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# ***Personal Best*** **Teacher's Guide**

*This Teacher's Guide includes the following:*

- Suggested Lesson Plan
- Preview Questions
- Key Terms
- Viewing Guide
- Discussion Questions
- Activity: Who Chooses
- Quiz
- Enrichment and Integration Activities
- Answer Key

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## **Suggested Lesson Plan**

*These materials may be used in a variety of ways. For maximum benefit, we suggest the following lesson plan:*

- As a class, discuss the Preview Questions and Key Terms.
- Distribute copies of the Viewing Guide for students to use as a note-taking tool during the video.
- Play the video, pausing if needed to facilitate understanding and note-taking.
- Review and discuss answers to the Viewing Guide using Answer Key as a guide.
- Use Discussion Questions to spark class discussion, or assign these questions as homework.
- As a class or in small groups, complete the Who Chooses Activity.
- Replay the video as preparation for the Quiz.
- Administer and grade the Quiz using Answer Key as a guide.
- Optional: Assign one or more Enrichment Activities as homework.

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## **Preview Questions**

*(These are meant to be read aloud by the teacher.)*

1. What is equal about people?
2. What does it mean to treat people equally?
3. What is discrimination?
4. What is affirmative action? What is its goal?
5. Has affirmative action achieved its goal? Explain.
6. When, if ever, should affirmative action be discontinued?

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# Key Terms and Definitions

Affirmative Action – (also known as positive discrimination) the policy of providing special opportunities for, and favoring members of, one group over another, when those being favored are perceived as a disadvantaged group who suffer from discrimination within a culture.

Civil rights – the protections and privileges of personal power and rights given to all citizens by law. Examples include the right to get redress if injured by another, the right to privacy, the right of peaceful protest, the right to a fair investigation and trial if suspected of a crime, the right to vote, the right to personal freedom, the right to freedom of movement and the right of equal protection.

Civil Rights Act of 1964 – outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace, and by facilities that served the general public (known as "public accommodations").

Discrimination – the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

Fourteenth Amendment – granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans and slaves who had been emancipated after the American Civil War. Prohibited the states from depriving any person of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" and from denying anyone within a state's jurisdiction equal protection under the law.

Great Society – a set of domestic programs in the United States launched by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964-65. The main goal was the elimination of poverty and racial injustice. New major spending programs that addressed education, medical care, urban problems, and transportation were launched during this period.

Reconstruction – the restoration of the seceded states and the integration of the freedmen into American society during and especially after the Civil War.

Segregation – separation of humans into racial groups in daily life. It may apply to activities such as eating in a restaurant, drinking from a water fountain, using a public toilet, attending school, going to the movies, riding on a bus, or in the rental or purchase of a home.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Personal Best* Viewing Guide, page 1

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was literally spelled out...in the Declaration of Independence in 1776.
2. The 14<sup>th</sup> [Amendment] guarantees \_\_\_\_\_ under the law.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ was part of the very fabric of America until the 1960s.
4. Organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality pushed for \_\_\_\_\_ treatment to make up for the past.
5. Others, like...Milton Friedman, saw this change in direction from non-discrimination to race preference policies as a \_\_\_\_\_ to the goal of freedom and equality.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of 1964...outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ [was] a sweeping set of affirmative action programs...requiring colleges and businesses to give special consideration to race.
8. "It was a series of programs and ideas that had no \_\_\_\_\_ in black people."
9. Many black Americans were achieving \_\_\_\_\_ decades before affirmative action came into play.
10. Many believe that well-intentioned efforts to level the playing field by giving special consideration based on race and gender \_\_\_\_\_ discriminate.

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## ***Personal Best*** **Viewing Guide, page 2**

11. “Black Americans are \_\_\_\_\_ on almost every...socio-economic measure.”

12. “The idea of personal freedom is a very \_\_\_\_\_ idea.”

13. “We were all held to the same \_\_\_\_\_.”

14. After 50 years of government assistance there is increasing evidence that these programs are not \_\_\_\_\_ the lives of those we intend to help.

15. Schools like Urban Prep Academies...provide a comprehensive, high-quality \_\_\_\_\_ education for young men in low-income neighborhoods.

