

Teaching Sensitive Subjects

Civil Rights

SUFFRAGE

Gender Issues

Slavery

School Prayer

Reproductive Rights

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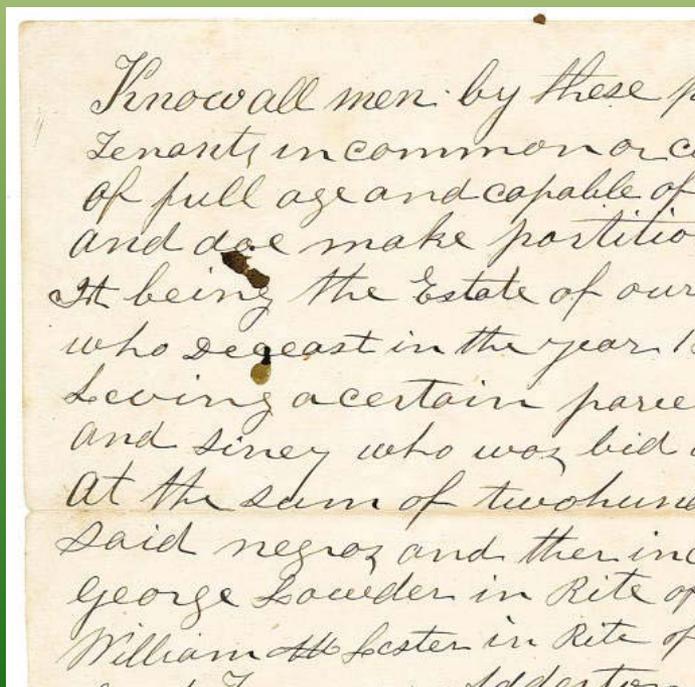


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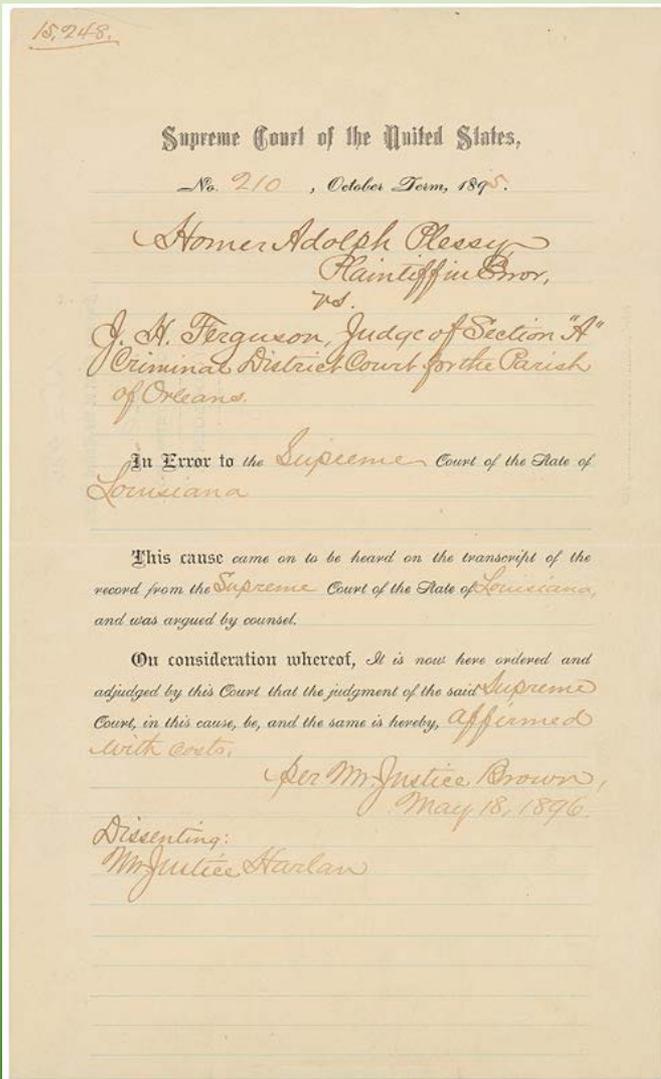
Many events in history produced, and in some cases continue to produce, strong and conflicting emotions. It is important for students not only to know about these events in history but to be able to think critically about them and draw their own conclusions.



