Lesson 1: Jim Crow: From Bias to Law

Time Estimated: 90 minutes, one afternoon

Objectives:
Students will:
1. Share prior knowledge of Jim Crow and events leading up to this era.
2. Sequence major events leading to the establishment of Jim Crow laws.
3. Place prior events and newly learned events on a rudimentary timeline.

Materials:
• Seven sets of index cards with events prior to Jim Crow. Each card will have a magnetic strip on the back. Some cards will be blank for the students to fill in any other events they see as important. Each set of cards will have the following information:

SET I
1. John Brown’s Raid
2. Emancipation Proclamation
3. Reconstruction begins
4. Amendments 13, 14 and 15 to the U.S. Constitution
5. Virginia’s Reconstruction constitution, 1867-1868
   (Note to teacher: this constitution was ratified in 1869)
6. Reconstruction ends

SET II
1. Rutherford B. Hayes becomes President
2. Virginia’s Redeemers Constitution 1901-1902
3. John Mitchell becomes editor of *The Richmond Planet*
4. Maggie Lena Walker’s “Penny Bank” established
5. Brown v. Board of Education
6. Massive Resistance

• Virginia history textbook, such as *Social Studies Virginia*, Scott Foresman
• Colored Pencils
• Magnetic tape (available at craft or fabric stores)
• Handout: Vocabulary Worksheet of people and terms including:
  2. Rutherford B. Hayes
  3. Redeemers
  4. Jim Crow
  5. Constitution
  6. Civil rights
  7. Compromise
  8. Boycott
  9. *The Richmond Planet*
10. Prejudice
11. Maggie Lena Walker
12. Harry Byrd, Sr.
13. Brown v. Board of Education
14. Massive Resistance

- Print out one copy of the Hayes-Tilden controversy and compromise from the “Rise and Fall of Jim Crow,” PBS website: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_election.html
- Create a copy and make handouts from Library of Virginia site on John Mitchell: advertisement for The Richmond Planet at http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whoweare/exhibits/mitchell/planhq.htm
- Create a copy and make handouts from the article “Jim Crow” Street-Car Law Set to Catch Negroes: Only White Folks in the Trap at http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whoweare/exhibits/mitchell/trap.htm
- Create handouts from the National Archives worksheet: “Written Document Analysis Worksheet” (2 per student) available at http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets

Strategies:
1. Announce that we will be studying the Jim Crow era in Virginia.

2. **Hook:** Divide the students into groups of three. Hand out the “Set I” index cards with events listed. Let the students know you have some blank cards if they would like to add some events. They may use their books to research dates if needed. Using magnetic surfaces around the classroom, have the students display the events in the order in which they occurred. Suggest that they write the dates on the cards.

3. Discuss any differences between groups. Display the correct order of events on the dry-erase board or another easily seen magnetic surface (lockers, cabinets). Lead a discussion on the events listed and any others the students may have added. Discuss the origin of the term “Jim Crow” and ask the students to give some examples of Jim Crow laws. (The term comes from a minstrel show song containing the refrain “jump-jump-jump Jim Crow.”)

4. Hand out the “Set II” index cards. Check students’ prior knowledge of these items.

5. Ask: who was John Mitchell, Jr.? Using the textbook, read the excerpt on John Mitchell Jr., pages 338-339 (If you do not use this textbook, a brief biography of Mitchell is available at the Library of Virginia site listed under websites). Place John Mitchell, Jr. on the timelines.

6. Ask: who were the “Redeemers.” (See historical background.) If students have not referred to the new constitution that Virginia was required to write after the
Civil War, remind them of the requirements needed for Virginia to re-enter the Union. Note this constitution was ratified in 1869, but this was not the Redeemers’ constitution. Discuss the prefix “re” (again; again “deem”) and the meaning of the word “redeem” (to buy back, or to get or win back). Guide students to the understanding: With the 1869 constitution in place, what do you think the Redeemers wanted to do? They wanted to get back to the way things used to be before Reconstruction. How could they do this?

