

Worksheet

1. (a) What was the basis of Dred Scott's argument that he was a free man? (b) How was this case related to significant political issues of that time ?

2. In rejecting Dred Scott's arguments that he should have the rights and privileges of a "citizen," the Supreme Court majority opinion interpreted the language of the U.S. Constitution.

(A) What two provisions from the original language of the Constitution did the Court refer to justify its rejection of his arguments ?

(B) How were each of those provisions of the original Constitutional language later amended ?

3. In Plessy v. Ferguson, the Court finds that the "separate railway carriage law" was reasonable. What was the Court's explanation for that conclusion?

4. The majority in Plessy v. Ferguson, discussing the Fourteenth Amendment, distinguished between political equality and social equality. Why did Justice Harlan's dissenting opinion reject this distinction?

5. In the Civil Rights Cases, the U.S. The Supreme Court held that the Civil Rights Act Of 1875 was not a proper exercise of federal legislative power under the U.S. Constitution. What did that law attempt to prohibit ?

6. In its decision in the Civil Rights Cases, what types of actions does the Supreme Court find are covered by the Fourteenth Amendment and which types are not covered?