

Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 6, WEBISODE 7

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview

He danced. He sang. He was white, but he blackened his face with make-up, wore bright clothing covered in patches, and took to the stage singing, “Every time I wheel about, I shout Jim Crow.” The comic stage routine of English actor Charles Mathews featured a buffoonish black man named Jim Crow. This image, which stereotyped and demeaned African Americans and their culture, gave its name to the series of restrictions the post-Reconstruction south implemented to keep African Americans separate and unequal. With the withdrawal of federal troops and the collapse of Reconstruction, southern African Americans saw their nascent freedoms eradicated. Jim Crow laws severely limited the rights of African Americans; in the words of orator Frederick Douglass, the African American under Jim Crow was not the slave of “the individual master, but the slave of society.”



Image of “Jim Crow”
From the Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection
Johns Hopkins University



Let's Discuss

Teacher Directions

1. Ask the students the following questions.
 - How did the end of Reconstruction affect African Americans?
 - Where did the term “Jim Crow” come from?
 - How did Jim Crow laws violate the Fourteenth Amendment?
2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

With the end of Reconstruction, African Americans saw their rights severely curtailed. In the post-Reconstruction south, African Americans experienced segregation, lynching, intimidation, voting restrictions, unequal justice. Jim Crow was a stage character that stereotyped African Americans. Jim Crow laws segregated African Americans in the south and violated their civil rights. Jim Crow laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees all citizens equal rights regardless of race.



Teacher Directions

1. Make sure students understand that the term “Jim Crow” came from a clown-like stage character. This stereotype gave its name to the series of laws created in the post-Reconstruction south that kept African Americans segregated and unequal and severely limited their civil rights.
2. Students brainstorm with team members to answer the following questions.
 - What is a stereotype?
 - What groups of people are often stereotyped?
 - Why are stereotypes hurtful?
3. Help students understand that to stereotype means to make broad judgments about a group of people. Different groups are often stereotyped (people from various ethnic groups, athletes, blondes, people from foreign countries), and stereotyping generally demeans or makes fun of people.
4. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Images of Jim Crow*. Working with team partners, students answer the following questions.
 - Describe Jim Crow. What is he doing? How is he dressed? Facial expression?
 - How do these pictures demean (put down) and stereotype African Americans?
 - What messages do they send about African Americans?
 - How would African Americans (including Frederick Douglass) react to seeing such pictures?
 - The song is written in dialect. What does the language use say about black Americans?
5. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Examples of Jim Crow Laws*. Students read and discuss the laws with teammates to answer the following questions.
 - How did these laws affect the lives of African Americans? Were there any aspects of daily life that these laws did not touch?
 - Find adjectives to describe such a life. What emotions would you feel living under these restrictions?
 - Imagine that you were a white person opposed to these laws (and many were). What might happen if you spoke out or wrote a letter to the newspaper?
 - Can people really be “separate but equal”?
6. Students respond to the Jim Crow images by writing a poem. They may choose to focus on what life was like under Jim Crow, to argue against such laws, or to take the identity of a post-Reconstruction African American who is fighting against Jim Crow.



What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom

Teacher Directions

Students discuss and write a response to one of the following questions.

- How would you feel living under Jim Crow laws?
- How can students help others learn not to stereotype people?

Teacher Directions

Activity One

1. Distribute the Student Sheets: *Frederick Douglass Visits the Sip n' Sup Restaurant*. This skit portrays what might have happened if Douglass had visited a segregated restaurant. Set up a small table in front of the classroom and select three students – two boys and one girl. One boy will play Douglass; one will play the waiter; and the girl will play Alma, a friend.

Note to the Teacher: Students may either follow along while actors read their parts or the teacher may choose to distribute scripts only to the actors.

2. Before you begin, tell the class that Frederick Douglass wrote that every time he experienced an act of discrimination, even one directed at others, he wrote letters of protest to the offending parties. Tell students that after they watch this brief skit, they will be writing their own letters of protest on Douglass' behalf using Student Sheet: *A Letter of Protest*.
3. After the play, discuss the following questions with the class.
 - How did Douglass and Alma treat the waiter?
 - How did the waiter treat Douglass and Alma? Describe his behavior.
 - Do you think that Douglass saw the "Whites Only" sign and entered the restaurant anyway? Why might he have done that?
 - What kind of a man is the owner, Mr. McCoy? What group was he planning on joining?
 - Do you think the waiter was afraid of his boss? Why?
 - What if Mr. McCoy had decided to serve lunch to Douglass and Alma. What might have happened to him?
 - What would you have done in the same situation?
 - Do you agree with how Douglass handled the situation?
4. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Letters of Protest*. Students write their letters and read them to the class.

