

# Teacher Guide - Law Day 2013

## *Realizing the Dream: Equality for All*

**Grades:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 2 to 4 class periods

Since 1958, the U.S. President has annually recognized Law Day. In 1961, Congress passed a joint resolution designating May 1 as the national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law.

This year's Law Day theme, "Realizing the Dream: Equality for All," provides an opportunity to explore the movement for civil and human rights in America. The year 2013 is significant as it marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Fifty years ago, during the Proclamation's centennial, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood in front of the Lincoln Memorial and gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Today, their inspirational words continue to resonate and challenge us to live up to our national idea of equality under the law.

Though many gains have been made, work still remains to fully realize the dream of equality in the United States. A key aspect of equality is equal opportunity in the workplace. Because employment opportunities are so central to American life, they have served a major role in the struggle for equality. Women and minorities remain underrepresented in many positions of power, influence, and leadership. In some fields, a disparity in pay still remains between women and their male colleagues performing exactly the same work. Workplace discrimination continues to occur, as individuals are treated unfairly at work based on race, gender, pregnancy, disability, age, or immigration status.

Discussion of equality in the workplace is sure to be of interest to high school students as they seek summer employment and plan for future careers. It also provides an opportunity to explore how law and the courts protect individuals and groups from employment discrimination. And finally, the topic of equality in the workplace gives the federal courts the opportunity to inspire and encourage students by celebrating our diversity.

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## **A. All Men Are Created Equal – (15-30 minutes)**

1. Lead a short discussion including the following topics:
  - a. Realizing the Dream: Equality for All
  - b. What is equality? Belief that all people should be treated equally, have the same rights and opportunities. Equality has been an important part of our nation's value system since its very beginning.
  - c. What dream is being referred to? The dream of equal treatment for all humans, from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech at the 1963 March on Washington, on the centennial of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.
2. Distribute **STUDENT WORKSHEET #1 – "American Equality Milestones."** This short activity will give students an overview of the American quest for equality. Most of the milestones will be review. A few social studies textbooks and one or more computer internet stations should be sufficient for them to fill in the blanks.
3. Instruct students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups, to find the date for each milestone, and to summarize the meaning of equality in context.
4. Allow time to complete. **To save time, you could:**
  - **divide students into groups, and assign only one row per group**
  - **assign as homework**
  - **skip directly to the discussion, using the worksheet as a discussion guide**
5. Discuss. Summarize and check for understanding.
6. Explain that the next activity will take a closer look at the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950-60s, with a focus on the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

## **B. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 – (15-30 minutes)**

1. Review the concept of equality in America.
2. Lead a short discussion including the following topics:
  - a. The American Civil Rights Movement: Mass protest movement against racial segregation and discrimination in the southern United States that came to national prominence during the mid-1950s. Through nonviolent protest, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s broke the pattern of public facilities' being segregated by "race" in the South and achieved the most important breakthrough in equal-rights legislation for African Americans since the Reconstruction period. (from [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com))
  - b. Mention the *Brown v. Board* and Martin Luther King, Jr. entries from the previous activity, along with other important milestones such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott, lunch counter sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, Little Rock school integration, etc.
  - c. Because of the actions of these individuals and groups, improvements occurred. Specifically, new laws were enacted to correct inequality. One of the most important was listed as the final entry on the previous activity. For the remainder of our studies, we'll focus on:
    - i. **The Civil Rights Act of 1964**
    - ii. More information can be found here: <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/pre1965/index.html> and here [http://www.congresslink.org/print\\_basics\\_histmats\\_civilrights64text.htm](http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_histmats_civilrights64text.htm)

- d. Other laws and executive actions stemming from the Civil Rights Movement, to mention if time and interest allow:
  - i. Equal Pay Act of 1963; <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/epa.cfm>
  - ii. 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1964) – elimination of poll tax
  - iii. Voting Rights Act of 1965; [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro\\_b.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_b.php)
  - iv. Executive Order 11246 (1965) prohibiting employment discrimination by businesses with federal contracts, and requiring federal contractors to take affirmative action in hiring; [http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/about/History\\_EO11246.htm](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/about/History_EO11246.htm)
  - v. Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adea.cfm>
3. Distribute **STUDENT WORKSHEET #2 – “The Civil Rights Act of 1964.”** This activity will guide students through the sections, or Titles, of one of this very important civil rights legislation, and ask them to consider the effects of each section. Dictionaries and one or more computer internet stations would be helpful.
4. Divide the class into 6 groups, and assign each to one relevant Title of the Act. Note there are actually 11 sections, but only Titles I, II, III, IV, VI, and VII are relevant to this activity. Titles V, VIII, IX, X, XI set up various procedures, committees, and reports.
5. Allow time to complete. **To save time, you could:**
  - **complete one or more as an example first**
  - **skip directly to the discussion, using the worksheet as a discussion guide**
6. Ask for groups to share their answers. Discuss. Summarize and check for understanding.
7. Explain that the next activity will take a closer look at Title VII of the Act. Ask students to think about the following question: *Why is equality in the workplace important?*

