

II.G.13

The Other Side of Modernity

Racism in the USA – A Short History

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Widersprüche ziehen sich wie ein roter Faden durch die US-amerikanische Geschichte. Einer der augenfälligsten ist der von Demokratie und Menschenrechten einerseits und einem historisch verwurzelten Rassismus andererseits. Diese Unterrichtseinheit erzählt die Geschichte des Rassismus in den USA und zeigt auf, wie das Erbe der Sklaverei die USA bis heute prägt.

KOMPETENZEN

Klassenstufe: 11–13

Dauer: ca. 10 Stunden

Kompetenzen: Zusammenhänge und Kontinuitäten in der Geschichte beurteilen; politische, wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Zusammenhänge analysieren; Denk- und Legitimationsmuster kritisch bewerten; Quellen analysieren; Statistiken analysieren und interpretieren

Thematische Bereiche: Geschichte der USA, Rassismus

Medien: Texte, Bilder, Diagramme, Schaubilder

Slavery – America’s Original Sin

M 1

Tasks

1. Look at the picture and read the text explaining its background. Then read the excerpt from the slave law below. Together with a partner, outline the legal argument in the slave code regarding the death of a slave following punishment by his “master”. As what are slaves categorized in the argument and what are the consequences of this categorization for the question, whether killing a slave is a crime or not?
2. Apply the legal argument to the story of Gordon: How did it legally justify his brutal whipping? Discuss your results with the class.

Left: Gordon, or “Whipped Peter”, an escaped slave, during a medical examination where he shows his scars from whipping while in slavery.

In the midst of the American Civil War (1861–65), Gordon fled from the plantation of his slaveholders John and Bridget Lyons. His flight took him 10 days over 40 miles, until he finally made it to a camp of Union soldiers in Baton Rouge. The Union represented the Northern States, who opposed slavery.

As he sat for the picture, Gordon reportedly said: “Overseer Artayou Carrier whipped me. I was two months in bed sore from the whipping. My master come after I was whipped; he discharged the overseer.”

Bild: © Library of Congress



Excerpt from a slave law in Virginia (1669)

[...] if any slave resist his master [...] and by the extremity of the correction should chance to die¹, that his death shall not be accounted a felony², but the master [...] be acquitted³ from molestation⁴, since it cannot be presumed⁵ that premeditated malice⁶ (which alone makes murder a felony) should induce⁷ any man to slay his own estate⁸.

Quellen: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_\(slave\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_(slave)) und Encyclopaedia Britannica: Slave codes, online unter: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/slave-codes> (zuletzt geprüft: 23.11.2021)

¹ **chance to die**: zufällig sterben

² **felony**: Straftat, Verbrechen

³ **to be acquitted**: freigesprochen

⁴ **molestation**: Belästigung, hier: Quälerei

⁵ **to presume**: annehmen, vermuten

⁶ **premeditated malice**: vorsätzliche Bosheit

⁷ **to induce**: veranlassen

⁸ **estate**: Eigentum, Besitz

“Separate but Equal” – The Doctrine of Segregation

M 6

Tasks

- Count off 1 to 6 going down the row. Then watch the video on the famous court case “Plessy vs. Ferguson” and briefly answer the question corresponding to your number. Afterwards, report back to the class.
 - Question 1: What exactly happened to Homer Plessy in 1892 and what law did he allegedly break?
 - Question 2: What did the U.S. Supreme Court try to determine and how did it answer?
 - Question 3: How did Justice Brown interpret the 14th Amendment? (i. e. the change to the Constitution that guaranteed equal protection by the law to *all* citizens)
 - Question 4: According to Justice Brown, why was the Louisiana law of separate seating for black and for white people not racist?
 - Question 5: What did Justice Harlan mean by “Our Constitution is color-blind.”?
 - Question 6: How would you explain the phrase “separate but equal” in your own words?

Link to the video: <https://raabe.click/Plessy>

- Reflect on the argument made by the Supreme Court. Do you think it is in line with the constitution, especially with the Fourteenth Amendment? And more generally: Is it possible to reconcile¹ the concept of separation with the concept of equality, as the doctrine “separate but equal” claims? Discuss these questions with the class.

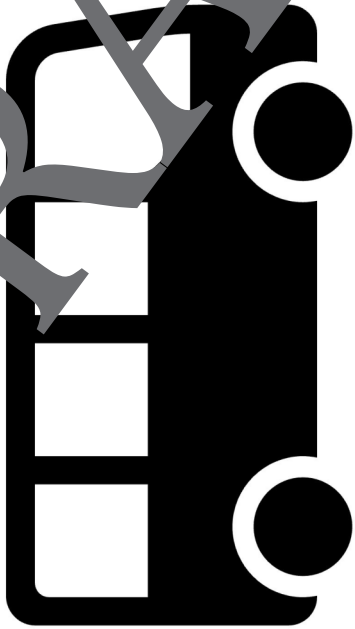


Image description: Segregated drinking fountains.

