



COMPARING THE CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION OF THE 1960s

Learning Objectives: The students will...

1. Understand the background in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
2. Analyze key provisions of both pieces of legislation.
3. Evaluate the impact of the legislation on the history of the United States.

TEKS: US 9G

Materials Needed: Copies of the Key Passages Cards for the two pieces of legislation (cut apart), Comparing the Civil Rights Legislation PowerPoint presentation.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce the lesson by having the students review the contents of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. Ask the students to recall examples of civil rights violations still present in the United States even with the passage of these amendments. Answers should include segregation, use of restrictive voter registration practices and literacy tests, Jim Crow laws, intimidation, etc.
2. Share the background information on the two laws from the PowerPoint presentation. Students should take notes on each piece of legislation.
3. Divide the class into groups of three and give each one of them a card that includes a section of either the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Explain that they are to complete the following with the passage they were given:
 - a. Read and summarize the section of the law in their own words.
 - b. Research (if necessary) to identify the cause or need for this section of the law.
 - c. Predict and evaluate the effectiveness of the this section in accomplishing its goal.
4. When the groups have completed their analysis, the groups with passages from the Civil Rights Act should meet together and the groups with passages from the Voting Rights Act should meet together to compare and edit their findings.
5. Beginning with the Civil Rights Act, each group should present their analysis to the class. This should be followed by the groups with the Voting Rights Act. As each group presents, the teacher and class should ask necessary questions to clarify their understanding of this section of the legislation as well as its impact on our history.
6. Conclude by asking each student to complete the following three questions:
 - a. Besides the section you personally analyzed, what are two key ideas you learned about the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and two key ideas learned from the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
 - b. What is a reason that both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were necessary to continue to fulfill the promises of the 14th and 15th Amendments?
 - c. How have these two pieces of legislation changed the history of the United States?

Key Passages Cards
Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965

Civil Rights Act of 1964

No person acting under color of law shall...employ any literacy test as a qualification for voting in any Federal election unless (i) such test is administered to each individual and in conducted wholly in writing...



Civil Rights Act of 1964

All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin... The provisions of this title shall not apply to a private club or other establishment not in fact open to the public...



Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Commissioner [of Education] shall conduct a survey and make a report to the President and Congress, within two years of the enactment of this title, concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States, its territories and possessions, and the District of Columbia...



Civil Rights Act of 1964

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer...to limit, segregate, or classify his employees in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as a employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin...



Civil Rights Act of 1964

There is hereby created a Commission to be known as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which shall be composed of five members, not more than three of whom shall be members of the same political party, who shall be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate...Whenever it is charged in writing under oath...that an employer...has engaged in an unlawful employment practice, the Commission shall...investigate...and endeavor to eliminate any such alleged unlawful employment practice...



Voting Rights Act of 1965

To assure that the right of citizens of the United States to vote is not denied or abridged on account of race or color, no citizen shall be denied the right to vote in any Federal, State, or local election because of his failure to comply with any test or device in any State..."test or device" shall mean...demonstrate the ability to read, write, or interpret any matter; demonstrate any educational achievement or his knowledge of any particular subject; possess good moral character; or prove his qualifications of the voucher of registered voters or members of any other class...



Voting Rights Act of 1965

Congress finds that the requirement of the payment of a poll tax as a precondition to voting...precludes persons of limited means from voting or imposes unreasonable financial hardship upon such persons...Congress declares that the constitutional right of citizens to vote is denied or abridged in some areas by the requirement of payment of a poll tax as a precondition to voting... (The 24th Amendment ratified in 1964 had only abolished the poll tax for federal elections, not state or local ones.)



Voting Rights Act of 1965

No person acting under color of law or otherwise, shall fail or refuse to permit any person to vote who is entitled to vote under any provision of this Act or is otherwise qualified to vote, or willfully fail or refuse to tabulate, count, and report such person's vote. No person, whether acting under color of law or otherwise, shall intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person for voting or attempting to vote, or intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person for urging or aiding any person to vote or attempt to vote...



Voting Rights Act of 1965

Congress hereby declares that to secure the rights under the fourteenth amendment of persons educated in American-flag schools in which the predominant language was other than English, it is necessary to prohibit the States from conditioning the right to vote of such persons on the ability to read, write, understand, or interpret any matter in the English language...



Voting Rights Act of 1965

Whoever knowingly or willfully gives false information as to his name, address, or period of residence in the voting district for the purpose of establishing his eligibility to register or vote, or conspires with another individual for the purpose of encouraging his false registration to vote or illegal voting, or pays or offers to pay or accepts payment either for registration to vote or for voting shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both...

