

A Class Apart Teacher's Guide

A Class Apart offers insights into social studies topics including Texas history and the area's transition from Spanish to Mexican to independent to U.S. control, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and its long-term effects on the U.S., discrimination against minorities including Mexican Americans, Earl Warren and Supreme Court activism, civil rights in the U.S. in the mid-20th century, issues of immigration, Hispanic Americans today, and more. Use the program in your classroom, or delve into the rich resources available on the film's Web site.

This teacher's guide includes three elements:

- a comprehension section for use with the programs
- classroom activities
- suggestions for completing the activities

Teachers are encouraged to adapt the guide to meet their own learning objectives for their students.

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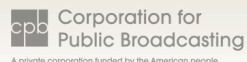


A Class Apart Comprehension

Answer the following questions as you watch the film.

1. In what town, and in what year, did Pete Hernández kill Joe Espinosa?
2. How did the United States gain control of large amounts of Mexican territory?
3. Did the Mexican American residents of these territories become U.S. citizens? Were they treated as the equals of Anglo citizens?
4. What stereotypes did many Anglos who settled Texas have about Mexican Americans? Where did these prejudices come from?
5. How did the segregation of Mexican Americans differ from the segregation of African Americans?
6. How many Mexican Americans served in the armed forces in World War II? How did their experience change Mexican Americans' view of themselves?
7. What scandal arose regarding Private Felix Longoria? What did it symbolize? How was the controversy ended?
8. What is the Fourteenth Amendment? Why did Mexican Americans see it as a way to have their rights respected? Why did some states argue that it did not apply to Mexican Americans?
9. Who was Gus García? Did he believe Hernández was innocent or guilty? Why did he take the case?
10. Why did Hernández's lawyers not sleep in town during the trial?
11. How many Mexican Americans were on Hernández's jury?
12. What happened when Hernández's lawyers tried to use the courthouse bathroom? Why was this relevant to their case?
13. How did the trial judge react when Hernández's lawyers complained about the lack of Mexican Americans on the jury? How did the trial end?
14. What was the "class apart" argument on which Hernández's lawyers based their appeal? What was the state's argument in response?

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15. Why were some Mexican Americans concerned about the appeal of this case?
16. How did the Texas Supreme Court rule on the case?
17. To what court did Hernández's lawyers appeal next? In what way was this a "first" in U.S. history?
18. How did Mexican American activists raise money to pay for the court case?
19. What was the court's ruling? What happened to Hernández?
20. How did the outcome of the case affect Mexican Americans across the country?

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A Class Apart

Classroom Activities

The Story of Texas

Objective

To understand the key events by which Texas passed from Spanish control and eventually joined the United States.

Activity

View the film chapter titled “Pepper Bellies,” which mentions the United States’ takeover of large areas of Mexican territory, including Mexico. What events led Texas to become part of the United States – and how might CNN have reported them on TV if it had existed back then? To find out, divide the class into eight groups and assign each group one of these events:

- Mexico declares independence from Spain (1821)
- Mexico grants Stephen Austin the right to bring Anglo settlers to Texas (1821)
- Texas declares independence from Mexico (1836)
- Battle of the Alamo (1836)
- Battle of San Jacinto (1836)
- United States annexes Texas (1845)
- Mexican-American War begins (1846)
- Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo signed (1848)

Each group should imagine that it is a CNN crew covering its assigned event and should prepare a brief (3-5 minute) news story for viewers on the event. These stories should answer the five basic questions of a good news report: Who? What? Where? When? Why? Groups should write the script for their story and then act it out for the class, going in chronological order.

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Assessment

Discuss the following questions:

- Based on what you have learned about these events, do you think it was inevitable that Texas would become part of the United States? Why or why not?
- Do you think any of these events helped lead to the discrimination Mexican Americans suffered in Texas? Explain.

“Impeach Earl Warren”

Objective

To examine the *Hernandez v. Texas* case in the context of the Warren Court’s other landmark decisions.

Activity

View the film chapter titled, “Arriving in Washington.” *Hernandez v. Texas* was just one of a number of decisions the Supreme Court issued under Chief Justice Earl Warren that caused great controversy – so much controversy that many conservatives called for Warren’s impeachment. To learn more about these decisions, divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the following cases to research: *Abington School District v. Schempp*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Engel v. Vitale*, *Escobedo v. Illinois*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, *In Re Gault*, *Mapp v. Ohio*, and *Miranda v. Arizona*.

Have each group give a brief report to the class on (a) the specific circumstances of the case, (b) how it reached the Supreme Court, (c) what constitutional issues were involved, and (d) the Court’s ruling and why it was important. As each group makes its presentation, list the case on the board along with a one-sentence summary of the Court’s ruling.

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Assessment

Discuss as a class:

- Do the Court’s decisions in these cases appear to reflect the same values and priorities as its decision in *Hernandez v. Texas*? Why or why not?
- What might have happened if *Hernandez v. Texas* had come before the Supreme Court at a time when the Court had different values and priorities? How might that have affected the lives of Mexican Americans across the country?

“To this much, he is entitled by the Constitution”

Objective

To understand the Court’s decision in *Hernandez v. Texas* and the reasons for it.

Activity

View the film chapter titled, “The Decision.” As a class, examine [the written opinion of the Court](#) by Chief Justice Warren.

