

Key Terms Related to Slavery and Racism in U.S. History

Terms and Definitions

Race: Groups of people who share a similar skin color, appearance, or ancestry.

Racism: Treating people differently or having different attitudes about people because of their race.

Discrimination: Treating people differently or having different attitudes about people based on some characteristic about them (e.g. religion, race, language, culture...).

Slavery: Forcing people to work without any payment and treating them as property.

Underground Railroad: A network of people in the U.S. who would help slaves escape from the South and make their way to the North or Canada.

Civil War: A war in the U.S. between the Union (northern states) and the Confederacy (southern states) mostly over the issue of slavery. It lasted from 1861-1865. The Union won the war and ended slavery in the South.

Black Codes: Laws created by southern states after the Civil War that tried to take away the rights of African Americans (mostly former slaves). The laws were struck down by northern states who had just won the war.

Jim Crowe Laws: Laws created by southern states in the 1890s that took away the rights of African Americans to vote, enforced segregation in public places, and denied African Americans rights listed in the U.S. Constitution. These laws were supported by the Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

Segregation: Forcing people of different races to use separate schools, restaurants, theaters, and other public places.

Desegregation: The attempt to end segregation in the U.S., which began in the 1950s and 1960s. The move was supported by the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which overturned the decision made in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Civil Rights Movement: The movement that tried to make sure African Americans (and other non-white Americans) had equal rights and opportunities that would be protected by the U.S. government. The movement began to gain national attention in the 1950s and 1960s.

Questions

1. How are race and slavery related in U.S. history?
2. Is it possible to have slavery without racism? How about racism without slavery?
3. Did the Civil War end slavery in the U.S.? Did it end racism?
4. What are examples of discrimination other than racism?
5. How long did it take to end segregation in public schools after the Civil War?
6. How are the Black Codes and the Jim Crowe Laws similar? How many years separate them?
7. What happened to the Black Codes that did not happen to the Jim Crowe laws?
8. What important court case supported segregation in the U.S.? What important court case supported desegregation? How many years separated these cases?
9. Does slavery still exist in the U.S.? Does racism still exist in the U.S.?