

# Class Guide

*Lesson 19 - How does the Constitution protect your right to equal protection of the laws?*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Define the concept of equal in the terms of the law?

**Step 1 – Vocabulary Work.** Complete the vocabulary work necessary to understand this lesson. The vocabulary should be completed first. Terms to know:

<i>Boycott</i>	<i>Civil Rights Act of 1964</i>	<i>Civil War Amendments</i>	<i>Equal Protection Clause</i>
	<i>Segregate</i>	<i>Voting Rights Act of 1965</i>	

**Step 2 – Critical Thinking Exercise – *Are these actions by government***

***fair?*** Work in a group of three to five students. Discuss each of the imaginary situations below. Decide if the government was being fair in the situation. Be prepared to share the reasons for your decisions with the class.

Situation	Group Discussion Thoughts
<i>A new law in your state says that you must go to a certain school because of your race.</i>	
<i>Your town has a law that says that you cannot live in a certain area because of your religion.</i>	
<i>Your city police department will not allow women on the police force.</i>	
<i>Your state has a law that says you cannot marry someone of a different race.</i>	
<i>A man and a woman work for the state government at the same jobs. The man is paid much more than the woman is paid.</i>	

## Step 3 – Interactive Lecture. Answer the questions during the class discussion.

<p><b>WHY WAS THE 14<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT NEEDED?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, THREE AMENDMENTS WERE ADDED TO THE CONSTITUTION.</li><li>• THESE AMENDMENTS ARE CALLED THE <b>CIVIL WAR AMENDMENTS</b></li><li>• 13<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT: ENDED SLAVERY</li><li>• 14<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT: EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAWS</li><li>• 15<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT: PROVIDED THE RIGHT FOR FORMER SLAVES TO VOTE</li></ul>	<p>Why do you think the end of the Civil War required these three amendments</p>
<p><b>WHAT IS "EQUAL PROTECTION"?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MEANS THAT GOVERNMENT MUST NOT TREAT PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY UNLESS THERE IS A GOOD AND FAIR REASON</li><li>• FOR EXAMPLE, GOVERNMENTS CAN RESTRICT PEOPLE FROM DRIVING UNTIL THEY REACH A CERTAIN AGE</li><li>• THE 14<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT'S "EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE" PROHIBITS LAWS THE UNFAIRLY FAVOR ONE GROUP OVER ANOTHER</li><li>• PASSING THE CIVIL WAR AMENDMENTS DID NOT STOP THE UNFAIR TREATMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS</li></ul>	<p>Why do you think that the Civil War amendments did not end the unfair treatment of African Americans?</p>

**Step 4 – Extended Reading – Plessy v Ferguson (1896).** Read the background to the Supreme Court decision in Plessy v Ferguson. When you are finished, get into small groups and discuss the questions that follow the reading. Each person needs to answer the questions, but not everyone in the group needs to agree with each other. Be prepared to discuss with the whole class.

### *Title: Plessy v. Ferguson - Separate but Equal?*

*In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many states had laws that enforced racial segregation separating blacks and whites in public places like schools, trains, and buses. In Louisiana, where the case Plessy v. Ferguson originated, there was a law that required separate train cars for white and black passengers. Homer Plessy, who was a mixed-race man (part white and part black), decided to challenge this law. He purposely sat in a white train car and refused to move to the black-only car.*

*Homer Plessy was arrested for breaking the law, his case would make its way to the United States Supreme Court. He argued that these segregation laws violated his rights as a citizen for equal protection under the law guaranteed in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.*

*In a 7-1 decision, the Supreme Court ruled against Plessy. They said that separate facilities for different races were allowed as long as they were "equal" in quality. This became known as the "separate but equal" doctrine. In reality, though, the facilities for black people were always worse than those for white people. This decision would allow segregated schools, public transportation, and many other places to legally continue for another 60 years.*

*The Plessy decision was not overturned until 1954 in the case of Brown v. Board of Education. The Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" was inherently unequal and that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.*

**Why was Homer Plessy arrested?**

**Summarize the policy of "separate, but equal".**

In the dissenting opinion, Justice Harlin wrote “*I am of opinion that the statute of Louisiana is inconsistent with the personal liberty of citizens, white and black, in that state, and hostile to both the spirit and letter of the Constitution of the United States.*” What do you think Justice Harlin meant by the “spirit” of the Constitution?

