



Viewing Guide:
Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

The Background of the 14th Amendment (0:00-3:57)

1. What were the two major reasons for the passage of the 14th Amendment?
2. What are the three key parts of the Amendment?
3. What are the two reasons the South ratified the 14th Amendment?

Stop and Think Activity: How effective do you think the 14th Amendment was in bringing about equality for all citizens when it was passed?

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 (3:58-6:43)

4. What were two reasons for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1875?
5. What was the major provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1875?
6. What was the effect of the law on life in the U.S.?
7. What did the Supreme Court rule with regards to the Civil Rights Act of 1875 in a case decided in 1883?
8. What was the effect of this decision?

Stop and Think Activity: If you had been a justice who heard this 1883 case, how would you have voted and why?

Homer Plessy (6:44-8:12)

9. Who was Homer Plessy and what did he do?

10. What was Mr. Plessy's argument in the case?

Stop and Think Activity: What is your opinion of the protest of the Louisiana Separate Car law?

Question Brought to the Supreme Court

11. What was the question that the Supreme Court had to answer in this case?

[Formula for issue=Yes/No question + facts of the case + part of the U.S. Constitution in question]

The Ruling (8:13-10:03)

12. What was the ruling of the Court and the major reason for this decision?

13. Who was the lone dissenter on the Supreme Court and what did he argue?

Stop and Think: Do you agree or disagree with the decision of the Supreme Court? Defend your answer.

The Impact of the Case (10:04-End)

14. What was the significance of the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* with regards to the 14th Amendment?

15. Describe what happened to race equality after the decision?

Conclusion: "...*The Constitution is colorblind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law...*"

—Supreme Court Justice Harlan

16. Paraphrase what this quote means in your own words.

17. What do you think it will take to achieve equal protection under the law?