

## LESSON: Desegregation and Your State

**GRADE LEVEL: Grades 9-12**

**SUBJECT: History, ELA**

**TIME REQUIRED: 180 mins**

This lesson is a Tennessee case study of desegregating Nashville, but the structure can be mapped onto any metropolitan city.

### RATIONALE

This lesson is an examination of a city and its history of integrating public schools, providing a counternarrative to traditional understandings of a post-*Brown* America.

NOTE: This lesson is about Nashville, but the framework of the lesson will be made with transposing the lesson to fit any metropolitan city and its desegregation story. The activities can be mapped onto any sources exploring the challenges of desegregation.

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

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this lesson is to provide a counternarrative for students to examine the desegregation process and the speed at which it happened in a southern metropolitan city. The pacing and organization of this lesson should be able to fit a study of any city that a teacher would want, but this lesson will be looking at the integration journey of Nashville, Tennessee, specifically.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What does justice look like?

### OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

After the lesson, students will...

Have a new perspective on the history of desegregation and will practice writing historical fiction narratives based on primary sources and firsthand accounts.

### PREPARING TO TEACH

If you want to use a case study that is closer to home for your classroom, we recommend basing a case study in a larger metropolitan area, though that is not necessary. The utilization of multiple accounts and sources from a variety of media is recommended as well. The more support students can get from local primary sources, the better.

## SCAFFOLDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS TO SUPPORT LEARNERS

### *Reading support...*

Much of what is given and recommended can easily be scaffolded and is already ideal for multilingual learners, given the modalities of the sources. Utilizing as many auditory and visual resources would help. For the longer reading, *Southern Spaces*, we recommend having students read the entire piece, however tell them to skip the “Introduction,” and they do not need to read the “Appendices.”

### *Differentiation...*

If you want to give students more resources to engage with, have them also read one of the “Recommended Resources” from the “Web” section of the *Southern Spaces* article.

### *Adjusting for middle school grades...*

Only use the podcasts, not the reading, and maybe even curate how much you want students to listen to.

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SEQUENCE

Begin class with a reflection “do now,” asking students the following question: *What does desegregation look like to you? How would you judge when education is equal?* While students are answering this question, give students the *Southern Spaces* reading with instructions for how you would like students to read it (individual, in groups, etc.). You can have students read this piece, but it is longer, so make sure students are given ample time or divide students up and make this a jig-saw reading, assigning portions to students and having them read their section and teach their classmates what they read. We recommend doing the jig-saw reading and then having class time for students to teach each other about what they read.

For homework or the later part of the first class, have them listen to and read the transcription of the linked podcast below, “Part 2: The Nashville Way,” which follows the story of the Kelley family and their fight for desegregation in Nashville. This can be listened to at 1.5x speed, though listening to it at normal speed may be needed for multilingual students. The following day’s class will be the listening to “Episode 3: The Unraveling,” which tells the story of the toll desegregation took on the Kelley family. A discussion around this counternarrative of desegregation can go a few ways, but we recommend a guided whole-class discussion. To begin, have students note in small groups what they found interesting from the article and podcasts. Once they have done that, ask students to think about what questions they have about desegregation, how it happened in individual cities, the Kelley family, and people like them. These should be the driving questions for the larger group discussion that should not only be used as an informal formative assessment, but an opportunity to clarify misconceptions if need be and give students the chance to develop their own questions about desegregation. This

will be followed by the main assessment piece of this counternarrative: having students write brief historical fiction about desegregation in Nashville.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Students will write a brief, ideally 1-2 page, historical fiction narrative set during the time of desegregation in Nashville. The prompt given to students should be as follows: *We have just heard a counternarrative to the traditional understanding of desegregation. Using the podcasts and articles we have read the past few days as context, write a piece of historical fiction set during desegregation in Nashville. This story should be about a moment in time that would be realistic during Nashville's challenge of desegregation. This narrative should be a short story, no more than two pages, and ideally look at a specific moment or challenge that a character at the time would need to reckon with.*

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

[Season 2, Part 2: The Nashville Way | WPLN News](#)

[Season 2, Episode 3: The Unraveling | WPLN News](#)

[Walking into History: The Beginning of School Desegregation in Nashville - Southern Spaces](#)