History Book Discussion Study Group Class Assignment
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A. Heading- Is America Living Up to What It Says It Stands For?
Reading, MA. 6/12/09 Grades 7-9

B. Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks Standards:
USII.9 Analyze the post-Civil War struggles of African-Americans and women to gain basic civil rights.

C. Historical Thinking Benchmarks Addressed:
• Analysis of primary and secondary sources
• An understanding of bias and point of view.

D. Essential Questions:
• During the 1920’s, was America’s treatment towards African-Americans consistent with the Declaration of Independence and the 14th Amendment?
• What were the different perspectives and opinions during the 1920’s towards the treatment of African-Americans during the 1920’s?

E. Learning Objectives:
• Students will analyze primary and secondary sources to gain different perspectives concerning the treatment of African-Americans during the 1920’s
• Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the different perspectives concerning the treatment of African-Americans during the 1920’s

F. Learning Activities:

Is America Living Up to What It Says It Stands For?

This 3-5 day lesson plan is intended as an introductory lesson to post-World War I, 1920’s America. It has been said that America fought in World War I in the name of freedom for all. America has always supposed to be a beacon light for liberty and justice for all. Was America living up to its claimed ideals and principles during the 1920s? This introductory lesson’s main objective is to give students an opportunity to research, read, and think for themselves whether or not the United States in the 1920’s is backing up its words with its actions. The readings are a limited sample of mostly primary sources. However, the readings give the students an opportunity to practice thinking about and questioning the country’s actions and principles.

Procedures/Activities
1) Hand out copies of the excerpt of the Declaration of Independence (Sheet A) to the students and the accompanying first answer sheet. Students work either independently, in groups, or collectively as a class to read both paragraphs and write each in their own words on the given lines. (The teacher may have to review or teach what the Declaration of Independence is and its purpose.) The class discusses the Declaration of Independence excerpt as well as what the students wrote.

2) Hand out copies of Amendment 14 (Sheet B). Students work independently, in groups, or collectively as a class to read section 1 and respond to the questions on the answer sheet. The class discusses section 1 and the student responses to the question sheet.

3) Teacher introduces video, “Road to Brown”. Citation (MLA)
   Discovery Education. 11 June 2009
   <http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com/>
   Students will view an eight-minute segment of the video (the first two segments) and respond to the question sheet either as they watch the video or after the video, individually or collectively. (Teacher may want to briefly relate to the students what they are going to see and who Charles Houston is [part 3 does a good job explaining Houston.]) The class discusses the video and student responses to the question sheet.

4) Teacher hands students reading and question sheets C through J at his or her discretion. The reading sheets serve as research so that students can get a varied picture of the attitudes and beliefs of American thoughts on race and laws during the 1920’s. The questions help organize the readings for the students and help the students and teacher check for understanding. Students may work independently, in small groups, or the class can read each collectively to help with understanding.

G. Authentic Assessment: Newspaper Editorial
   Once students have read all of the excerpts and the teacher has checked for understanding, the students are now ready to assume their roles as writers. The teacher will assign one of three roles to each student at his or her discretion. (I will probably have them blindly choose their fate somehow.) They are going to write as a newspaper reporter writing an editorial to the reading public about whether or not America of the 1920’s is living up to the Declaration of Independence and the 14th Amendment. The three roles are:
   a) Proud white, middle-class American who thinks it is
   b) A back American who thinks it is not
   c) A foreign journalist writing to his or her native country thinking it might or thinking it is not

   The editorial should be at least five paragraphs.
P1) An introduction describing to the reader the thesis and why
Body P2 and P3) Two different reasons backing up their thesis
Body P4) A paragraph that counters an argument that someone who disagree with the writer might bring up
P5) Conclusion that ends with a favorite quote from one of the readings that best sums up the editorial

H. Annotated Bibliography:
- **Citation (MLA) Introduction**: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Fight Against Jim Crow. California Newsreel. 1990. Discovery Education. 11 June 2009 <http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com/>
- **John Harlan and William Billings Brown Decisions-** http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAharlanJ.htm
- **“Equal Rights” by Calvin Coolidge-** http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Equal_Rights
- **Kevin Boyle, Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age**
**Question sheets**

**Sheet A- Declaration of Independence**

Read the "Preamble" and "the Right of the People to Control Their Government" portions of the Declaration of Independence. On the given lines, write each portion in your own words.

**Sheet B- 14th Amendment- Civil Rights Guaranteed, Section 1.**

Read section 1 of the 14th Amendment and respond to the following:

1) For whom does the 14th Amendment apply?

2) Do you think this amendment goes along with the Declaration of Independence? If so, how? If not, why not?

**Video- Road to Brown**

As you watch or after you watch this eight-minute segment from, The Road to Brown, respond to the following:

1) What were some legal protections gained for blacks after the Civil War?

2) What was the significance of *Plessy v. Ferguson*?
Sheet C- Ku Klux Klan Declaration

As you read the Ku Klux Klan Declaration, respond to the following. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) a) What is the audience for this declaration?
   
   b) What is the stated purpose of the declaration?

