

DBQ: All Men Are Created Equal.....In 1965
Grade 11 American History
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Directions: Use your background knowledge of the Civil Rights era and documents A-H to answer the following essay question. Remember to study each document and answer the questions that follow.

How did the Civil Rights movement create equality for minorities in the 1950's and 1960's and how does that impact society today?



Document A: Photo of Dwight D. Eisenhower signing the Civil Rights act of 1957 into law

1. Since the Civil Rights Act of 1957 was the 1st piece of civil rights legislation to be passed after Reconstruction, how do you think President Eisenhower feels about signing it?
2. Do you think some Americans opposed the Act?

Document B: Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision of 1955

Supreme Court of the United States

No. 1 ———, October Term, 19 54

Oliver Brown, Mrs. Richard Lawton, Mrs. Sadie Emmanuel et al.,
Appellants,

vs.

Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, et al.

APPELLANTS
DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS
JUDGMENT
MAY 31 1955

Appeal from the United States District Court for the _____
District of Kansas.

This cause came on to be heard on the transcript of the record from the United States
District Court for the _____ District of Kansas, _____
and was argued by counsel.

On consideration whereof, It is ordered and adjudged by this Court that the judgment
of the said District _____ Court in this cause be, and the same is
hereby, reversed with costs; and that this cause be, and the same
is hereby, remanded to the said District Court to take such
proceedings and enter such orders and decrees consistent with
the opinions of this Court as are necessary and proper to admit
to public schools on a racially nondiscriminatory basis with all
deliberate speed the parties to this case.

Per Mr. Chief Justice Warren,
May 31, 1955.

1. Just after the Civil Rights Act of 1954 was passed, the Supreme Court ruled that schools should be desegregated when Linda Brown's father sued the school board of Topeka Kansas for denying her admission into an all- white school. Do you think this made things better or worse for African Americans in the 1950's?
2. How do you think Linda Brown would benefit from going to an all white school closer to home instead of the all -black school 21 blocks away?

Document C: Civil Rights act of 1964

An Act

1. To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964".

1. According to this Act, what is the Attorney General given power to do concerning protection of constitutional rights in public facilities and public education?
2. How does this document help ensure that equality is protected?

Document D: Photo, Sit-in demonstrators, Jackson Mississippi, 1963



1. What are the activists having to endure from the white segregationists?
2. What do you think the activists are trying to prove?

Document E: excerpt of 15th Amendment, US Constitution, ratified: February 3, 1870

"right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

1 This amendment was ratified in 1870, but was not enforced until 1965. What events of the 1950's and 1960's led to an atmosphere of acceptance and support of the African American vote?

2. Why do you think it took so long to enforce the 15th Amendment in all 50 states?

Document F: Poll tax receipt of 1896

No. **S38** Birmingham, Ala. 4/9 1896
Received of J. M. Gillis (Col.) (White.)
the sum of Two 1/2 Dollars
in full of amount of Poll Tax for the year 1895.

Poll Tax,	1	50
Assessor's Fee,		50
Collector's Fee,		50

A. M. M. P. T. C.

1. Poll taxes were set in an attempt to keep poor whites and African Americans from voting. How much was this receipt for?
2. Why do you think poor whites and African Americans could not pay this tax?

Document G: excerpt from Guinn v. United States Supreme Court case decision of 1915.

If two or more persons conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any citizen in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or because of his having so exercised the same; or if two or more persons go in disguise on the highway, or on the premises of another, with intent to prevent or hinder his free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege so secured, they shall be fined not more than five thousand dollars and imprisoned not more than ten years, and shall,

moreover, be thereafter ineligible to any office, or place of honor, profit, or trust created by the Constitution or laws of the United States.' [238 U.S. 347, 355] We concentrate and state from the certificate only matters which we deem essential to dispose of the questions asked.

1. This court case decision was made in response to the Grandfather Clause which was another attempt to keep African Americans from voting. What is the punishment for hindering the free exercise of rights and privileges of the US Constitution?

2. Do you think this is an appropriate punishment? How would you change it?

Document H: Inaugural Poster for Pres. Elect, Barak Obama. Shepard Fairey, Jan 2009



1. In 2008, the United States elected the first African American President 43 years after the Voting rights act was passed. Do you think the Civil Rights laws themselves led to this triumph or do you think it was the spirit of the voters?

2. Do you now think that all men (and women) are now created equal?