

# Separate But Not Equal: Mississippi Education

**Objectives:** Students will understand the framing of the 1890 Mississippi Constitution in regards to disenfranchisement of African Americans; they will analyze the impact of the Supreme Court ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in the perpetuation of segregation and racial inequality; compare and contrast African American and white schools in Mississippi; write a literary analysis about the attitude of Mississippi/Southern government officials towards the education of African Americans, citing specific evidence from both fiction and nonfiction excerpts; and identify differences between primary and secondary resources.

The *Separate But Not Equal: Mississippi Education* lesson plan is adaptable for grades 8-12.

Curricular Connections		
Common Core Language Arts	Grade 8	RL 1, 2, 3, 4, 6; W 1, 4, 5, 9; SL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; L 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	Grades 9-10	RL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; W 1, 4, 5, 9; SL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; L 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	Grades 11-12	RL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; W1, 4, 5, 9; SL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; L 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Social Studies	Mississippi Studies	4a; 6a
	U.S. History from Post-Reconstruction to the Present	1a; 1b; 4a; 4c; 4d; 7a
	Minority Studies	1b; 2c; 4a
	African American Studies	1c; 1d; 5a; 5b; 7b
	Problems in American Democracy	2b; 5a; 5b; 5d



“I now truly understand what a wonderful resource the Department of Archives and History is for my classroom. I will be back, and often.”

Loran Nicole Bell-Taylor teaches at Forest Hill High School in Jackson Public Schools. She has taught all levels of English from grades 7-12 and social studies. Currently she teaches creative writing and survey of African American literature. She was a participant in MDAH’s first annual Summer Teachers School in 2015.

**Materials:** Separate But Not Equal PowerPoint; *Guided Notes Worksheet*; *Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources*; *Excerpt 1*; *Excerpt 2*.

**Procedures:**

**Activity One:**

1. Distribute *Guided Notes Worksheet 1* to students .
2. Project the Separate But Not Equal PowerPoint presentation and have students complete the worksheet during viewing.
3. Discuss the worksheet as a class.

**Activity Two:**

1. Distribute the *Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources* worksheet to students.
2. Review primary and secondary sources.
3. Have students complete the *Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources* worksheet independently.

**Activity Three:**

1. Distribute *Excerpts 1* from “The Ethics of Living with Jim Crow” from *Uncle Tom’s Children: Five Long Stories* by Richard Wright and *Excerpt 2* from *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor to students.
2. Have students read independently, in small groups, or together as a class.
3. Students will write a literary analysis answering the following question:
  - What was the prevalent attitude of Mississippi/ Southern government officials towards the education of African Americans? Cite specific evidence from each excerpt to support your conclusion.
4. Give students an opportunity to share their analysis with the class.

**Extension Activity:**

View *With All Deliberate Speed*, a documentary that looks at the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that declared segregated public schools unconstitutional and explores how school desegregation was delayed for decades. Features interviews with individuals involved with the *Brown* lawsuit and dramatic readings related to the case. Produced by Feature Docs and Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2005. 111 minutes, color. Grades 8-12.

This film can be borrowed free of charge from the Mississippi History on Loan Collection. Go to <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/> or contact the Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Guided Notes Worksheet***

**Directions:** Use the power point Separate but Not Equal to answer the following questions.

1. What was the importance of the 13th Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What was the importance of the 14th Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Which sections of the 1890 Mississippi Constitution were written specifically to disenfranchise African Americans?

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4. What specifically did these sections establish? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Who was Homer Plessy? \_\_\_\_\_

