

**CHAPTER 16** Section 3 (pages 492–495)

# Segregation and Discrimination

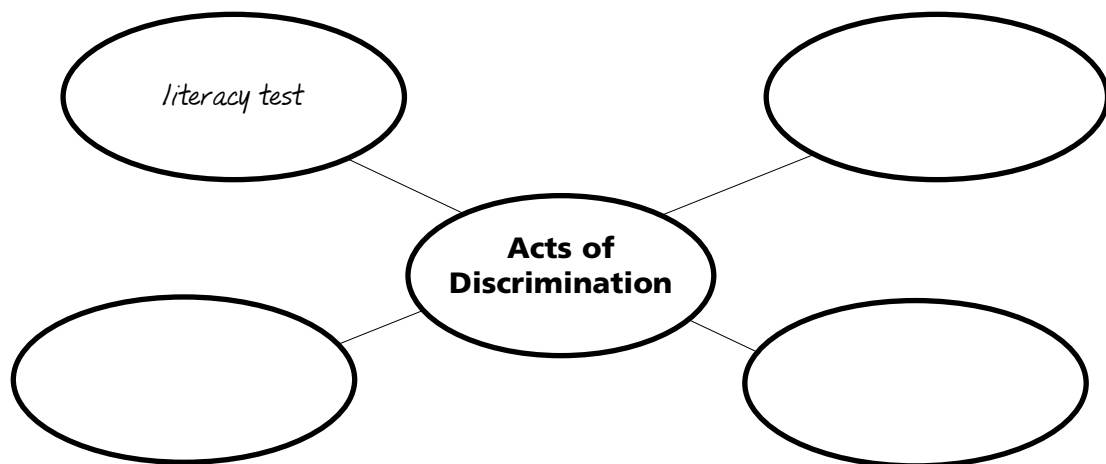
## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about improvements made to public education around the turn of the century.

In this section, you will read about how life for African Americans and other nonwhites remained one of hardship and discrimination.

## AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the discrimination against African Americans at the turn of the century.



### TERMS AND NAMES

**Ida B. Wells** African-American reformer who tried to end lynching

**poll tax** Money one had to pay in order to vote

**grandfather clause** Clause that allowed poor, uneducated whites to vote

**segregation** The word used to describe racial separation

**Jim Crow laws** Laws that helped keep whites and blacks separate

**Plessy v. Ferguson** Court case that upheld the Jim Crow laws

**debt peonage** A system in which a person is forced to work to pay off debts

## African Americans Fight Legal Discrimination (pages 492–493)

### *How were African Americans kept from voting?*

**Ida B. Wells** was a leader in the fight against discrimination. Wells crusaded against racial violence. After Reconstruction, African Americans were kept from voting in the South. By 1900, however, all Southern states had set up new voting restrictions meant to keep blacks from voting.

For example, some states required voters to be able to read. To determine this, officials gave each voter a literacy test. They often gave African

Americans more difficult tests. The officials giving the test could pass or fail people as they wished.

Another voting requirement was the **poll tax**. This was a tax that one had to pay to enter a voting booth. African Americans and poor whites often did not have the money to pay the tax. So they were unable to vote.

Several Southern states wanted to make sure that whites who could not read or pay a poll tax still could vote. So they added a **grandfather clause** to their constitutions. This clause stated that any person could vote if their father or grandfather was qualified to vote before January 1, 1867. This date was important because before that time, freed

slaves did not have the right to vote. Therefore, the grandfather clause did not allow African Americans to vote. Some Americans challenged the literacy test and poll tax laws. But the Supreme Court allowed the laws to stand.

Separating people on the basis of race became known as **segregation**. Racial segregation developed in such places as schools, hospitals, and transportation systems throughout the South. The Southern states also passed **Jim Crow laws**. These laws separated whites and blacks in private and public places.

Eventually a legal challenge to segregation reached the U.S. Supreme Court. However, in the case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court ruled that separating the races in public places was legal.

**1. Name two ways that Southern states restricted the voting rights of African Americans.**

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## Turn-of-the-Century Race Relations

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### *How did social customs restrict African Americans?*

In addition to laws, customs also restricted the rights of African Americans. African Americans had to show respect to whites, including children. These customs often *belittled* and humiliated African Americans. For example, blacks had to yield the sidewalk to whites. Black men always had to remove their hats for whites.

African-American reformers debated over how to address racial discrimination. Booker T. Washington argued that blacks should not insist on full legal equality—which whites would never allow. Instead, he argued, blacks should concentrate on gaining economic power. Other African Americans, like W. E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells, demanded legal equality right away.

African Americans who did not follow the customs could face severe punishment. Often, African Americans accused of failing to perform the customs were lynched—hanged without trial.

African Americans in the North also faced *discrimination*. They lived in segregated neighbor-

hoods. They faced discrimination in the workplace, some of which turned violent.

**2. Name two ways blacks had to show respect to whites.**

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## Discrimination in the West

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### *What other groups faced discrimination in America?*

African Americans were not the only ones who faced discrimination at the turn of the century. Mexican Americans faced similar treatment. In the 1880s and 1890s, railroad companies hired many Mexicans to build new rail lines in the Southwest. Railroad managers hired Mexicans because they were used to the Southwest's hot, dry climate. Managers also felt they could pay Mexicans less than members of other ethnic groups.

Mexicans also played an important role in the Southwest's mining and farming industries. Raising crops such as grapes, lettuce, and citrus fruits required large amounts of labor. Mexicans provided much of this farm work.

Landowners often forced Mexicans to work to repay debts. This system was called **debt peonage**. The Supreme Court ruled against this system in 1911. The Court called it a *violation* of the Thirteenth Amendment.

The Chinese also faced discrimination in America. Whites feared losing their jobs to Chinese workers. Chinese workers lived in segregated neighborhoods and their children attended segregated schools.

**3. Name two groups that faced discrimination in the West.**

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