16. “We should shift the movement from civil rights, which we’ve had for 50 years now, to \_\_\_\_\_.”

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### **Discussion Questions, page 1**

1. How was our freedom spelled out in the Declaration of Independence?
2. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution guarantees equal protection under the law. What does this mean?
3. Racial segregation continued into the 1960s. Was this consistent with the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment? Explain.
4. In President Kennedy's executive order in 1961, how was the term "affirmative action" used? Why do you think it was called that? What distinguished affirmative action from simply ending discriminatory policies?
5. What does affirmative action mean today? Is it the same as or different from non-discrimination? Explain.
6. What is the difference between being 'colorblind' and being 'color-conscious' with regard to race?
7. What is preferential treatment? Why did some civil rights advocates in the 1960s push for preferential treatment?
8. What are civil rights?
9. What did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 do?
10. Did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 support racial preferences? Explain.
11. Can preferential treatment for members of a group make up for past discrimination? If so, how? If not, why not?
12. When should preferential treatment end? What is its goal?

## *Personal Best* **Discussion Questions, page 2**

13. Why did some see racial preferences as a threat to freedom and equality?
14. Explain Milton Friedman's foot race analogy. What concept of equality did he object to? Why?
15. What did President Johnson say about the foot race analogy?
16. Milton Friedman and Lyndon Johnson seem to have very different ideas about what is fair. How would you define fairness?
17. What was the Great Society? What were its goals?
18. What did the Great Society programs require of colleges and businesses?
19. Why does Shelby Steele object to LBJ's Great Society programs?
20. Is it wrong to place lower expectations on a person because he or she is a member of a particular group? Does affirmative action do this? Explain.
21. Should the freedom of some be restricted in order to provide greater benefits to others? Why/why not?
22. List three examples cited by Lyndon Johnson of black Americans already achieving success in the decades before affirmative action. Was affirmative action needed? Explain.
23. What does Walter Williams think about affirmative action? Do you agree? Why/why not?
24. How can we create a society where everyone is encouraged to achieve their personal best?



# ***Personal Best***

## **Activity:**

### **Who chooses? Who benefits? Who pays? What's fair?**

[These four questions can be a useful tool for evaluating any policy or system. Posing the questions is a great way to stimulate critical thinking.]

As a class, or in small groups, discuss the following:

*(For each question, think broadly about all the possible people or groups of people who may be affected, and remember there may be non-monetary costs and benefits.)*

1. In life, in what sense is it possible to arrange so that everyone starts at the starting line at the same time? In what sense is this impossible?
2. If the government cannot ensure complete equality of opportunity, should it ensure that everyone ends up with equal results? In what sense is this possible? In what sense is it impossible?
3. Who, if anyone, benefits when government acts to equalize results? Who, if anyone, pays the price?
4. If the government decides that due to unequal opportunities, people cannot run the race on their own, what room does that leave for people's own choices? Can anyone's choices and actions matter if they are prevented from "running the race"? How can people be satisfied with the equal results that government delivers if they come without running the race?

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## *Personal Best* Quiz, page 1

1. Which Amendment to the Constitution guarantees equal protection under the law to all citizens?
  - A) 1st
  - B) 5th
  - C) 14th
  - D) 18th
  
2. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) slavery
  - B) racial discrimination
  - C) equal protection under the law
  - D) poverty
  
3. The Great Society was a set of anti-poverty, anti-discrimination programs launched by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) Franklin Roosevelt
  - B) John F. Kennedy
  - C) Lyndon Johnson
  - D) Bill Clinton
  
4. Just prior to affirmative action \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) many black Americans were already achieving success
  - B) slavery was still practiced in America
  - C) black Americans had no legal guarantee of their civil rights
  - D) it was impossible for black Americans to get ahead
  
5. Shelby Steele believes \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) racial preferences are justified due to past discrimination
  - B) racial preferences have been harmful to African-Americans
  - C) blacks should be held to lower standards than whites
  - D) affirmative action gave black Americans dignity

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## *Personal Best* Quiz, page 2

