Separate, Not Equal

Trace how court decisions shaped Jim Crow policies and daily life.

USH.2.3 "Analyze the development of "separate but equal" policies culminating in the Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) case. Explain the historical significance of the denial of African American rights through Jim Crow Laws and the effects of these..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two court decisions that helped segregation grow, circle the court's claim about equality, and number two effects of Jim Crow laws. Use your marks to trace how legal decisions affected daily life.

From Equal Protection to Jim Crow

1 After the Civil War, the Fourteenth Amendment promised equal protection under the law, and the Fifteenth Amendment barred denying the vote because of race. Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which prohibited racial discrimination in public places such as theaters and trains. But in 1883, the Supreme Court struck down key protections in that act against discrimination by private businesses. With federal protection weakened, Southern states expanded laws that separated Black and white people in public life.

2 In 1890, Louisiana required separate railway cars for Black and white passengers, claiming the cars would be equal. In 1892, Homer Plessy, who was legally classified as Black, sat in a whites-only car to challenge the law and was arrested. In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld Louisiana's law in Plessy v. Ferguson. The majority said separation did not violate equal protection if facilities were equal. This ruling gave states legal support for segregation, even though separate facilities were often unequal.

3 Jim Crow laws spread separation to schools, waiting rooms, and other public spaces. States also used poll taxes and literacy tests to block Black citizens from voting, while threats and violence made resistance dangerous. Black schools often received fewer resources than white schools, showing how the promise of equality failed in practice. Losing a vote reduced people's power to challenge these rules. Together, segregation and voter suppression denied African Americans equal rights and shaped daily life for generations.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the 1883 Supreme Court decision make it easier for Southern states to expand segregation?

2. How did the Plessy ruling affect states that wanted to require separate facilities?

3. How did conditions in Black schools challenge the Court's claim about equal facilities?

4. Why did barriers to voting make Jim Crow laws harder to challenge?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining how a promise of equal rights became unequal daily life. Use at least two dated events from the passage, explain how one led to another, and describe an effect other than unequal schools or voting barriers.

Separate, Not Equal

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two court decisions that helped segregation grow, circle the court's claim about equality, and number two effects of Jim Crow laws. Use your marks to trace how legal decisions affected daily life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the 1883 Supreme Court decision make it easier for Southern states to expand segregation?	**It struck down key federal protections against discrimination by private businesses, weakening a barrier to segregation.**
2	How did the Plessy ruling affect states that wanted to require separate facilities?	**It gave states legal support for segregation by saying separation did not violate equal protection if facilities were equal.**
3	How did conditions in Black schools challenge the Court's claim about equal facilities?	**Black schools often received fewer resources than white schools, so the separate facilities were not equal in practice.**
4	Why did barriers to voting make Jim Crow laws harder to challenge?	**Poll taxes and literacy tests blocked Black citizens from voting, reducing their power to change the laws.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Fourteenth Amendment promised equal protection, but an 1883 Supreme Court decision weakened protections against discrimination by private businesses. With those protections weakened, Louisiana required separate railway cars in 1890. The 1896 Plessy ruling upheld that law and gave states legal support for segregation. Black travelers faced enforced separation in train cars and waiting rooms despite the promise of equal protection.

Accept responses that accurately connect at least two dated events and explain a cause-and-effect link. The daily-life effect must be supported by the passage and cannot be unequal schools or voting barriers.