2) a) The Klan is inviting men to help the Klan accomplish what?
   
   b) Who do you think would be attracted to this organization based on this paragraph? Why?

3) What kind of language is used in this paragraph to try and attract future members? Explain.

4) Explain how this declaration lives up to the Declaration of Independence and the 14th Amendment in your opinion.
Sheet D- Malcolm X

As you read this excerpt from Malcolm X’s biography, respond to the following. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) Why do you think Malcolm X shares with his readers this paragraph? What do you think is his purpose?

2) Why do you think Garvey’s exhorting the Negro masses to return to their ancestral African homeland would be controversial?

3) What do you think was the purpose of the Klan’s actions in this paragraph?

4) What made Malcolm X’s father give up the thought that freedom would never be achieved for blacks in America?

5) Why do you think Malcolm X hated every drop of his white grandfather’s blood in him?

6) Why do you think Malcolm X’s father was a target of the Black Legionaires for wanting to own a store, for living outside the Lansing Negro district, and for spreading dissension?

7) What does this paragraph suggest about the feelings Malcolm X had towards the white policemen and firemen? Why?

8) What do you think Malcolm X would say if asked about his feelings of the Declaration of Independence and the 14th Amendment at the time of this writing? Why?
Sheet E- John Harlan’s dissent to *Plessy v. Ferguson* and William Billings Brown’s defense of the Louisiana court and defense of separate but equal.

Read the dissenting opinion of John Harlan of the Supreme Court and respond to the following. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) What do you think overall is John Harlan’s opinion about what the Constitution says regarding race according to the first paragraph?

2) What does Harlan think of the Supreme Court’s decision to defend Louisiana’s policy? Why does he think this?

3) In the last paragraph, what is John Harlan’s fear if states treat people of different races differently?

Read William Billings Brown’s statement defending the lower court’s decision to convict Homer Plessey for riding in a white only railway car and respond to the following. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) Why does Brown think it is OK for states to enforce laws that separate people based on race?

2) According to the underlined portion of the second paragraph, why does Brown consider it OK to separate people based on race in certain areas of the country?

3) Why do you think Brown mention the District of Columbia?

4) What does Brown blame the “colored race” for?

5) Whom do you agree with more, John Harlan or William Billings Brown? Why?
Sheet G- "Equal Rights" by Calvin Coolidge
Read the speech given by Calvin Coolidge in 1920 and respond to the following. He would become president in 1923. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) According to Coolidge in the first paragraph, what was July 4, 1776 truly all about?

2) What do you think Coolidge found so remarkable about "the beginnings of independence"?


4) Based on paragraph four and the entire speech, what do you think Coolidge would say if asked about his opinion on the notion of "separate but equal"? Why?

5) What is your opinion about the speech given by Calvin Coolidge? Why?
Sheet H- "Liberty Under the Law" by Warren G. Harding
Read the speech given by Warren Harding in 1920 and respond to the following. He would become president in 1921. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) What are some principles Harding is calling his Republican party to cling to?

2) When would Harding call on the government to show its power and will? Explain.

3) What do you think Harding seems to be most worried about in paragraph 3? What makes you think so? Explain.

4) What do you think Harding meant in the last two sentences of paragraph four. Explain.
Arc of Justice, written by Kevin Boyle, is a non-fiction account of a 1925 murder case that occurred in Detroit, Michigan. It describes Ossian Sweet, a successful black doctor and his wife, Gladys, deciding to purchase and move into a house in an all-white neighborhood. Eventually an angry mob protesting the Sweets’ move arrive at the Sweet home and begin hurling insults and throwing rocks towards the Sweets and supporting family members and friends as they take cover inside. Eventually, someone from the house shoots at the angry mob killing two people. Boyle’s narrative relates to the reader the events of the shooting, the various reactions, and the eventual trials. Sheets I and J are excerpts from the book.

Sheet I – Waterworks Park Improvement Association
As you read this excerpt from Arc of Justice, respond to the following. Each question number pertains to the number in the margin of the reading.

1) What rumor was going around Garland Avenue in June 1925 according to paragraph 1?

2) Why were homeowners so worried about a black family moving in to their neighborhood?

3) Describe the setting for the meeting on Tuesday night, July 14 at the elementary school?

4) What was the main idea of the keynote speaker’s speech that night? What was he trying to convince to the audience?

5) What was the general reaction of the audience to the speech?

6) What is your opinion of this meeting? Should it have taken place? Why or why not?
Sheet J- Clarence Darrow for the Defense
Clarence Darrow served as the lead defense attorney for Ossian Sweet. This is an excerpt from Arco of Justice by Kevin Boyle. This is part of Darrow’s closing statement during the first trial. Read the portion that is underlined and respond to the following.

1) What did Darrow think of the mob that was gathering outside of the Sweets’ home the night of the killing? How do you know?