(<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=347&invol=475>) Have volunteers read portions of the decision as outlined below, and discuss the following questions for each segment:

- Paragraph 1 (“The petitioner, Pete Hernández. . . .”): On what did Hernández’s lawyers base their appeal to the Supreme Court – was it the outcome of the trial, or the way the trial was conducted? On what passage do you base your answer?
- Paragraphs 2-3 (“In numerous decisions . . . between ‘white’ and Negro.”): Does the Court see this case as a question of whether there has been discrimination on the basis of race or color? Explain your answer.
- Paragraph 4 (“As the petitioner. . . .”): Is *Hernandez* charging that Texas’s system for selecting jurors is flawed? Explain your answer.

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- Paragraph 5 (“The petitioner’s initial burden. . . .”): List four pieces of evidence demonstrating that Mexican Americans were discriminated against.
- Paragraphs 6-7 (“Having established . . . and/or petit jury.’ ”): Have Hernández’s lawyers provided examples of Mexican Americans who were denied the right to serve on juries? Explain.
- Paragraphs 8-10 (“The petitioner met . . . must be reversed.”): How did the jury commissioners from Texas respond to the charge of discrimination in jury selection? Why did the Court not accept their arguments?
- Paragraph 11 (“To say that. . . .”): What is proportional representation? According to the Court, how many Mexican Americans must be on the jury in Hernández’s case?

Assessment

As the film notes, Hernández received a second trial following the Court’s decision, but the outcome of the second trial was the same as for the first trial. Why, then, is this case considered important?

Hispanics Today

Objective

To learn about the current status of Hispanics in areas such as population, income, and health care.

Activity

View the film chapter titled, “ Epilogue.” Today Hispanics are the largest minority group in the United States. To learn more about them, look as a class at the following tables from the Census Bureau showing [the number of Hispanics in each state](http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0018.pdf) (<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0018.pdf>) and [in major U.S. cities](http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0021.pdf), (<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0021.pdf>) as well as how Hispanics compare with other population groups in [health coverage](#)

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(<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0146.pdf>) and areas such as [education and income](#). (<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0035.pdf>)

Using the data in these tables, work together as a class to prepare a series of graphics on the state of Hispanics today. For example, you might prepare a U.S. map with the states color-coded according to their Hispanic population, or a bar graph comparing Hispanics with other racial/ethnic groups in terms of the share of the population who are uninsured or poor. You might also want to compare one of the above tables with comparable [Census data from previous years](#). (http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/past_years.html)

Assessment

Review the graphics as a class. Which of your findings surprised you? What do they suggest about some of the issues facing Hispanics today?

Hispanics and Immigration

Objective

To examine how issues related to immigration might affect Hispanics' rights.

Activity

View the film chapter titled "Epilogue." In recent years, the controversial issue of illegal immigration has raised civil rights concerns among many Hispanics. Because many illegal immigrants are Hispanic, efforts to combat illegal immigration could have the side effect of harming Hispanic citizens. (For example, Hispanic citizens might be turned down for jobs because employers fear they might not be in the country legally.)

Explore this issue by having each student bring in a news article, editorial, or research report dealing with illegal immigration that was published within the past three months and summarize it for the class. Using this material, discuss the following questions:

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- What are some ideas for dealing with illegal immigration that have recently been proposed or enacted at the local, state, or federal level?
- What are the main arguments for and against these ideas?
- Do any of the articles suggest that efforts to fight illegal immigration are harming Hispanic citizens? If so, how?

Assessment

Ask students to look at the issue of illegal immigration from the perspective of Hispanics. What special reasons might some Hispanics have for supporting proposals that would allow illegal immigrants to stay in this country permanently and legally? On the other hand, what special reasons might some Hispanics have for supporting a crackdown on illegal immigration? Can you come up with a way to address illegal immigration that takes both of these views into account?

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Hints for Completing the Classroom Activities

The Story of Texas

In their reports, groups may want to incorporate brief interviews with historical figures such as Santa Anna or Stephen Austin.

“Impeach Earl Warren”

Groups may want to consult this [biography of Warren](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/robes_warren.html) (http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/robes_warren.html) and these descriptions of some [landmark cases in the Court’s history](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/landmark.html). (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/landmark.html>)

“To this much, he is entitled by the Constitution”

You may want to point out to students that an important precedent Warren cites in his opinion – *Norris v. Alabama* – concerned the famous [Scottsboro case](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/scottsboro/) (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/scottsboro/>) of the 1930s, in which an all-white jury convicted several young African Americans of rape. What does this link between the *Norris* and *Hernandez* cases suggest about different groups’ struggles for equal rights?

Hispanics Today

Instead of creating the graphics as a class, you may want to divide the class into groups and have each group choose which graphic it will create.

Hispanics and Immigration

Encourage students to find publications that concern local issues, if possible, and that have appeared as recently as possible. Non-governmental organizations that publish materials related to immigration include the [Center for Immigration Studies](http://www.cis.org) (www.cis.org), the

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Federation for American Immigration Reform (www.fairus.org), the National Council of La Raza (www.nclr.org), and the National Immigration Law Center (www.nilc.org).

An alternative activity would be to focus on a specific legislative proposal, such as the “CLEAR Act” proposed in Congress, which would involve state and local police in the enforcement of federal immigration laws. This proposal has been both [praised](http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=1690) (<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=1690>) and [criticized](http://www.nclr.org/content/policy/detail/1063/) (<http://www.nclr.org/content/policy/detail/1063/>).

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