

"To Secure These Rights"

By Liza R. Rognas

The Lesson

Anticipatory Set

Define the terms: Equality, Liberty, and Freedom. Write an essay about their place in your life. What are you free to do? What kinds of equality and freedom do you enjoy? What restrictions do you experience?

Procedures

1. Examine pages **one**, **two**, and **three** from "To Secure These Rights." What do you find the most interesting about the information contained on these pages?
2. How do the terms defined in the anticipatory set apply to these pages?
3. What are the messages about segregation revealed in this document?
4. Read the Preamble and the Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution. Write an essay comparing them with information you have learned from "To Secure These Rights."
5. Divide the class into small groups of four or five. As a class project, have students evaluate the information from "To Secure These Rights." Ask them to develop findings based on that information.
 - Have them define democracy, for example, and then compare their definition with the situations presented in "To Secure These Rights."
 - Have them determine what it means to be an American by asking questions such as: What does America stand for? What does being an American mean to you?
 - Have them then examine the report and compare their findings to their definitions of America and being an American. What discrepancies do they find? Have things changed? How? How have they not changed?

Extension Activity

Have the students keep a journal of their family's daily activities for a week. Working in groups and comparing experiences, have them determine those activities that would have been restricted for African Americans according to "To Secure These Rights." Encourage them to list categories of activities, such as employment, transportation, recreation, education, and health.

Liza R. Rognas is a librarian and historian at The Evergreen State College Library in Olympia, Washington.