Know all men by these presents
Tenants in common or co
of full age and capable of
and doe make partitio
It being the Estate of our
who decest in the year 16
Leaving a certain part
and Siney who was bid
at the sum of two hund
said negroz and ther inc
George Souder in Rite of
William Hester in Rite of
Addertoz

Bill of sale for two slaves

[Stanly County Museum of History, DPLA](#)

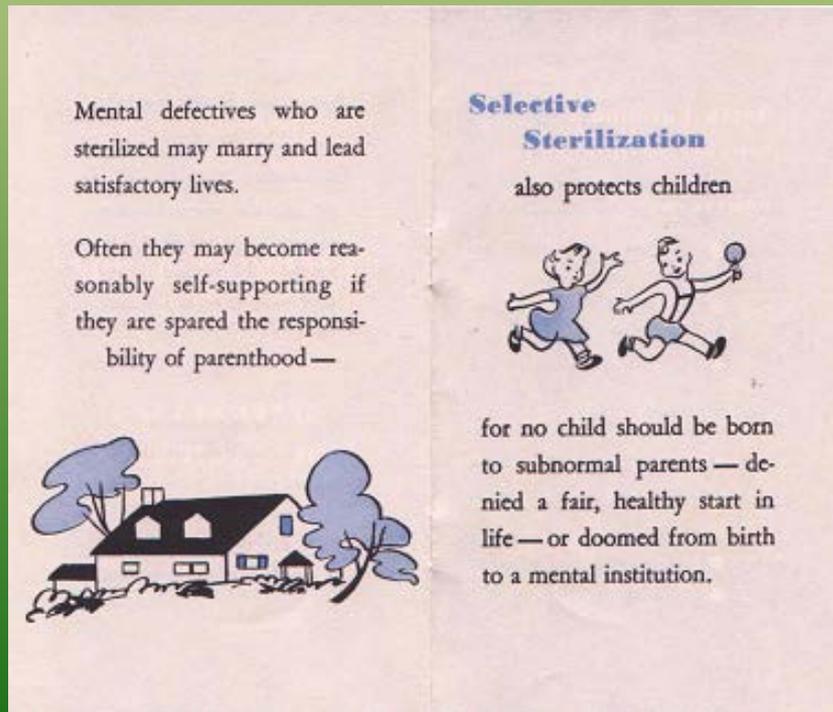


Learning to examine and evaluate the primary documents related to such topics contribute to understanding events in history.

Here are some tips for introducing sensitive topics in your classroom.

[Plessy vs. Ferguson](#), Judgement, Decided May 18, 1896; Records of the Supreme Court of the United States; Record Group 267; *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163, #15248, National Archives.

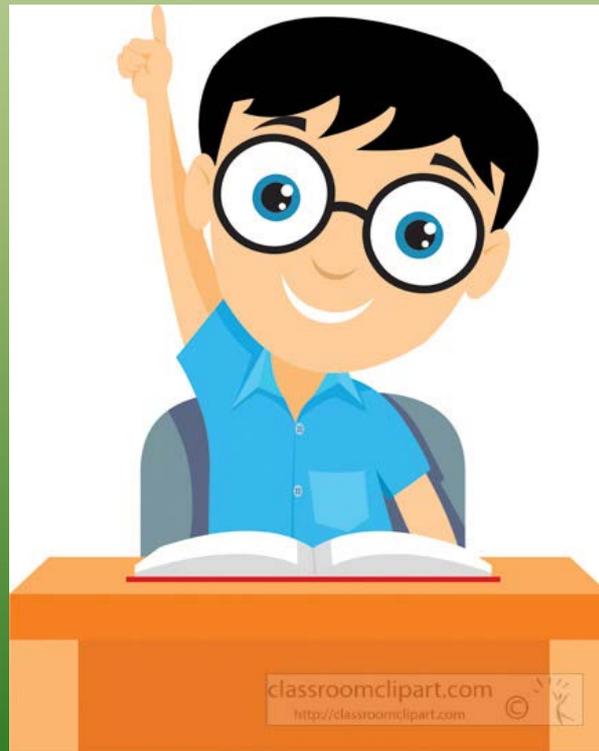
First, identify which topics may be controversial, so you can be prepared to effectively lead discussions. Consider that some topics may raise other controversial issues. For instance, a study of a court case on reproductive rights may include a discussion of eugenics.