7. Where does Rutherford B. Hayes fit into this picture? Briefly explain the boondoggle of the Hayes-Tilden election. Tilden had the popular vote, but was one vote shy in the Electoral College. Hayes was a Republican; the Redeemers were southern Democrats. A deal was struck. If Hayes agreed to end Reconstruction, the southern Democrats would back his election. Hayes agreed and with that, the door slammed shut on civil rights for African Americans in Virginia and the rest of the south. The national government pretty much told the black populace they were on their own and gave the Redeemers free rein. If time permits, read the PBS excerpt about the Hayes-Tilden election found at the Jim Crow website listed above. In 1870, Virginia was re-admitted to the Union. By 1877 getting back to good old boy business as usual was moving forward.

8. Primary Sources:
   Note that, even though things got very bad very fast for African Americans after 1877, and would get worse, there were always ways to protest the unfair environment of Jim Crow.
   • Hand out copies of the advertisement for The Richmond Planet and the National Archives sheet for evaluating written documents. Model how to really look at the primary source documents, filling out the sheet together.
   • Hand out copies of the “streetcar” source and an evaluation sheet from the National Archives. (Note: the date for this is 1904. This is not shown on the article, and should be written on the handout. The students will not be able to read the entire article, but will be able to get the general idea of the boycott.) Allow the students at least 20 minutes to work on this. At the end of that time, discuss their findings and write them on the board. Hand out and read the excerpt from the Jim Crow history site that gives information on the boycott of and eventual bankruptcy of the Virginia Passenger and Power Company.

Homework: Have the students complete the vocabulary worksheet of people and terms.

Differentiation:
Student collaboration will aid struggling learners. This lesson provides expression by kinesthetic learners as well as auditory and visual learners.
Lesson 2: *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the World of Jim Crow

**Time Estimate:** 90 minutes, one afternoon

**Objectives:**

1. The students will show understanding of the following terms
   - grandfather clause
   - poll tax
   - literacy test

2. The students will place *Plessy v. Ferguson* on a timeline and be able to explain the importance and ramifications of this ruling.

3. The students will compare and contrast the perspectives of:
   - Southern African Americans
   - Southern poor whites
   - Southern politicians
   - Northern African Americans
   - Northern whites
   - Supreme Court justices

**Materials:**

- Handout: Create a handout in which you select questions from a literacy test found on the PBS site “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow”
- Handout: Create a handout with the following Jim Crow terms
  - voting
  - grandfather clause
  - poll tax
  - literacy test
- Handout: Create a handout listing the six groups:
  - Southern African Americans
  - Southern poor whites
  - Southern politicians
  - Northern African Americans
  - Northern whites
  - Supreme Court justices
- Sound recording of oral history “Remembering Jim Crow” from Behind the Veil Project. Track 7, Charles Gratton (2 minutes and 17 seconds)
- Blank index card with magnetic tape on the back.

**Strategies:**

1. **Hook:** Tell the students you have a quiz for them to take. Using the first 10 questions of the literacy test found on the PBS site listed above, give the students 10 minutes to answer them. (Note: the test has a total of 68 questions and cannot
be printed from the site. I retyped the first ten questions and did not include a heading because I didn’t want them to know this was a literacy test.)

2. **Discuss:** Go over the test together. No one should get all the questions right. Ask them how they are feeling. Angry? Upset? Why? Ask them why they think the test was unfair. Reveal to them that these are actual questions taken from a literacy test in Louisiana in 1965 and that the original test had 68 questions. Not everyone had to take the test. Discuss who would, who wouldn’t, and who might.

3. **Explain:**
   - **Voting, Jim Crow Style:** Write the terms “literacy test,” “poll tax,” and “grandfather clause” on the board. Lead a DLTA (directed-thinking-listening-activity) to brainstorm what these mean. The students may know “poll tax” from previous lessons. Explain to them that the grandfather clause stated that anyone who was descended from a voter pre-1867 was exempt from taking a literacy test and from paying the poll tax. Lead a class discussion about who this would not include (all blacks, many poor whites).

   - **Plessy v. Ferguson:** Who was Homer Plessy? Review John Mitchell’s promotion of the boycott of Richmond streetcars in 1904. Tell the students that others had also protested segregation on transportation vehicles. Discuss why this would be an issue. Note that the railroads weren’t either “southern” or “northern”. Guide the students to an understanding that not all of the U.S. states practiced segregation by law. How could a commercial enterprise (common carriers) that crossed state boundaries, practice segregation? Introduce Homer Plessy and the Louisiana Supreme Court (notably Justice Ferguson). Note that, Plessy (like Rosa Parks, years later), deliberately sat in a white only rail car and refused to move. Also, Plessy (like Parks), had the backing of groups trying to end segregation. In 1896 his case was brought before the U.S. Supreme Court where the decision was made in favor of the state of Louisiana. Note that the reason this is so important is that the highest court in the land was, in effect, sanctioning the south’s “right” to segregation. Fill out an index card (with magnetic tape on the back) with the words Plessy v. Ferguson and discuss where to place it on the timeline.

