



Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment

Annotation Station

Highlight in **YELLOW** phrases that confuse you. Use context clues to figure out their meaning.

Highlight in **RED** examples where rights have been violated, denied, or limited.

Highlight in **GREEN** examples where rights have been protected or granted.

☆ Star the items that make you wonder and wish to explore further.

Equal Protection Clause

“No State shall make or enforce any law which shall **abridge** [curtail] the privileges or **immunities** [protection or exemption from something] of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State **deprive** [deny a person the possession or use of something] any person of life, liberty, or property, without **due process** [fair treatment entitled to a citizen through the normal judicial system] of law; nor deny to any person within its **jurisdiction** [the official power to make legal decisions and judgments] the **equal protection** [requires the government to treat individuals fairly regardless of their race, national origin, citizenship status, sexual orientation, or gender] of the laws.”

14th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States

Ratified on July 9, 1868

This segment of the 14th Amendment has become known as the equal protection clause, meaning that the government may not deny people equal protection of its governing laws. The government must treat an individual in the same manner as others in similar conditions and circumstances. Simply put, the equal protection clause ensures that every person, regardless of race, national origin, citizenship status, sexual orientation, or gender, is treated the same by the government.

The 14th Amendment is one of the three amendments passed after the Civil War, known as the Civil War Amendments. It granted citizenship to all persons born or **naturalized** [admitted to citizenship] in the United States, including formerly enslaved people.

Note: Following each bolded term, a definition has been provided in brackets to assist with comprehension. The bracketed words do not appear in the original primary-source document.