
Equal Opportunity in America

Videos:

“The Segregation Myth: Richard Rothstein Debunks an American Lie” (8:35 minutes)
<https://youtu.be/2roWLzrqOjQ>

“Is the American Dream Alive for Minorities?” (4:33 minutes)
https://stosselintheclassroom.org/both_sides/

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. In the video, *The Segregation Myth: Richard Rothstein Debunks an American Lie*, Richard Rothstein discussed his book, *The Color of Law*. Why do you think he chose that title for his book?
3. In the Stossel video, “Is the American Dream Alive for Minorities,” Star Parker said that her life changed for the better when her outlook changed from that of a victim to one who believed that personal responsibility was the way out of poverty. Why?
4. John Stossel asked his audience if it is tougher for non-whites to achieve the American dream. Some believed it is, but most believed it is not. If Richard Rothstein is correct about the problems that government policies caused back in the 1940s and ‘50s, why might some people today not see a connection between achieving the American Dream today and government policies that led to segregation in the past? Why might some people, such as Star Parker, discount that connection?
5. What is the national myth Richard Rothstein spoke of? Explain the argument of those who blame de facto segregation as the cause of racial segregation throughout the United States. How does Richard Rothstein refute that explanation?
6. According to Richard Rothstein, why did the federal government create public housing? How did these housing projects become segregated?

7. To what did Richard Rothstein attribute white people moving out of the projects and more blacks moving in?
8. Richard Rothstein said the projects soon became slums. What caused that?
9. Why did the newly created suburbs become primarily white?
10. Where does Richard Rothstein place the blame for the problems with housing?
11. Star Parker said her views about government changed when she became a business owner. Why did her views change then?
12. “When you buy the lie that government will take care of you, then you are not going to move into self-sufficiency, and you get trapped.” What did Star Parker mean?
13. Star Parker says she used to believe her problems were the fault of others and that government would take care of her. How could this mentality be harmful?
14. In some ways, Richard Rothstein and Star Parker agree. In what way do they agree about the cause of the problems they discussed? In what way might they disagree?