



Lesson Plan: *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)

Learning Objectives: The students will...

1. Answer comprehension questions while watching the video of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
2. Express personal opinions about key facts, the arguments, decision, and impact of *Plessy v. Ferguson* on American history.

TEKS: US.20A

Materials Needed: Oyez video on *Plessy v. Ferguson* (www.texasbar.com/civics), copies of student viewing guide, copy of teacher notes.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Explain to the students that they are going to view a video on the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Set the case up by explaining its significance in U.S. history—it illustrates the problems of achieving equality for all citizens, especially African Americans, in the years after the Civil War.
2. Pair the students up and distribute a viewing guide to each student. Have the students preview the guide with a partner and predict what they think the answers might be. After they have discussed their ideas on the guide, explain that they will be watching the video and answering the questions individually.
3. Play the video, stopping at the designated time on the teacher notes for the students to individually answer the comprehension questions as well as complete the “Stop and Think” section. If there is time, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts before going to the next section of the video. Continue this process until the video has come to an end.
4. Explain that the last portion of the guide contains a quote from the decision by Justice John Marshall Harlan and a comprehension opinion question they should answer before turning in the video guide.

Extension Idea:

Have the students research the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Scott v. Sanford*, also available on the Oyez website. Students should complete a case study of this case and then compare it to the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case they have just analyzed. Explain what they think Justice Harlan meant when he warned that the *Plessy* case could have the same harmful effect as the *Scott* decision. They should also defend their opinion of the warning he gave.