What Supreme Court case overturned the Plessy v Ferguson decision?

What do you think it took to prove the “separate, but equal” was never equal?

## Step 5 – Interactive Lecture. Answer the questions during the class discussion.

<p><b>BROWN V BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954)</b></p> <p><b>BACKGROUND.</b> LINDA BROWN WAS A SEVEN-YEAR OLD AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT IN TOPEKA, KANSAS. HER HOME WAS FIVE BLOCKS FROM THE CLOSEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL BOARD REQUIRED HER TO GO TO A SCHOOL TWENTY-ONE BLOCKS AWAY BECAUSE OF HER RACE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LINDA'S PARENT SUED THE SCHOOL BOARD UNDER THE “EQUAL PROTECTION” PROVISION OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT</li></ul>	<p>Why do you think that the Civil War amendments did not end the unfair treatment of African Americans?</p>
<p><b>BROWN V BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954)</b></p> <p>SUPREME COURT HELD THAT “SEPARATE BUT EQUAL” FACILITIES ARE INHERENTLY UNEQUAL AND VIOLATE THE PROTECTIONS OF THE EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE OF THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT.</p> <p>THE COURT RULED THAT THE RACIAL SEGREGATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION CAUSED A SENSE OF INFERIORITY THAT HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION AND PERSONAL GROWTH OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN.</p> <p>THE COURT BASED MUCH OF THE OPINION ON INFORMATION FROM SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDIES RATHER THAN COURT PRECEDENT.</p> <p>THE DECISION USED PLAIN LANGUAGE SO THAT NON-LAWYERS COULD UNDERSTAND THE RULING.</p>	<p>Why do you think the Supreme Court needed to have the Brown decision understood by non-lawyers?</p>

## Step 6 – Extended Reading – Civil Rights Campaign. Read the background to the Civil Rights Campaign. Highlight key points in each paragraph. Complete the Illustrated Outline when you have finished reading.

*The Civil Rights Campaign was a major movement in the United States that happened during the 1950s and 1960s. The Civil Rights Campaign was a peaceful fight for fairness and equal rights. It mainly focused on African Americans who were being treated unfairly because of their skin color. They wanted to change the laws and attitudes that allowed this unfair treatment to happen.*

### Key Events and Leaders

**Montgomery Bus Boycott:** *The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a key civil rights protest that took place in Montgomery, Alabama, from December 1955 to December 1956. It was sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks, an African American woman who refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated city bus. In response, the African American community, led by civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., organized a year-long boycott of the city's bus system. This nonviolent protest led to major financial losses for the bus company and resulted in national media attention. In the end, the boycott led to a Supreme Court ruling declaring segregated buses unconstitutional, marking a significant victory in the struggle for civil rights and resulted in broader civil rights movement in the United States.*

**Martin Luther King Jr.:** *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a renowned American civil rights leader and Baptist minister who emerged as a key figure in the mid-20th century struggle for racial equality and justice. He is most celebrated for his nonviolent activism and his inspiring speeches, including the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech delivered during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Dr. King's tireless efforts*

and commitment to civil rights and social justice led to significant advancements in the fight against racial segregation and discrimination in the United States. He played a crucial role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Birmingham Campaign, and the Selma to Montgomery marches, among other key civil rights events. Tragically, he was assassinated in 1968, but his legacy endures as an emblem of moral leadership and a symbol of hope for a more just and equitable society.

**March on Washington:** *The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, held on August 28, 1963, was a historic civil rights event in the United States. Organized by civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., it drew a multiracial crowd of approximately 250,000 people to the nation's capital. The march aimed to address the pressing issues of racial segregation, discrimination, and economic inequality. The highlight of the event was Dr. King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he passionately articulated his vision of a future where racial prejudice would be overcome, and individuals would be judged by their character rather than the color of their skin. The March on Washington played a pivotal role in raising awareness about civil rights issues and ultimately contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, key legislative milestones in the quest for racial equality in America.*

**Civil Rights Act:** *The Civil Rights Act of 1964 aimed to combat racial segregation and discrimination in the United States. Signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964, this wide-reaching act outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in various aspects of public life, including employment, education, and public accommodations. It also granted the federal government the authority to enforce desegregation and pursue legal action against discriminatory practices. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 marked a significant turning point in the civil rights movement and played a crucial role in dismantling institutional racism and promoting equal rights for all citizens, regardless of their background.*