Moving Toward Freedom,
Continued.

Activity Two

1. If necessary, acquaint students with the civil rights work of Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1960s. Frederick Douglass was born over one hundred years before King (Douglass was born in 1817; King was born in 1929). Both were intelligent, well-educated men who were excellent writers and public speakers. They expressed similar dreams.
2. Distribute the Student Sheets: *Who Said It First?* Working with teammates, students cut each sheet into squares and put all squares into a pile in the center of each team.
3. Students take turns selecting a quote and reading it to teammates. The student explains the quote and guesses if the author of the quote is Dr. King or Frederick Douglass.

Authors of quotes:

- (1) Frederick Douglass
 - (2) MLK, Jr.
 - (3) MLK, Jr.
 - (4) Frederick Douglass
 - (5) Frederick Douglass
 - (6) MLK, Jr.
 - (7) MLK, Jr.
 - (8) Frederick Douglass
 - (9) MLK, Jr.
 - (10) MLK, Jr.
 - (11) Frederick Douglass
 - (12) MLK, Jr.
4. To close this exercise, reinforce the difficulty of knowing which man authored each quote and the similarities of the quotes despite the passage of time. If time permits, discuss what this tells students about the progress, or lack thereof, of civil rights? Which quotes might apply today?

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with students.

Language Arts — Students interview a friend, family member, neighbor, or teacher and about their memories of Martin Luther King Jr., and the era of the 1960s. What types of discrimination did he or she experience? How did they view the civil rights movement?

Art — Students create collage-covered shoeboxes as “Stereotype Boxes.” Students select pictures of people and groups who are and have been stereotyped throughout the world, not only in the United States.



Connections

Connections, Cont.

Music — Students listen to a recording of the song, “Little Boxes.” What does the song tell us about our lives? About stereotyping? Teachers may consider using the song “Short People” for a similar discussion.

Art — Students illustrate one of the Jim Crow laws or Frederick Douglass’ encounter with the waiter at the Sip n’ Sup Restaurant.

Images of Jim Crow



Image of "Jim Crow"
From the Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection
Johns Hopkins University

**Come listen all you gals and boys,
I'm going to sing a little song,
My name is Jim Crow
Weel about and turn about and
do jis so
Eb'ry time I weel about
I jump Jim Crow**



From the *Africans in America* web site
@ www.pbs.org

Examples of Jim Crow Laws

- In Oklahoma, telephone booths were segregated.
- Mississippi had separate soft-drink machines for blacks and whites.
- In Atlanta, Georgia, an Afro-American could not "swear to tell the truth" on the same Bible used by white witnesses.
- In North Carolina, factories were separated into black and white sections.
- In some Alabama towns it was against the law for blacks and whites to play cards, checkers, dominoes, or other games together on athletic teams.
- In Florida, school textbooks for white and black students were segregated in separate warehouses.
- In Washington, D.C., black people could not bury their dead dogs or cats in the same pet cemeteries used by whites. Public parks were segregated. Even jails and prisons had separate sections for black prisoners.

From Kenneth Gamerman, Executive Editor, Afro-American History Series, Volume 3, Separate and Unequal-1865-1910 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1969), p. 89.

Some of the Jim Crow laws seem silly to anyone who has not had to live under them. One law tried to stop black and white cotton-mill workers from looking out the same window! Another, in Birmingham, Alabama, said blacks and whites could not play checkers or dominoes together. In Mobile, Alabama, Negroes had to be off the streets by ten o'clock each evening.... White taxi drivers could not carry black passengers; Negro drivers could not accept white passengers. There were Jim Crow elevators in office buildings. A black child could not buy an ice cream cone at a white stand. A black college professor—or any other black American—could not use a public library. Jim Crow was the way of life; its touch soiled each day of a Negro's life.

