

LESSON 20

The Struggle for Equal Rights

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

Pay very close attention when watching the video program. Review the video objectives and be prepared to record possible answers, in abbreviated form, as you view the video. The titles and numbers of the textbook chapters may differ from the video program. Keep in mind that the video program examines contemporary examples to illustrate your government in action. An attempt is made to show how you can participate in the political arena and bring about changes in the political process.

Video:

“The Struggle for Equal Rights,” from the series, *Voices in Democracy: United States Government*.

Activities:

One or more activities may be assigned to this lesson. Refer to your syllabus.

OVERVIEW

This lesson examines the struggles of different groups in the United States to achieve equal rights. The lesson traces the historical discrimination of such groups as Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, women, people with disabilities, and homosexuals. The long-term impact of this discrimination on the social and economic status of these groups is also examined. The lesson evaluates the success of the various civil rights movements and identifies problems that are still faced by some of these groups. The lesson also evaluates the role of Congress, the president, the Supreme Court, and the states in this struggle. Key issues such as affirmative action and abortion policy are debated. Finally, the lesson examines the current status of the equality issue and takes a look at the future of the issue as well.

LESSON GOAL

Discuss the struggle to extend “unalienable rights” to people of color, women, disabled people, and homosexuals.

VIDEO OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are designed to assist you in identifying the most significant aspects of the video segment of this lesson. You should take succinct notes while viewing the video.

1. Discuss the struggle to extend “unalienable rights” to people of color and to women.
2. Explain the difference in today’s racism and the racism exhibited in the past.
3. Explain stereotyping and its effect on people of color.
4. Define affirmative action, and explain its effects on today’s citizens. Analyze the debate for and against affirmative action.

WEB ACTIVITIES

These activities are not required unless your teacher assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

Visit the Martin Luther King Web pages, produced by the Department of Political Science of Western Michigan University at <http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/>.

Travel through the timeline of American Civil Rights Movement.

As you progress through the timeline, print off a picture representing each milestone and write a few sentences describing how the event or activity represents a form of political participation.

Evaluate whether the activity would have been considered conventional or unconventional, and its impact on U.S. politics.

When you have finished the timeline, write a closing paragraph or two that summarizes strategies employed by the participants and the reactions of the opponents of the Civil Rights Movement.

Finally, analyze the effectiveness of these political actions given the circumstances of U.S. and southern politics at the time.

PRACTICE TEST

After watching the video and reviewing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. When you have completed the Practice Test, turn to the Answer Key to score your answers.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

Select the single best answer.

- Equality was envisioned by the Founders as equality among...
 - naturalized citizens
 - native-born citizens
 - all white citizens
 - white males
- The diverse groups of people of color and women in the U.S. have all the following struggles in common EXCEPT the...
 - experience of discrimination and prejudice
 - struggle against racism and sexism
 - persecution for their religious beliefs
 - struggle for equal rights
- According to Professor Derald Wing Sue, prejudice and racism is deeply embedded in individuals, institutions, and in our society, and the thing that makes it so powerful is that it is...
 - protected in the Declaration of Independence
 - found throughout the world
 - an invisible veil
 - cleverly camouflaged
- Russell Means states that racism exists because people in the United States...
 - are not familiar with the “equal protection” clause of the U.S. Constitution
 - learn only about family relationships
 - fear those they do not know
 - none of the above
- One reason that stereotypes are so damaging to racial and ethnic minorities is that they come to believe in...
 - themselves
 - the system
 - those stereotypes
 - the political leaders
- The attempt to correct for the historical disadvantages which women and minorities have endured was called...
 - due process of law
 - equal protection of the law
 - affirmative action
 - micro aggressions

ESSAY/PROBLEM QUESTIONS

- Describe the irony in the struggles of women and people of color and the Declaration of Independence phrase “. . . all men are created equal.” Explain using the issues found in the video about today’s world.
- Have you ever been stereotyped? How did you feel? How do you think a lifetime of stereotyping would affect you? Do you believe that racial issues are one of the critical problems facing the United States? Why or why not?
- On which side of the affirmative action coin do you stand—in favor of or opposed to? Why? What do you predict will be the outcome of the affirmative action debate?

ANSWER KEY

The following provides the answers and references for the practice test questions. Objectives are referenced using the following abbreviations: V=Video Objectives.

1. D Ref: V 1 (Video)
2. C Ref: V 1 (Video)
3. C Ref: V 2 (Video)
4. C Ref: V 2 (Video)
5. C Ref: V 3 (Video)
6. C Ref: V 4 (Video)
7. Ref: V 1 (Video)
8. Ref: V 1 and 3 (Video)
9. Ref: V 4 (Video)