1950 Eugenics Pamphlet

[NCpedia](#)

When introducing the topic, ask what students already know about the issue. This may reveal existing biases and viewpoints.



Present multiple perspectives on the topic. Finding quotes from secondary sources may be useful.

I think there are many times when it would be most efficient to use nuclear weapons.

Curtis LeMay

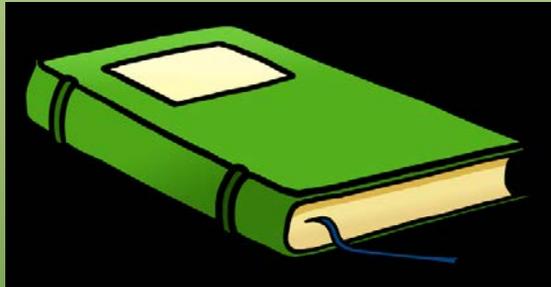
Brainy Quotes

My feelings of revulsion and foreboding about nuclear weapons had not changed an iota since 1945, and they have never left me.

Daniel Ellsberg

Brainy Quotes

Assign background reading in secondary sources.



Free clip art

Before beginning analysis of the document, provide ground rules for discussion.

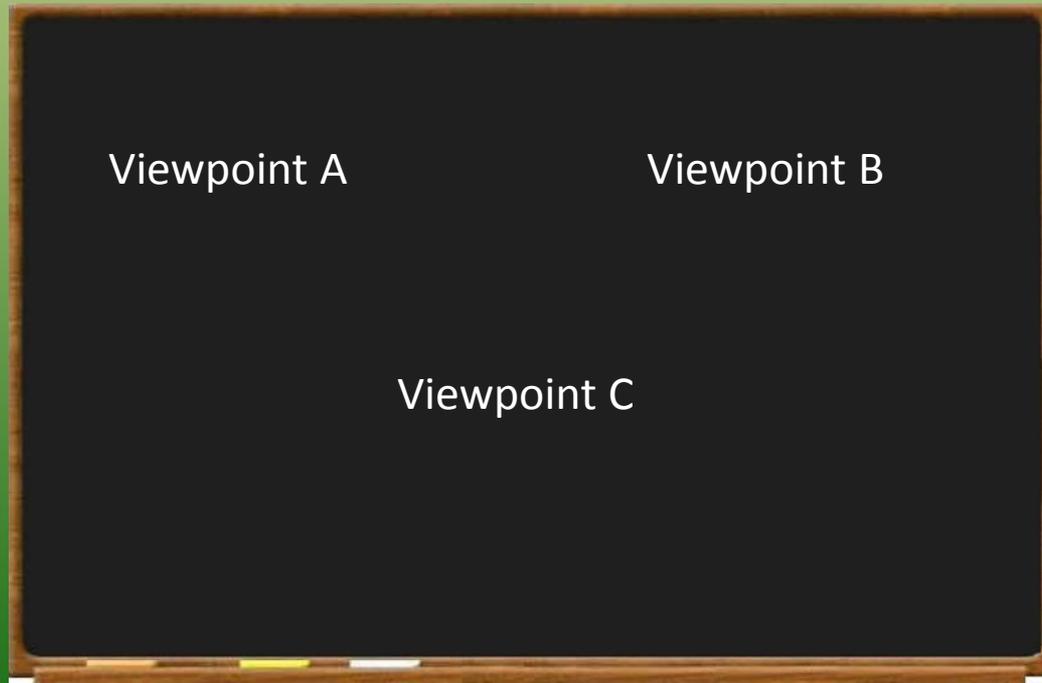
Rules of Engagement

1. All opinions are to be respected.
2. No one may interrupt while another is speaking.
3. Personal attacks and sarcasm are forbidden.
4. Focus on issues not on the person expressing an opinion.

Be an effective facilitator

1. Enforce the rules.
2. Intervene if the discussion gets too heated.

Once the discussion has ended,
have students provide an
objective summary of the
different viewpoints presented.



An online search for teaching sensitive or controversial subjects will provide numerous articles. Here are a few:

[LearnNC](#)

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-eg/6633>

[Yale Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

<http://ctl.yale.edu/teaching/ideas-teaching/teaching-controversial-topics>

[University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching](#)

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsd>