

Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: Middle School (6th grade)
Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS.RI.6.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
 CCSS.RI.6.5 - Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

Library of Congress Resources:

This matter of social equality is a vague, unreal and evanescent thing. Who is to define what it is? If such a thing really exists it is regulated by the individual. Is it social equality to want to ride in first-class manner when a colored person pays a first-class fare? Is it social equality when being in a strange city, or home city a colored person desires to get a bite to eat, having the price to pay for it, goes to a place where food is sold to buy it? Is it social equality for a colored person to desire to hear good music, see an uplifting drama and buy a seat where his means will permit? Is it social equality for a colored person to patronize the public libraries and the institutes of fine art for the cultural benefits to be derived from them? How much of social equality is there in colored children attending mixed schools and having that healthful contact, that beneficial understanding that is so easily obtained in the formative years of life between the races? If these things mean social equality then the colored people want them, and if these United States form a real democracy they are entitled to them, or this country is not the land of the free, and the Constitution of the United States is a misnomer and the Declaration of Independence is a dead letter.

Wilmington (Del.) Advocate (November 26, 1921) "President's southern speech"
 [News Article]
 Library of Congress Historical Newspapers Division
 Washington D.C. 20540 USA

Specific Pages Used:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016810/>

Topic Background:

The post-war era marked a period of unprecedented energy against the second class citizenship accorded to African Americans in many parts of the nation. Resistance to racial segregation and discrimination with strategies such as civil disobedience, nonviolent resistance, marches, protests, boycotts, "freedom rides," and rallies received national attention as newspaper, radio, and television reporters and cameramen documented the struggle to end racial inequality. There were also continuing efforts to legally challenge segregation through the courts.

Success crowned these efforts: the Brown decision in 1954, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act in 1965 helped bring about the demise of the entangling web of legislation that bound blacks to second class citizenship. One hundred years after the Civil War, blacks and their white allies still pursued the battle for equal rights in every area of American life. While there is more to achieve in ending discrimination, major milestones in civil rights laws are on the books for the purpose of regulating equal access to public accommodations, equal justice before the law, and equal employment, education, and housing opportunities.

Excerpted from: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/aopart9.html>

Source Used:

The source used for this assessment includes excerpts from Wilmington (Del.) who comments on the President Harding speech in the south (November 26, 1921). Wilmington states that colored people have the right of social equality and this right is guaranteed by the constitution and the Declaration of independence that are misapplied in the U.S.

Multiple Choice Answer Key:

Question 1 – A
 Question 2 – C

The Appeal, November 26, 1921, Image 1 Social equality

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Questions:

- 1) Which statement best represents the author's point of view about social equality? (CCSS-RI.6.6)
 - A. The author supports giving colored people social equality.
 - B. The author opposes giving colored people social equality.
 - C. The author neither supports nor opposes giving colored people social equality.
 - D. The author believes that giving colored people social equality contradicts the U.S. Constitution.

- 2) The author states:

"The constitution of the United States is a misnomer and the Declaration of independence is a dead letter"

Why is this statement significant? (CCSS-RI.6.5)

- A. It shows that the U.S. constitution and the Declaration of independence become old and they should be changed.
- B. It shows that the U.S. constitution and the Declaration of independence neglect the rights of colored people particularly the social rights.
- C. It shows that both the U.S. constitution and the Declaration of Independence guarantee the colored people social rights but they are misapplied in the U.S. community.