All parts of life were segregated. Laws were passed to prevent marriage between whites and blacks. There were separate hospitals for the two races. White nurses could not treat black men. Even a dying Negro would not be admitted to a "white" hospital. Southern states ran separate orphan homes for black and white children. Some states had separate prisons. If an Afro-American wanted to attend a theater or a movie, he had to buy his ticket at a separate booth. He had to enter by a separate entrance. He had to sit in the balcony, well apart from any white people. Each black person all his life was kept apart from white people. Then, when he died, he had to be buried from a black funeral home in a black cemetery. This was Jim Crow from birth to death.

Frederick Douglas Visits the Sip n' Sup Restaurant

A Skit in One Act

By

Iwanna B. Free

Cast of Characters:

Frederick Douglass — abolitionist, orator, writer

Alma — Frederick's friend

Waiter

Stage Directions: Set up a small table and two chairs in the middle of the room. The waiter stays offstage until his entrance. All actors read their parts; no memorization is needed. The restaurant is not full. All patrons are white.

[Enter Douglass and Alma]

Douglass: Well, Alma, this looks like a fine place to have lunch. One of the best in town.

Alma: It's lovely, Frederick. I am so hungry. Thank you for inviting me.

Douglass: *[showing her to a chair and holding the seat for her]* Well now, let's get some menus.

Alma: *[looking around]* Frederick. People seem to be staring at us.

Douglass: *[looking around for a waiter. He sees one nearby and motions to him]* Waiter! Could we have some menus and some water please?

Waiter: *[approaching hesitantly]* Mister, you better get out of here before my boss comes back.

Douglass: And why so?

Waiter: This restaurant is for whites only. You people ought to know that you can't just walk in here and expect to be served!

Douglass: And why not? A new Civil Rights Bill was just passed stating that “our people” — as you put it — can be served anywhere.

Waiter: I’m not very well-educated, and I don’t know about any bill. I just know that my boss will fire me if he sees you even sitting here. I didn’t see you walk through the door.....and besides ...there’s a sign outside saying “Whites Only.” You’ll have to go down the street to the Negro restaurant.

Alma: Frederick, dear, I really think we should go.

Douglass: No, not yet. [to the waiter] I would like to speak to your boss. We’ll wait until he returns.

Waiter: Even when he comes back, he won’t talk to you. He makes me do it. He only talks to the colored help in the kitchen.

Douglass: Young man, do you know that what you are doing is breaking the law of the land? The 13th Amendment freed the slaves; the 14th said that all states have to support the Constitution and not make their own laws; and the 15th just gave us the right to vote. We have every right to eat in this restaurant.

Waiter: I don’t know anything about that — except that Mr. Yancey says he’s going to join the Ku Klux Klan now that you people can vote and everything.

Douglass: [To Alma] I am getting a very clear picture of Mr. Yancey. [To the waiter] Your Mr. Yancey sounds like a typical Redeemer. That’s what they call Southerners who think that the rules for Reconstruction and the laws of the country don’t apply to them.

Waiter: His name isn’t Mr. Yancey. It’s Mr. Yancey McCoy. And you really have to get out of here. We’ve got these Jim Crow laws and Mr. McCoy could even get fined. He’d take it out of my paycheck. I know he would. Plus I’d lose my job.

Alma: Please, Frederick, we don't want this young man to lose his job.

Douglass: Very well, Alma. [To the waiter] Young man, we will leave. However, do tell your Mr. McCoy that Frederick Douglass was here. He might recognize my name. Tell him that his name might appear in one of my newspaper or magazine articles, and it won't be praising his food. One more thing. Every time I encounter discrimination in any form, I make it a habit to write a letter of protest. Tell Mr. McCoy that he can expect a letter as well.

Good Day. Let's go, Alma. Down the block it is. *[They exit]*

The End

Who Said It First?

1.
“Fortunately, the Constitution of the United States knows no distinction between citizens on account of color.”

2.
“I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged on the color of their skin but on the content of their character.”

3.
“Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation.”

4.
“All that is necessary to be done is to make the government consistent with itself, and render the rights of the States compatible with the sacred rights of human nature.”

5.
“No republic is safe that tolerates a privileged class, or denies to any of its citizens equal rights and equal means to maintain them.”

6.
“Let us hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities.”

7.

“...the Emancipation Proclamation...[was] a momentous decree [that] came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice.”

8.

“The right of the Negro is the true solution of our national troubles.”

9.

“There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights.”

10.

“The life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of Discrimination.”

11.

“...it will be found that the nation must fall or flourish with the Negro.”

12.

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’”