6. The term affirmative action was first used \_\_\_\_\_.
- A) in the Declaration of Independence
  - B) in the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution
  - C) in an executive order signed by JFK
  - D) in the Civil Rights Act of 1964
7. After 50 years of government assistance \_\_\_\_\_.
- A) blacks now perform as well as whites on almost every socio-economic measure
  - B) blacks still lag behind whites on almost every socio-economic measure
  - C) affirmative action is now a thing of the past
  - D) the success of affirmative action is clear
8. The Congress of Racial Equality pushed for \_\_\_\_\_.
- A) preferential treatment to make up for the past
  - B) colorblind rather than color-conscious policies
  - C) separate but equal treatment of blacks
  - D) a policy of strict non-discrimination
9. People disagree about whether \_\_\_\_\_.
- A) affirmative action amounts to unjust discrimination
  - B) affirmative action was good for black Americans
  - C) segregation and racial discrimination persisted into the 1960s
  - D) both A and B
10. The success of schools such as Urban Prep Academies is due to \_\_\_\_\_.
- A) their dumbed-down curriculum
  - B) lower standards for black students
  - C) discrimination against whites
  - D) black students meeting high standards

# *Personal Best*

## **Enrichment and Integration Activities, page 1**

### I. Activity: Grade Equality

*Note: The teacher should read through these instructions (but not share the information with students) before giving the Quiz for this video.*

Tell students they will be graded on the Quiz. Administer the Quiz and grade in class, using Answer Key as a guide. Determine the class average grade on the Quiz. Now announce that grades are being equalized – points will be deducted from some and added to others so that all receive the same (average) grade. Allow students to respond. Some will object that this is unfair. For those who argue that it is fair, have them explain why. Ask the other students to explain why they think it is unfair. Students may say it is unfair because some worked harder than others. Challenge them on this, pointing out that some received high scores without seeming to put in much effort. Continue to discuss and debate as a class. Ask whether students would like to see a grade equalization system established in your class for the rest of the school year. What do they think the consequences would be? What would happen to the class average over time? Why?

Now ask students to compare affirmative action to grade redistribution. Assign the following written response to be completed in class or as homework: Write a one-page paper answering the following questions: Is affirmative action justified? Why/why not?

### II. Writing:

A) Write a one-page essay or journal entry interpreting one of the following quotes, and explaining why you agree or disagree:

- “There’s nobody who can give you dignity. You have to get that on your own.”
- “The idea of personal freedom is a very radical idea.”

B) Write a one-page essay or journal entry using this as a starting point: If you compare life to a foot race...

C) Creed writing

- Write your own personal creed.
- Write a creed for your class or school.

D) Write an essay on the following: If we benefit members of one group by restricting the freedoms of another group, is that fair? Support your position.

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### **Enrichment and Integration Activities, page 2**

- III. Debate: Affirmative Action. Ask the class to remain silent while you write the following proposition on the board: *Affirmative action should be abolished*. Do not allow any class discussion at this time. Have students cast secret written ballots for or against the proposition. Set the ballots aside without counting them. Now hold a class debate. Select two 2-person teams. One team argues for the proposition and the other against. Follow the rules for formal debate as closely as possible. Students not debating act as judges, voting for the team they believe won the debate by casting secret written ballots at the end of the debate. Now tally the results of the pre-debate vote and the post-debate vote and write both results on the board. How many students changed their minds as a result of the debate? Conduct a class discussion, allowing students to explain which team's arguments they found more persuasive, and why.
- IV. Report: Race in American History. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group research one of the following topics, create a report, and present their report to the class.
- Reconstruction
  - The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - Segregation
  - The Civil Rights Movement
  - The Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - The Great Society
  - Affirmative Action

# *Personal Best* **Answer Key**

## **Viewing Guide**

1. Freedom
2. equal protection
3. Discrimination
4. preferential
5. threat
6. Civil Rights Act
7. Great Society
8. faith
9. success
10. unjustly
11. behind
12. radical
13. standard
14. improving
15. college preparatory
16. dignity

## **Quiz**

1. C) 14th
2. B) racial discrimination
3. C) Lyndon Johnson
4. A) many black Americans were already achieving success
5. B) racial preferences have been harmful to African-Americans
6. C) in an executive order signed by JFK
7. B) blacks still lag behind whites on almost every socio-economic measure
8. A) preferential treatment to make up for the past
9. D) both A and B
10. D) black students meeting high standards

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