



## The Jim Crow Law in the USA vs The Colour Bar in Great Britain Text

The Jim Crow laws were a series of state and local laws in the Southern United States that enforced racial segregation from the late 19th century until the mid-1960s. These laws required Black and white people to use separate public facilities such as schools, transportation, restaurants, parks, and bathrooms. Although the law said these facilities should be "separate but equal," in reality, those for Black people were usually of lower quality and fewer in number.

The name "Jim Crow" comes from a racist character in minstrel shows in the 1830s that mocked Black people. After the American Civil War and Reconstruction, white Southern lawmakers created these laws to keep Black Americans separated and limit their rights. Jim Crow laws also included voting restrictions like poll taxes and literacy tests to stop Black people from voting.

The Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 supported these segregation laws by approving the idea of "separate but equal." This ruling made segregation legal and widespread across the South. However, the facilities and services provided to Black Americans were rarely equal and often neglected.

Jim Crow laws affected all parts of life, including schools, hospitals, prisons, and even cemeteries. Because of these laws, many Black families moved from the South to Northern and Western cities in what became known as the Great Migration, searching for better opportunities and freedom from discrimination.

In Britain, there was no exact version of the Jim Crow laws. However, racial discrimination and segregation still existed, mainly through informal practices and social customs rather than official laws. One example is the "Colour Bar", which referred to a social practice excluding non-white people from certain jobs, housing, clubs, and public spaces. Unlike the legal segregation in the US, the Colour Bar was often enforced unofficially by landlords, employers, and social clubs.

During the 20th century, particularly after World War II, many people from British colonies, especially the Caribbean and South Asia, migrated to England. They faced discrimination in housing, jobs, and social life due to the Colour Bar and racist attitudes.

While the British Empire had racial hierarchies in its colonies—where people of different races were treated unequally—there was no formal system like Jim Crow within Britain itself. Instead, systemic racism existed through cultural attitudes and unofficial practices.

Understanding both Jim Crow laws and the Colour Bar helps us see how racial discrimination worked differently in the US and Britain. Still, both systems caused hardship and inequality for Black people and other minorities. Studying these histories helps us learn about the importance of civil rights and equality today.

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## Worksheet Section 1: True or False Quiz

1. Jim Crow laws included measures such as poll taxes and literacy tests designed to disenfranchise Black voters.
2. The Colour Bar in Britain was often supported by formal laws passed by Parliament.
3. The Jim Crow ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson declared that segregated facilities were constitutional only if they were truly equal in quality.
4. Jim Crow laws not only enforced segregation in public places but also banned interracial marriage in many Southern states.
5. During the Jim Crow era, Black passengers on buses were usually allowed to sit anywhere as long as they paid their fare.
6. The Colour Bar affected social spaces such as clubs and housing but not employment opportunities.
7. The Jim Crow system was reinforced not only by laws but also by violence and intimidation tactics.
8. Unlike Jim Crow laws, the Colour Bar was mostly an informal system perpetuated by social attitudes rather than legal codes.

## Worksheet Section 2: Multiple Choice Quiz

1. What did Jim Crow laws enforce?
  - a) Equal rights for all races
  - b) Racial segregation in public places
  - c) Voting rights for all citizens
2. The term "Jim Crow" originally referred to:
  - a) A type of flower
  - b) A minstrel show character
  - c) A political leader
3. Which court case legalized "separate but equal" facilities?
  - a) Brown v. Board of Education
  - b) Plessy v. Ferguson
  - c) Marbury v. Madison
4. What is the Colour Bar?
  - a) A British law against color discrimination
  - b) An unofficial practice excluding non-white people
  - c) A type of police barrier
5. Which group mainly experienced discrimination due to the Colour Bar in Britain?
  - a) British aristocrats
  - b) Immigrants from former colonies
  - c) Tourists



6. The Great Migration refers to:
  - a) British people moving to America
  - b) Black Americans moving from the South to northern cities
  - c) People moving from rural to urban areas in England
7. Jim Crow laws were abolished in the:
  - a) 1960s
  - b) 1920s
  - c) 1800s
8. Which of the following is true about the Colour Bar?
  - a) It was enforced by laws in the British Parliament
  - b) It was mainly a social and economic discrimination practice
  - c) It only affected people living in Britain's colonies

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## Worksheet Section 3: Short Answer Questions

1. What was the "separate but equal" doctrine, and how did it affect Black Americans?
2. How did the Colour Bar affect immigrants living in Britain?
3. Why is it important to learn about both Jim Crow laws and the Colour Bar when studying racial discrimination?

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## Group Project: Exploring Racial Segregation and Discrimination in the US and Britain

### Group Formation

- 26 students divided into 5 groups (4 groups of 5 students, 1 group of 6 students).

### Project Title

Understanding and Comparing Jim Crow Laws and the Colour Bar

### Project Objectives

- Research and explain key facts about Jim Crow laws or the Colour Bar.
  - Analyze the social, political, and cultural impacts of segregation and discrimination.
  - Compare the differences and similarities between racial discrimination in the US and Britain.
  - Develop English communication skills through group collaboration and presentation.
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## Group Tasks

### Group 1: Jim Crow Laws - Legal Framework and History

- Research the origin and development of Jim Crow laws.
- Present key laws and court cases (e.g., Plessy v. Ferguson).
- Explain how these laws enforced racial segregation and voting restrictions.

### Group 2: Life Under Jim Crow

- Investigate what daily life was like for Black Americans under Jim Crow (schools, transport, jobs).
- Highlight the impact of these laws on families and communities.
- Use historical images or testimonies to illustrate.

### Group 3: The Colour Bar in Britain

- Research the concept of the Colour Bar and how it operated socially and economically.
- Explore examples of racial discrimination in housing, employment, and social clubs.
- Explain protest actions or resistance against the Colour Bar (e.g., Len Johnson's campaigns).

### Group 4: Comparison of Jim Crow and Colour Bar

- Compare the legal enforcement in Jim Crow laws vs. unofficial practices in Britain.
- Discuss cultural attitudes and social impacts in both countries.
- Identify similarities and differences in how racial discrimination was experienced.

### Group 5: Legacy and Civil Rights Movements

- Research how discrimination laws and practices were challenged and overturned.
- Present major civil rights figures and movements in the US and Britain.
- Reflect on the lasting effects of segregation and racial discrimination in contemporary society.

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## Presentation Guidelines

- Each group prepares a 7–10 minute presentation using visuals, timelines, or role plays.
- Include at least 3 key facts or quotes from their research.
- Encourage creativity: short video clips, posters, or dramatizations are welcome.
- End with a 2-minute Q&A session to engage classmates.