

### A Level History - Essay Questions (US Civil Rights, 1850-2009)

1. To what extent did the lives of black Americans change for the better during the Reconstruction period of 1865-77?
2. 'The abolition of slavery and Radical Reconstruction failed to bring about black American equality by 1877.' How far do you agree with this statement?
3. 'The civil rights cases of 1883 showed that the gains in civil and political equality achieved by black Americans during Reconstruction (1865-77) were short-lived?' How far do you agree with this statement?
4. 'Constitutional Amendments introduced during the Reconstruction period significantly improved the position of black Americans in the years 1865-77.' How far do you agree with this statement?
5. To what extent did Jim Crow Laws, introduced between 1887 and 1900, turn black Americans into second-class citizens across the United States?
6. 'The exclusion of black Americans from the vote was the most damaging setback to their fight for civil rights in the years 1883-c.1900.' How far do you agree with this statement?
7. 'The introduction of Jim Crow Laws by state government was the most important reason for the denial of civil and political equality for black Americans'. How far do you agree with this statement?
8. 'The Supreme Court played the crucial role in the spread of the Jim Crow laws in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.' How far do you agree with this statement?
9. 'The Jim Crow laws did not introduce any totally new system of Southern race control.' How far do you agree with this statement?
10. 'In the 1930s, legal (*de jure*) segregation was a bigger problem for black Americans than *de facto* racial segregation.' How far do you agree with this statement?
11. 'The failure to pass federal anti-lynching legislation was due to the inaction of Democrat President Franklin D. Roosevelt.' How far do you agree with this statement?
12. 'New Deal programme introduced during the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt failed black Americans.' How far do you agree with this statement?
13. How far was the influence of southern whites in the Democratic Party the chief cause of the failure to address the grievances of black Americans during the New Deal years, 1933-41?
14. 'The New Deal unquestionably improved the lives of black Americans in the years 1933-41.' How far do you agree with this statement?
15. To what extent was Eleanor Roosevelt responsible for the change in black American voting habits in the years 1933-41?
16. How far did increasing tensions within the campaign for black civil rights damage the move towards greater racial equality in the USA?
17. 'It was the Supreme Court that was responsible for the improved position of black Americans in the Southern states in the period 1950-63.' How far do you agree with this statement?
18. How significant was media coverage to the successes of the civil rights movement during the years 1956-68?
19. To what extent, in the years 1954-68, did the civil rights movement succeed in improving the status of black Americans?
20. To what extent was President Johnson responsible for the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act?

21. 'Martin Luther King was the person most responsible for the improvement in black American civil rights between 1955 and 1965.' How far do you agree with this statement?
22. How successful, by 1968, was the campaign to achieve equal civil rights for black Americans?
23. How far was Obama's election to the Illinois state senate a turning point in his career to become a possible future Democratic Party candidate for the presidency?
24. 'Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008 because he was black.' How far do you agree with this statement?
25. How far was Obama's victory in the presidential election of 2008 due to the weakness of his opponents?