

LESSON 1: SETTING THE CONTEXT

Organizing Questions

- What are civil rights?
- What are some examples of civil rights violations?

Introduction

This introductory lesson sets the context for the rest of the curriculum by familiarizing students with the concept of civil rights. Students are first given a definition of civil rights and are encouraged to list some specific examples of what they believe to be civil rights. Students then compare their examples with the Bill of Rights and amendments related to civil rights. Students are then given examples of civil rights violations experienced by Japanese Americans during World War II, and work together in small groups to determine how such violations impact people on an individual level.

Objectives

knowledge

- to learn the definition of civil rights
- to recognize references to civil rights in the Bill of Rights and amendments
- to differentiate between civil rights and human rights

attitude

- to appreciate the importance of civil rights to an individual and to society
- to appreciate the importance of protecting one's civil rights

skill

- to work effectively in small groups
- to apply principles in legal documents to specific actions

Activities

Activity 1-1: An Introduction to Civil Rights

Students discuss the definition of "civil rights" and consider the importance of civil rights in their daily activities. They also consider the U.S. Constitution as a document that describes the basic rights of U.S. citizens.

ACTIVITY 1-1: AN INTRODUCTION TO CIVIL RIGHTS

Introduction

In this activity, students are introduced to the definition of "civil rights" and are asked to come up with examples of civil rights. Then, students are presented with the Bill of Rights and selected amendments and are asked to determine which class examples are actual civil rights. In addition, students are given situation cards and must discuss and answer questions about the civil rights involved in their given situation.

Time

One to two class periods

Materials

Transparency: *Definition*

Handout 1-1a: *The Bill of Rights and Selected Amendments* (one copy per student)

Handout 1-1b: *Civil Rights Questions* (one copy per group)

Handout 1-1c: *Situational Cards* (one card per group)

Handout 1-1d: *Incarceration Map* (one copy per student)

Procedure

1. Download and the print PDF file of Activity 1-1 transparency, handouts and map. Make copies as indicated above.
2. Inform students that they will begin this curriculum by discussing civil rights. Display transparency: *Definition* on the overhead. Give students one minute to write down examples of specific civil rights (e.g., freedom of religion, a fair trial).
3. Call on students to read their responses. Write all responses on the chalkboard or on the overhead so that the entire class can read them.
4. Divide students into groups of six. Distribute handout 1-1a: *The Bill of Rights and Selected Amendments* to each student. Give groups 10 minutes to decide which of the class's examples (those listed on the chalkboard or overhead) would be considered civil rights according to the Bill of Rights and the amendments provided on the handout.
5. After 10 minutes, ask a reporter from each group to share the results of his/her group's discussion. See if the class can come to a general agreement on which of the students' examples of civil rights are actually guaranteed in the United States. Point out that civil rights have been historically intertwined with questions of citizenship. Have students discuss who may become a citizen of the United States and to whom civil rights are granted.

6. Ask students how they think civil rights differ from human rights. (Generally, civil rights are based upon the constitution or protections of a specific political entity, whereas human rights are defined as "rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons.") You may also want to point out that a "civil liberty" refers to a freedom guaranteed by government, such as the freedom to move about the country.
7. Distribute handout 1-1b: *Civil Rights Questions* and one of the six *Situational Cards* from handout 1-1c to each group. Allow the groups 10 minutes to discuss and answer the questions on handout 1-1b: *Civil Rights Questions*.
8. Have a reporter from each group read the group's situational card aloud to the class and share the group's answers to the questions. Allow time after each group's presentation for class discussion on the group's topic.
9. Inform students that these six situations were presented to encourage them to consider issues of "due process," which refers to a course of legal proceedings carried out regularly and in accordance with established rules and principles. Inform them that the denial of "due process" to Japanese Americans was the central civil rights' violation in their experience. Students will examine World War II-era violations of Japanese Americans' civil rights later in the module. First, however, students will receive information on the lives of early Japanese immigrants in the United States.
10. Assign reading: *The Issei Immigrants and Civil Rights*. Distribute copies of handout 1-1d: *Incarceration Map*. The map should serve as a reference throughout the teaching of this curriculum. You may also want to distribute copies of the glossary to students.