### **C. Equality in the Workplace** – (25-45 minutes)

1. Begin by posing the thought question from the previous activity: *Why is equality in the workplace important?* Possible answers may include:
  - a. People spend a lot of their time at work, thus it’s a big part of their lives.
  - b. Being employed and earning a living is considered part of the “American Dream.”
  - c. Employees are in a position of weakness, relative to the boss’s position of power, a relationship which makes employees particularly vulnerable.
  - d. Workplace discrimination has unfortunately been a common occurrence.
  - e. Others?
2. Lead a short discussion including the following topics:
  - a. Previously we learned about the important piece of legislation called the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
  - b. Recall Title VII of the Act specifically banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, with some restrictions. (i.e. doesn’t apply to employers with less than 15 employees, doesn’t apply to religious groups in the hiring of their clergy or teachers, hiring discrimination is

permitted in a few limited situations for which there is a bona fide reason, for example mandatory retirement age for an airline pilot)

- c. Title VII also created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), with the mission of eliminating illegal discrimination from the workplace.
  - d. The EEOC now enforces Title VII, along with quite a few other laws. More information can be found here:  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/>  
<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/index.cfm>
3. Distribute **STUDENT WORKSHEET #3 – “The EEOC and Equality in the Workplace.”** This activity takes students through the “Youth@Work” section of the EEOC’s website. The materials found here help young adults understand their rights and responsibilities as applicants and employees in the workforce. Students will need internet access to complete the selected activities. If internet access is not available, you could consider making a set of handouts from the material on the website, and setting it up in stations around the room.
  4. Instruct students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups, to complete the activity sections you’ve selected.
  8. Allow time to complete. **To save time, you could:**
    - skip directly to the discussion, using the worksheet as a discussion guide
    - assign only the first 2 pages, skipping the 3<sup>rd</sup> page
    - for page 2, assign each group only one section, then ask them to share what they found
    - consider assigning as homework
  5. Discuss. Summarize and check for understanding.
  6. Explain that the next activity will take a closer look at gender in the workplace. Ask students to think about the following question: *Why is gender equality at work important for everyone, male and female?*

#### **D. Gender Equality – (40 minutes)**

1. Begin by posing the thought question from the previous activity: *Why is gender equality at work important for everyone, male and female?* Possible answers may include:
  - a. Males and females can both experience discrimination at work.
  - b. Even if you are not the person/gender experiencing the discrimination, it still affects the work climate for everyone.
  - c. You may someday experience discrimination at work and you need to be prepared and know your rights.
  - d. You may someday witness someone else being treated unfairly and you need to be prepared and know what to do.
  - e. You may someday be a supervisor or manager and you need to be prepared and know how to avoid discriminating against certain classes of people.
2. Lead a short discussion including the following topics:
  - a. What are ways males are discriminated against? (nursing, teaching, child care)
  - b. What are ways females are discriminated against? (manual labor, military combat, athletics...women may also be discriminated against due to pregnancy and family care)

- c. Have you ever heard of the Gender Pay Gap? Do you think it really exists, or is a made-up concept?
7. Distribute **STUDENT WORKSHEET #4 – “Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.”** This activity will guide students through a video found on the Annenberg Classroom website. It is about the gender pay gap and the creation of the 2009 Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Students will need internet access to complete the selected activities. If you are working in a computer lab setting, headphones would also be useful. **As an alternative, you could show the video on a screen to the entire class.**
  - a. Review the concepts listed at the beginning of the worksheet before beginning the video.
  - d. Instruct students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups depending on your set up.
3. Allow time to complete. The video is just under 23 minutes long. **To save time, you could assign for homework.**
4. Discuss. Summarize and check for understanding.

Video:

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/call-to-act-ledbetter>

Additional Lessons on the video. Includes entire transcript from the video:

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/files/documents/lessonplans/actionsthatchangedthelaw.pdf>

## **E. Bibliography**

- The American Bar Association  
[www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_education/initiatives\\_awards/law\\_day\\_2013](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/initiatives_awards/law_day_2013)
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)
- The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics Annenberg Classroom  
[www.annenbergclassroom.org](http://www.annenbergclassroom.org)

## **F. Extension Activity Suggestions:**

Complete the “Real-World Connections” activity found on pp.98-99 of the following packet. It connects the EEOC Youth@Work website with the Lilly Ledbetter video.

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/files/documents/lessonplans/actionsthatchangedthelaw.pdf>

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<http://judiciallearningcenter.org/educator-center/>

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