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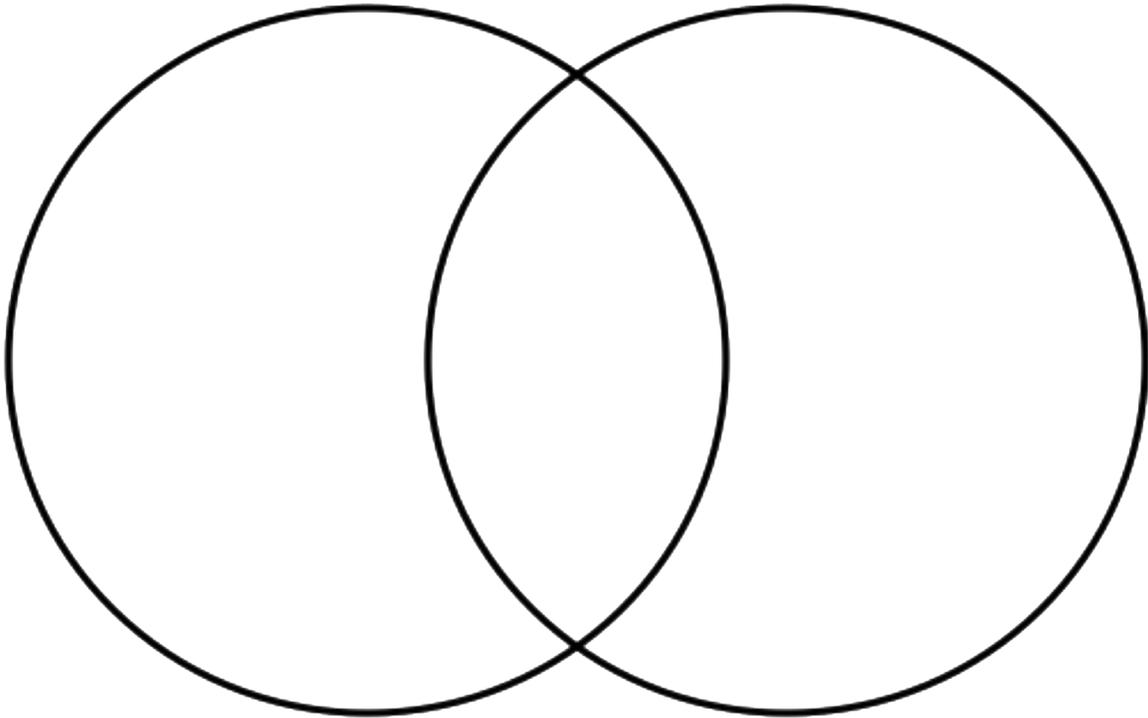
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6. What was the importance of *Plessy v. Ferguson*? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Using the venn diagram below, compare and contrast the photos of the African American schools and the white elementary schools in Adams County, Mississippi.



8. What were the differences in funding between African American students and white students? In the salaries of the teachers for each school?

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9. Who is Ruby Bridges? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What do you think was significant in Ruby Bridges' meeting and viewing the Norman Rockwell painting (based on her personal experience) with President Obama?

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### **Guided Notes Worksheet Key**

**Directions:** Use the power point Separate but Not Equal to answer the following questions.

1. What was the importance of the 13th Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_

The 13th Amendment outlawed the practice of slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States, except in the case of criminal punishment and conviction.

2. What was the importance of the 14th Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_

The 14th Amendment gave citizenship to everyone born or naturalized in the United States and assured them life, liberty, property, due process, and equal protection under the law.

3. Which sections of the 1890 Mississippi Constitution were written specifically to disenfranchise African Americans?

Section 241, Section 242, and Section 243.

4. What specifically did these sections establish? \_\_\_\_\_

Section 241 (sets voting standards regarding age and residency and restricts voting by criminals), Section 242 (tightens the regulations needed to become a registered voter), and Section 243 (the institution of a poll tax).

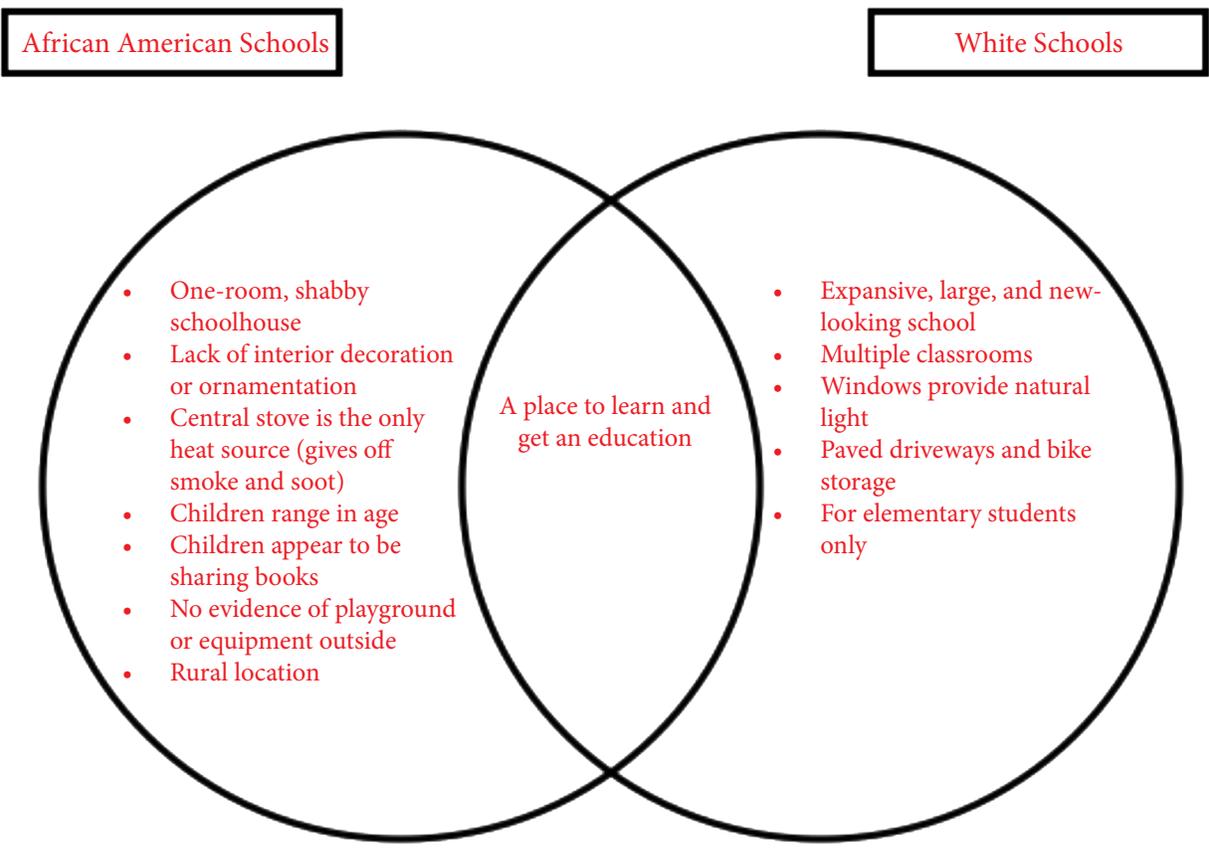
5. Who was Homer Plessy? \_\_\_\_\_

Plessy was an African American who was convicted for sitting in the white section of a train car in the late 1800s.

6. What was the importance of *Plessy v. Ferguson*? \_\_\_\_\_

The May 18, 1896, Supreme Court ruling stated that separate but equal facilities was not discrimination and not un-Constitutional.

7. Using the venn diagram below, compare and contrast the photos of the African American schools and the white elementary schools in Adams County, Mississippi.



8. What were the differences in funding between African American students and white students? In the salaries of the teachers for each school?

African American schools and supplies were poorly maintained and updated. In Mississippi, \$98.15 and \$43.17 were spent yearly on white and African American students respectively. Teachers earned \$2,261 and \$1, 302 yearly at white and African American schools respectively.

9. Who is Ruby Bridges? Bridges was a six-year-old child when she integrated a white school in New Orleans. American artist Norman Rockwell's painting of her walking to school (escorted by U.S. marshals) became an iconic image of the Civil Rights Movement.

10. What do you think was significant in Ruby Bridges' meeting and viewing the Norman Rockwell painting (based on her personal experience) with President Obama?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources***

**Primary Source:** a record made by people who saw or took part in an event (originates from the past).

**Secondary Source:** a record of an event written by someone not there at the time.

**Directions:** Label the following resources as either a primary (P) resource or a secondary (S) source.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A website that lists the entire Mississippi Constitution of 1890 word for word.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Pictures from the era of segregation.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ A film clip from the 2015 movie *Selma* which was based on a true story.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The chapter on civil rights in your history book.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The Ruby Bridges film clip with interview.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A film about Ruby Bridges.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ An autobiography written by Richard Wright entitled *The Ethics of Living with Jim Crow*.
8. How do you think that historical fiction writers use primary and secondary sources in their writings?

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9. Which is the most accurate type of resource, primary or secondary? Why?

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10. Name a novel or short story in which the author most probably used primary and secondary sources. Why do you think this particular story used this type of research? Give a specific example.

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources Key***

**Primary Source:** a record made by people who saw or took part in an event (originates from the past).

**Secondary Source:** a record of an event written by someone not there at the time.

**Directions:** Label the following resources as either a primary (P) resource or a secondary (S) source.

1. **S** A website that lists the entire Mississippi Constitution of 1890 word for word.
2. **P** Pictures from the era of segregation.
3. **S** A film clip from the 2015 movie *Selma* which was based on a true story.
4. **S** The chapter on civil rights in your history book.
5. **P** The Ruby Bridges film clip with interview.
6. **S** A film about Ruby Bridges.
7. **P** An autobiography written by Richard Wright entitled *The Ethics of Living with Jim Crow*.
8. How do you think that historical fiction writers use primary and secondary sources in their writings?

Possible answers include to make the story feel authentic, to educate readers about historical events, or to attract an audience who usually has no interest in history.

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9. Which is the most accurate type of resource, primary or secondary? Why?

Primary because it is a source that is written, photograph, filmed, drawn, etc. by an eyewitness to the event.

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Primary sources capture a "live" impression of an event or opinion whose details can be forgotten, distilled, or slanted in secondary sources created after-the-fact.

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10. Name a novel or short story in which the author most likely used primary and secondary sources. Why do you think this particular story used this type of research? Give a specific example.

Possible answers include *The Help*; *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; and *Black Boy*.

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***Excerpt 1: “The Ethics of Living with Jim Crow” from Uncle Tom’s Children: Five Long Stories by Richard Wright***

Here my Jim Crow education assumed quite a different form. It was no longer brutally cruel, but subtly cruel. Here I learned to lie, to steal, to dissemble. I learned to play that dual role which every Negro must play if he wants to eat and live.

For example, it was almost impossible to get a book to read. It was assumed that after a Negro had imbibed what scanty schooling the state furnished he had no further need for books. I was always borrowing books from men on the job. One day I mustered enough courage to ask one of the men to let me get books from the library in his name. Surprisingly, he consented. I cannot help but think that he consented because he was a Roman Catholic and felt a vague sympathy for Negroes, being himself an object of hatred. Armed with a library card, I obtained books in the following manner: I would write a note to the librarian, saying: “Please let this n\*\*\*\*\* boy have the following books.” I would then sign it with the white man’s name.

When I went to the library, I would stand at the desk, hat in hand, looking as unbookish as possible. When I received the books desired I would take them home. If the books listed in the note happened to be out, I would sneak into the lobby and forge a new one. I never took any chances guessing with the white librarian about what the fictitious white man would want to read. No doubt if any of the white patrons had suspected that some of the volumes they enjoyed had been in the home of a Negro, they would not have tolerated it for an instant.

Richard Wright, “Big Bou Leaves Home” in *Uncle Tom’s Children* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 13-14.

## ***Excerpt 2: Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor***

By ten o'clock, Miss Crocker had rearranged our seating and written our names on her seating chart. I was still sitting beside Gracey and Alma but we had been moved from the third to the first row in front of a small potbellied stove. Although being eyeball to eyeball with Miss Crocker was nothing to look forward to, the prospect of being warm once the cold weather set in was nothing to be sneezed at either, so I resolved to make the best of my rather dubious position.

Now Miss Crocker made a startling announcement: This year we would all have books.

Everyone gasped, for most of the students had never handled a book at all besides the family Bible. I admit that even I was somewhat excited. Although Mama had several books, I had never had one of my very own.

"Now we're very fortunate to get these readers," Miss Crocker explained while we eagerly awaited the unveiling. "The county superintendent of schools himself brought these books down here for our use and we must take extra-good care of them." She moved toward her desk. "So let's all promise that we'll take the best care possible of these new books." She stared down, expecting our response. "All right, all together, let's repeat, 'We promise to take good care of our new books.'" She looked sharply at me as she spoke.

"WE PROMISE TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF OUR NEW BOOKS!"

"Fine," Miss Crocker beamed, then proudly threw back the tarpaulin.

Sitting so close to the desk, I could see that the covers of the books, a motley red, were badly worn and that the gray edges of the pages had been marred by pencils, crayons, and ink. My anticipation at having my own book ebbed to a sinking disappointment. But Miss Crocker continued to beam as she called each fourth grader to her desk and, recording a number in her roll book, handed him or her a book.

As I returned from my trip to her desk, I noticed the first graders anxiously watching the disappearing pile. Miss Crocker must have noticed them too, for as I sat down, she said, "Don't worry, little ones, there are plenty of readers for you too. See there on Miss Davis's desk." Wide eyes turned to the covered teacher's platform directly in front of them and an audible sigh of relief swelled in the room.

I glanced across at Little Man, his face lit in eager excitement. I knew that he could not see the soiled covers or the marred pages from where he sat, and even though his penchant for cleanliness was often annoying, I did not like to think of his disappointment when he saw the books as they really were. But there was nothing that I could do about it, so I opened my book to its center and began browsing through the spotted pages. Girls with blond braids and boys with blue eyes stared up at me. I found a story about a boy and his dog lost in a cave and began reading while Miss Crocker's voice droned on monotonously.

Suddenly I grew conscious of a break in that monotonous tone and I looked up. Miss Crocker was sitting at Miss Davis's desk with the first-grade books stacked before her, staring fiercely down at Little Man, who was pushing a book back upon the desk.

"What's that you said, Clayton Chester Logan?" she asked.

The room became gravely silent. Everyone knew that Little Man was in big trouble for no one, but no one, ever called Little Man "Clayton Chester" unless she or he meant serious business.

Little Man knew this too. His lips parted slightly as he took his hands from the book. He quivered, but he did not take his eyes from Miss Crocker. "I-I said may I have another book please, ma'am," he squeaked. "That one's dirty."

"Dirty!" Miss Crocker echoed, appalled by such temerity. She stood up, gazing down upon Little Man like a bony giant, but Little Man raised his head and continued to look into her eyes. "Dirty!" And just who do you think you are, Clayton Chester! Here the county is giving us these wonderful books during these hard times and you're going to stand there and tell me that the book's too dirty? Now you take that book or get nothing at all!"

Little Man lowered his eyes and said nothing as he stared at the book. For several moments he stood there, his face barely visible above the desk, then he turned and looked at the few remaining books and, seeming to realize that they were as badly soiled as the one Miss Crocker had given him, he looked across the room at me. I nodded and Little Man, glancing up again at Miss Crocker, slid the book from the edge of the desk, and with his back straight and his head up returned to his seat.

Miss Crocker sat down again. "Some people around here seem to be giving themselves airs. I'll tolerate no more of that," she scowled. "Sharon Lake, come get your book."

I watched Little Man as he scooted into his seat beside two other little boys. He sat for a while with a stony face looking out the window; then, evidently accepting the fact that the book in front of him was the best that he could expect, he turned and opened it. But as he stared at the book's inside cover, his face clouded, changing from sulky acceptance to puzzlement. His brows furrowed. Then his eyes grew wide, and suddenly he sucked in his breath and sprang from his chair like a wounded animal, flinging the book onto the floor and stomping madly upon it.

Miss Crocker rushed to Little Man and grabbed him up in powerful hands. She shook him vigorously, then set him on the floor again." Now, just what's gotten into you, Clayton Chester?"

But Little Man said nothing. He just stood staring down at the open book, shivering with indignant anger.

"Pick it up," she ordered.

"No!" defied Little Man.

"No? I'll give you ten seconds to pick up that book, boy, or I'm going to get my switch."

Little Man bit his lower lip, and I knew that he was not going to pick up the book. Rapidly, I turned to the inside cover of my own book and saw immediately what had made Little Man so furious. Stamped on the inside cover was a chart which read:

<b>PROPERTY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION</b>			
<b>Spokane County, Mississippi</b>			
<b>September, 1922</b>			
<b>CHRONOLOGICAL ISSUANCE</b>	<b>DATE OF ISSUANCE</b>	<b>CONDITION OF BOOK</b>	<b>RACE OF STUDENT</b>
1	September 1922	New	White
2	September 1923	Excellent	White
3	September 1924	Excellent	White
4	September 1925	Very Good	White
5	September 1926	Good	White
6	September 1927	Good	White
7	September 1928	Average	White
8	September 1929	Average	White
9	September 1930	Average	White
10	September 1931	Poor	White
11	September 1932	Poor	White
12	September 1933	Very Poor	nigra
13			
14			
15			

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LESSON PLANS  
TEACHER EVALUATION**

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES AND PLEASE MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE. THANK YOU!

TEACHER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON TITLE ***Separate But Not Equal: Mississippi Education*** \_\_\_\_\_

1. In your opinion, did this unit elicit better than average student response; if so, how?
2. Which segments of the unit exceeded your students' attention span?
3. Will this unit be of assistance to you in developing future classroom activities; if so, how?
4. How did this unit add to your earlier teaching on the same subject?
5. Would this teaching unit be handier to use as a:  
\_\_\_ multi-day unit      \_\_\_ multi-week unit      \_\_\_ other
6. Were the activities and lessons appropriate for your students? How?

Please rate the following lesson materials and activities by circling the appropriate number.

**4=excellent, 3=good, 2=average, 1=inadequate**

Directions and Notes	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Curricular Connections	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Student Worksheets	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Interactive Activities	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Historic Images	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
References and Resources	4	3	2	<u>1</u>

Activity One	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Activity Two	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Activity Three	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Extension Activity	4	3	2	<u>1</u>
Overall Unit	4	3	2	<u>1</u>

We would appreciate any additional comments on this teaching unit and any suggestions for improvement. Comments may be entered in the space below.

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