



Lesson Plan: *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857)

Learning Objectives: The students will...

1. Be able to define and explain the terms controversial, abolish, dissent, and judicial review.
2. Be able to explain how territorial expansion affected the debate over slavery in America.
3. Understand the events and figures involved in the landmark Supreme Court case, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*.
4. Review the impact of the early major Supreme Court cases.

TEKS:

1. Evaluate the impact of selected landmark Supreme Court decisions, including *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, on life in the United States. [18C]
2. Describe the impact of 19th-century amendments, including the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, on life in the United States. [16B]

Materials: Oyez video on *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (www.texasbar.com/civics), computer and projector with speakers, copies of student viewing guide, copy of teacher notes, white board, and dry erase marker. (If technology allows, students could watch video and complete notes independently or in pairs.)

Vocabulary: judicial review, overrule, abolish, controversial, dissent

Teaching Strategy:

Intro Activity: (5-10 Minutes)

1. Have the students partner with a discussion buddy and give each student a viewing guide.
2. On the back of their viewing guide, have the students define the word 'controversial' in their own words and brainstorm examples of issues, both historic and modern, they know are controversial. They don't need to share their opinions on any of the issues, just brainstorm examples.
3. After they have brainstormed examples, have them look at their list and determine how society dealt, or is dealing, with these issues. If they need some guidance, you could list a few of the issues they brainstormed on the board and provide some categories, such as law(s) passed, court ruling, protests by citizens, etc. Obviously, many issues can fall under multiple categories.
4. Discuss as a class how many controversial issues on their lists have had related court rulings. Can they think of any examples of court rulings on controversial issues with which they agree or disagree?
5. Remind them as they watch the following video that the Supreme Court often has to take up controversial social and political issues. This case dealt with the

controversial issue of slavery. Tell them to be prepared to discuss their opinion of the ruling after the video.

Video: (35-40 Minutes)

1. Have the students continue to sit with their discussion buddy and watch the first section of the video through 6:41. Pause once this section is complete and let them work together to fill in all the blanks in Part 1. Once they have completed that step, have them discuss the following questions with their buddy until everyone is done.
 - a. Why was keeping an even number of free and slave states so important to so many people?
 - b. Would the slavery issue have become so divisive if the U.S. had never expanded west?
2. Play the video through 12:34 and pause again. Have the students work with their discussion buddy to complete all the blanks in Part 2. Once they have completed that step, have them discuss the following questions with their buddy until everyone is done.
 - a. How do you think the make-up of the court affected the ruling?
 - b. What do you think of the ruling? Explain fully.
3. Play the video through the end. Have the students work with their discussion buddy a final time to complete the blanks in Part 3. Once completed, have them discuss the following questions.
 - a. What impact did the *Dred Scott* ruling have on the country?
 - b. Why are these early cases important to study? What impact do they have today?

Wrap-Up: (5 Minutes)

Let the students share any interesting points they discussed with their discussion buddy during the course of the lesson.

Discussion Questions:

1. What, if anything, can we learn from the *Dred Scott* ruling and its result?
2. Should the Supreme Court involve itself in political and social debates?
3. Why can a court ruling have such a huge impact on a political/social issue?