

An African American Family in Segregated Dallas:
Document Analysis: Case Study of a Middle Class Family
in the Segregated South

Author: Elizabeth Barnes

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Lesson Plan

Grade Levels: 8-12

Duration of Lesson: 50 minutes

Learning Objectives

- Analyze images to evaluate the lifestyle of a Dallas African American family in the Segregated south

Summary:

Students will be divided into groups and asked to predict what the family's life was like based upon sets of images. They will then be given a biography of the family and asked to evaluate their predictions. Students will then be asked to reflect on their predictions individually.

Materials:

- Sets of photos of the Culmer family
- Printed handouts of the biography of the Culmer family
- Handouts of the prediction questions
- Handouts of the reflection questions

Instructional Background Material:

African American families in the South lived varied lives that could reflected differences in economic status even if their political rights could be dramatically limited. This lesson is an attempt to show one such example. The Culmer family was a local Dallas family. Dr. Culmer earned his medical degree and served in World War II. Their economic success was sustained through their lives as a result of his profession but they were unable to retain their wealth on a generational basis.

Pre-assessment:

Teachers should use these questions to facilitate a pre-assessment discussion.

1. Did all African Americans in the South live in the same ways during the Jim Crow era?
2. In what ways might the lives of African Americans have been similar? What ways might they have been different?

Instructional Steps:

1. Teacher will facilitate a group discussion using the pre-assessment questions.
2. Divide class into groups according to class size and distribute images accordingly.
3. Ask students to complete the document analysis questions to help them predict the overall lifestyle of the family.
4. Pass out the family's biography and have the student's read it in a group. Students can be encouraged to look up the various locations listed in the biographical sketch if technology is available.
5. Ask the students to re-evaluate their predictions of the family based upon the realities of their lives.

Post-Assessment:

Teachers should use the following questions to facilitate a post lesson discussion:

- How did African American families gain economic influence in the south even if segregation meant they lacked political influence?
- Was the Culmer family able to pass their wealth down to their children? What does that mean for families in the long term?
- How common do you think the Culmer's story was?
- Do you think their economic advantages meant they did not face racial discrimination? Why or why not?
- Why do you think their story might be important?

Extension Activities:

- Students can be asked to write on of the post-assessment questions as a journal entry or a short, take home writing assignment. The teacher can choose to assign one particular question or assign a few and allow the students to pick the one they are most interested in.
- Students could research how common the Culmer's family story was on their own and report back.