of the Jim Crow laws established by southern and border states.

- 2) Hand out student graphic organizer. Divide class into pairs of students.
- 3) Each pair should be assigned to a computer station with internet access.
- 4) Students type in the address: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/>
- 5) Students select the link for:

- Interactive Maps
- Go to The Maps
- Jim Crow Laws

6) Using the projector, show the students how to maneuver within the website to find the information necessary for the assignment.

First, click on a category until the map appears, then click on a state to find the information for that states Jim Crow laws, use Maryland as an exemplar.

Show students how by scrolling over the different categories: education, hospitals and prisons, miscegenation, public accommodations, transportation and other; they will be able to pull up the Jim Crow laws from that state.

Have students complete the graphic organizer for the Maryland law on miscegenation (already completed on sample graphic organizer as example.) This gives an opportunity to review what miscegenation was and why states may have prohibited it.

7) Assign partners any one of the southern or border states to research and complete the graphic organizers.

8) Tell students they will be responsible for researching and presenting 4 Jim Crow laws on their assigned state to the class.

9) Students should have 25 minutes to read, analyze Jim Crow laws and complete the graphic organizer chart.

10) Groups report back to the class describing any two of the four Jim Crow laws they researched while giving reasons the pair thinks the codes were passed. One student should speak, while the other writes the research information on the board. While students report out, classroom students complete their chart by listing two laws from states presented by other groups.

11) After presentations, pairs answer the questions on back of graphic organizer.

**Assessment:** As homework, students write a two paragraph news account about an incident in French Fry Village involving a Raw Potato accused of a crime. Use one of the black codes you learned about today as the basis for the law that has been broken. The news story should include:

- Details about the law the Raw Potato broke
- The French Fry and Raw Potato public reaction to the crime
- A creative final outcome of the incident.

**Materials:**

Student graphic organizer

*Plessy* decision

Access to computers and internet

**Resources:**

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow - <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/themap/map.html>

From Jim Crow to Linda Brown

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/97/crow/crowhome.html>

Andrew Johnson Biography

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAjohnsonA.htm>

*Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, ed. Leon Fink, Houghton Mifflin, (Boston, 2001) p. 296.

Find Law for Legal Professionals - Federal and State Cases

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=163&invol=537>



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After examining the PBS site and sharing information on Jim Crow laws from southern and border states, discuss and answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think these laws were created? What were southern officials attempting to avoid in writing them?

2. Imagine you lived in the 1890s. How would these laws have made you feel?

African American:

Wealthy merchant/store owner:

Poor white farmer:

3. Which of these laws is most surprising to you? Why?

HW: As homework, students write a two paragraph news account about an incident in French Fry Village involving a Raw Potato accused of a crime. Use one of the Jim Crow laws you learned about today as the basis for the law that has been broken. The news story should include:

- Details about the law the Raw Potato broke
- The French Fry and Raw Potato public reaction to the crime
- A creative final outcome of the incident.