   - **Listening to the voice of survivors of the Jim Crow era:** Charles Gratton. Hand out the National Archives worksheet for the evaluation of a sound recording. Go over the steps together. Tell the students the class will be listening to an oral history of someone who lived under Jim Crow in North Carolina. As they listen, think about some of the things on the sheet in front of them, but don’t write anything. Listen to the selection. Together, discuss and fill out the sheet. Invite further response.

4. **Compare/Contrast:** Jigsaw Assessment: Hand out the list of people from above.
Have the students count off by sixes. Assign them to take on the role of the person from the list above that corresponds with their number. Have them answer the questions below, and ask students to write the questions on the handout. For example, if the student has a card with #1 printed on it, they would answer these questions from the perspective of a “Southern African American”.

- Define and tell me what you think of the grandfather clause.
- Define and tell me what you think of the poll tax.
- Define and tell me what you think of the literacy test.
- If you could change one thing about the Jim Crow laws, what would it be?

Remind the students that you know people are individuals and it is not fair to say everyone in a certain group would think the same way, but that you are looking for trends and generalizations in this assignment.

**Differentiation:**
The whole class working together on the National Archives’ sheet will support students for whom this is a difficult task. Assignment may be modified for some learners.

**Lesson 3:** The World of Jim Crow: Wrap-up

**Time Estimated:** 90 minutes

**Objectives:**
Students will:
1. Share the experience of Jim Crow from various viewpoints
2. Respond and evaluate a sound recording from the era
3. Work collaboratively to design a timeline of the Jim Crow era, using the events we’ve discussed.

**Materials:**
- Sound Recording from “Remembering Jim Crow,” Behind the Veil Project, Track #5, Olivia Cherry (2 minutes, 37 seconds)
- Colored pencils, drawing paper
- Large (bulletin board) paper, about six feet long
- Popsicle sticks

**Strategies:**
1. **Hook:** Separate students into their designated “groups” of people from the lesson on the previous day. Give those students 10 minutes to discuss the answers they came up with to the questions posed and ask them to make up a list of answers to present. Circulate and help.

2. Have students share the perspectives of the different groups of people. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being a part of each of the groups.

3. Discuss the use of primary sources and the ways to use them, noting the primary
sources they have used in this mini-unit. Discuss using the Internet and how to know if you can trust sources.

4. Revisit the oral recording discussion from the day before. Pass out the National Archives worksheet to evaluate sound recordings and have the students listen to Olivia Cherry’s account and respond. Discuss as whole class.

5. On the board write events and/or people from the “index-card” timeline we have been working on as well as vocabulary terms we have learned. Designate students to write about one to three things listed. Students can design illustrations to accompany their writing.

6. Using the bulletin board paper, arrange the events on the timeline. The vocabulary terms can be used as part of a border.

7. Incorporate popsicle sticks to help illustrate John Mitchell, Jr.’s advocacy of the boycott and Homer Plessy’s suit regarding trains. The popsicle sticks can be arranged in a parallel fashion, going across the poster like train tracks. A title such as “No Free Ride to Freedom” or the song title, “No Easy Walk to Freedom” could be written at the top.

NOTE: This project could be done by the whole class, by groups, or individually, depending on time and the dynamics of your class.

Differentiation:
These activities incorporate a variety of learning styles. Group collaboration will aid struggling learners.

Lesson 4: Bringing it Home

Time Estimated: 90 minutes

Objectives:
Students will:
1. Respond to oral history by local people.

Materials:
• Student-generated questions.

Strategies:
1. Invite people who lived through Jim Crow for a roundtable discussion. If possible, visit a local museum to hold this forum.

2. Have the students prepare a list of 3 to 5 questions for our guests, based on the
primary sources and discussions that are part of this mini-unit.

3. Have each guest give some background information and invite each to tell us how Jim Crow affected their life by sharing personal anecdotes.

4. Allow the students to ask questions.

5. Share the timeline we made with our guests.