

## LESSON: The Two Rulings of *Brown v. Board*

**GRADE LEVEL:** Early High School

**SUBJECT:** American History

**TIME REQUIRED:** 60 mins

This lesson will allow students to investigate the rulings of *Brown v. Board* and the intricacies of legal language.

### RATIONALE

This lesson introduces students to the complexities of legal language and desegregation by analyzing the dual rulings of *Brown v. Board*. Students will complete an online investigation course to answer questions about the two rulings.

NOTE: This lesson is designed for students to work through individually. The pacing will change depending on how teachers adapt grouping configurations.

This lesson plan and materials needed to teach it can be found at the Thurgood Marshall Institute: <https://tminstituteldf.org/>

### OVERVIEW

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the relationship between political language and action?
- How are historical decisions altered or updated?
- How did the rulings of *Brown v. Board* influence desegregation?

#### OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

After the lesson, students will...

- Know the two rulings associated with *Brown v. Board*.
- Explain the differences between these two rulings.
- Evaluate the purposes and meaning of these two rulings.

#### PREPARING TO TEACH

- Students should have a preliminary knowledge of segregation, Jim Crow, desegregation, and the foundational details of *Brown v. Board*.
- Teachers should
  - Print out copies of the attached worksheets for all students.
  - Provide the attached links and resources to students in the most accessible manner.

#### SCAFFOLDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS TO SUPPORT LEARNERS

*Reading support...*

Teachers may provide vocabulary definitions, synonyms, or scaffolded reading to support students as they work with primary sources. Teachers may also edit the packet to allow students to represent their answers in methods beyond writing.

#### *Differentiation...*

Teachers may elect to have students complete the attached packet with partners or small groups depending on their class. Teachers can also work through the primary sources as a whole class before encouraging students to answer the questions in the packet alone.

#### *Adjusting for high school grades...*

This lesson is applicable to high school grades as it stands. Teachers may choose to edit the attached questions and explanations depending on their class.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SEQUENCE**

1. Review any necessary information/history with students to prepare them for the content of the lesson.
2. Explain to students the procedure and intended outcomes of this investigation workshop. Explain that the worksheet packet will guide them through their learning.
3. Allow students time to work through the packet individually or with partners.
4. Regather the class and organize students in small groups. Invite them to discuss their answers to the last two questions in their packet.

### **ASSESSMENT**

The concluding discussion is meant to refocus and solidify student understanding after the course of activities. Teachers may use this discussion to check in on student understanding and clarify questions/misconceptions. Teachers may also collect and review worksheet packets after the conclusion of the lesson to check student learning.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ENRICHMENT**

- See attached links below.

## The “End” to *Brown v. Board*: Source Investigation

Today we’re going to be looking at how the court case of *Brown v. Board* was closed and how its decisions were presented to the public. The following links and questions will walk you through an investigation to uncover the information yourself.

Start by reading the overview included at the top of this page:

<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/brown-v-board-of-education>.

1. How many rulings did *Brown v. Board* have? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why were there additional rulings? What questions did people have after the first ruling?

3. What were some of the reactions after the second ruling?

Follow this link to open the text from the first ruling of *Brown v. Board* in 1954:

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/opinion-brown-v-board>. Go to page 11 and read the first full paragraph on this page (it starts “We conclude...”).

1. What was the final decision of the Supreme Court in 1954?
2. What words and phrases does the Supreme Court use to describe **segregation**?

3. What words and phrases does the Supreme Court use to describe **desegregation**?

Now, follow this link to see the Supreme Court's additional ruling for *Brown II* in 1955:  
<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/judgment-brown-v-board>. Read page 1.

1. What was the final decision for *Brown II* in 1955?

2. What words and phrases does the Supreme Court use to describe **segregation**?

3. What words and phrases does the Supreme Court use to describe **desegregation**?

Consider the differences between these two rulings.

1. What do the two rulings have in common?