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¹ to reconcile: hier: vereinbaren, in Übereinstimmung bringen

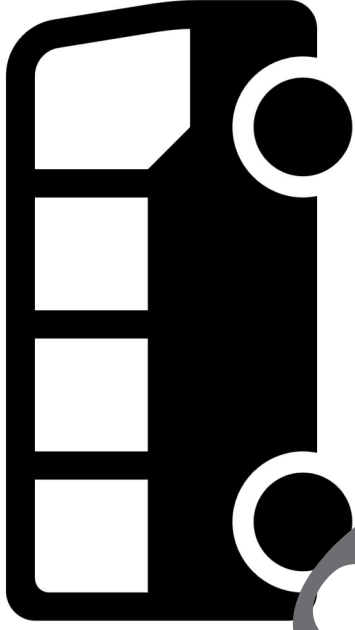
Bus Stop No. 1



Plessy vs. Ferguson / Rosa Parks

- similarities
- differences

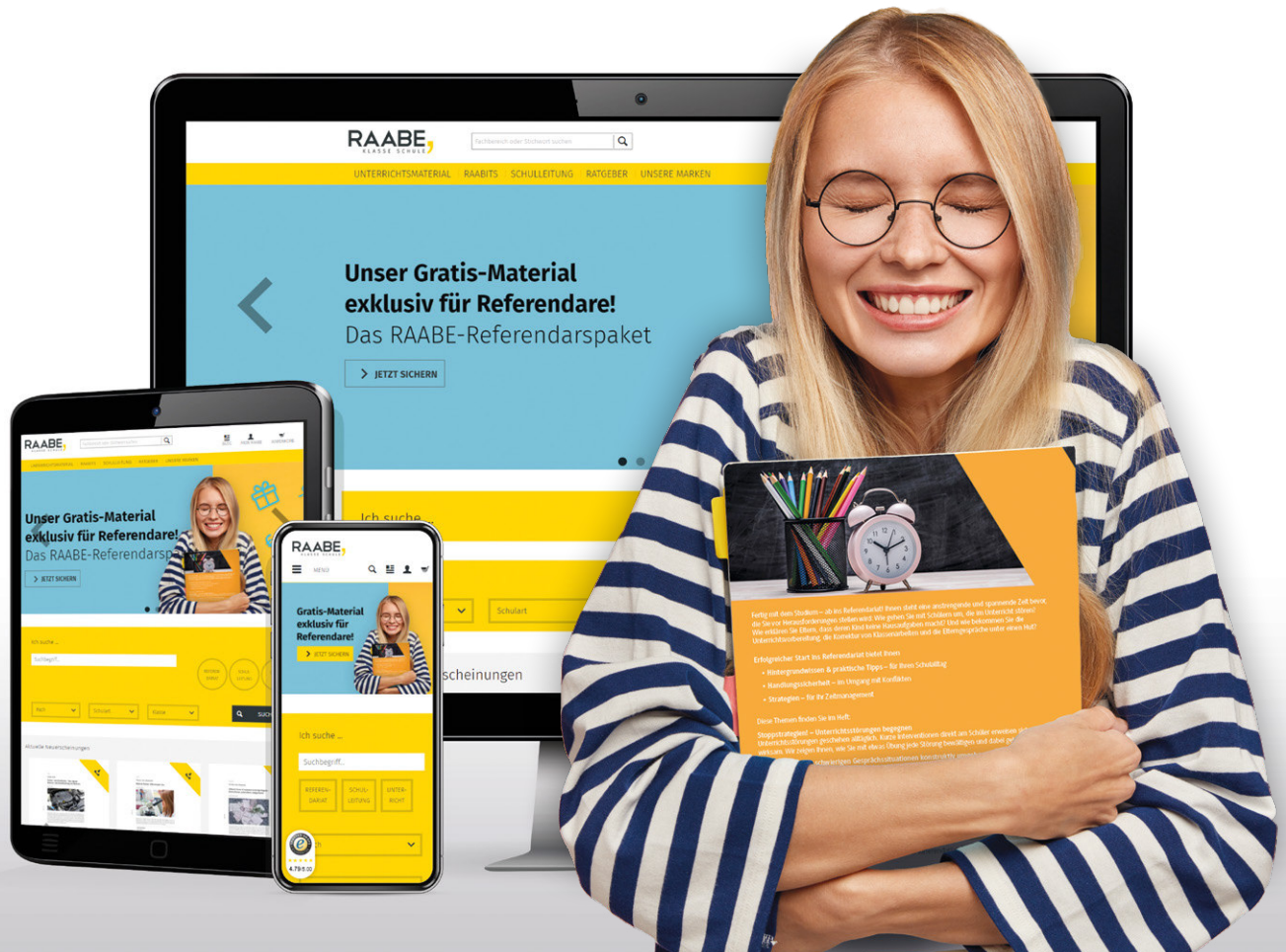
Bus Stop No. 2



In your opinion, which factors contribute to the legal outcome?

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