**Voting Rights Act:** *The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a landmark piece of legislation in the United States aimed at addressing systemic racial discrimination in voting practices. Signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on August 6, 1965, this historic act outlawed discriminatory voting practices such as literacy tests and poll taxes, which had been used to disenfranchise African American voters, particularly in the Southern states. It also provided federal oversight and monitoring of elections in areas with a history of racial discrimination in voting, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their race or background, had equal access to the voting booth. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was instrumental in dismantling barriers to voting for minority communities and played a pivotal role in expanding and protecting the voting rights of all American citizens.*

<b>Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955)</b> <i>Write 3 Key Bullets</i>	<b>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.</b> <i>Write 3 Key Bullets</i>	<b>March on Washington (1963)</b> <i>Write 3 Key Bullets</i>	<b>Civil Rights Act of 1964</b> <i>Write 3 Key Bullets</i>	<b>Voting Rights Act of 1965</b> <i>Write 3 Key Bullets</i>
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

Summarize the event in one picture	Summarize the event in one picture	Summarize the event in one picture	Summarize the event in one picture	Summarize the event in one picture

**Step 7 – Interactive Lecture.** Answer the questions during the class discussion.

<p><b>HOW HAS THE EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE HELPED OTHER GROUPS IN AMERICA?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ASIANS, LATINOS, NATIVE AMERICANS, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THE ELDERLY, AND OTHER GROUPS HAVE WORKED TO GAIN THE RIGHT TO EQUAL PROTECTION</b></li> <li>• <b>WOMEN WERE THE LARGEST GROUP TO BENEFIT FROM THESE EFFORTS</b></li> </ul>	<p>How would the success of African Americans gaining equal protection under law be used to grant other groups equal protection?</p>
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**Step 8 – Extended Reading – Title IX: Championing Equality**

*Title IX, a federal law enacted in 1972, has played a significant role in shaping the rights and opportunities available to women in the United States. It has been a powerful force in promoting gender equity, particularly in education and sports.*

**Equal Access to Sports:** *Before Title IX, girls and women faced many challenges when it came to participating in sports. Schools often didn't provide equal opportunities for female athletes. With the passage of Title IX, schools and colleges were required to offer the same sports opportunities to both girls and boys. This change had a profound impact. Girls and women could now join teams, receive proper coaching, and have access to athletic facilities and resources. This led to a surge in female participation in sports, enabling them to develop their skills, build confidence, and achieve athletic success. Today, we have female athletes competing at the highest levels and inspiring us all.*

**Equal Educational Opportunities:** *Title IX isn't just about sports; it's also about education. Before this law, girls and young women sometimes faced discrimination in schools and colleges. They might not have received the same educational resources, scholarships, or opportunities as their male counterparts. Title IX changed that by mandating equal treatment in education. This meant that girls and women could access the same quality of education, scholarships, and academic programs as boys and men. As a result, more women started attending college, pursuing degrees in various fields, and entering careers that were once dominated by men. This shift transformed the workforce and allowed women to chase their dreams.*

**Breaking Stereotypes:** *Title IX has helped challenge old-fashioned ideas about what girls and women can or can't do. By providing equal opportunities in sports and education, it showed that women are just as capable as men. Women started to excel in fields like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and even ventured into careers such as politics and business leadership. This shift has been crucial in breaking stereotypes and showing that women can achieve anything they set their minds to.*

**Cultural Impact:** *Beyond the legal and practical changes, Title IX has had a cultural impact. It has inspired generations of girls and women to believe in themselves and their abilities. It ignited a movement for gender equality and encouraged discussions about fairness and inclusion. Title IX showed us that when people come together to fight for what's right, they can make a big difference in the world.*

*In conclusion, Title IX has been a powerful force for positive change in the rights and opportunities of women in the United States. It has led to more girls and women participating in sports, pursuing education, and breaking down stereotypes. Its impact goes beyond the law; it has reshaped our society, inspiring women to aim high and dream big. As we continue to celebrate the achievements of women, we should also celebrate Title IX as a key player in advancing gender equality.*

**Create Three Posters Celebrating the Successes of Title IX**

