
STUDY GUIDE FOR EBZB PRODUCTIONS'
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Questions About Brown v. Board and The Civil Rights Movement...

Enhance your theatre experience. Relate the play to Arts Education, Computer Skills, English-LA, Healthful Living - Character Education, History, Information Skills, Social Studies, and more.

BROWN FAMILY PORTRAIT



1. 1954 was the year of the Brown v. Board Ruling. What was the outcome of the ruling? Who was the US President at the time? Who was The Vice-President?
2. What is the "Plessy vs. Ferguson" ruling?
3. What is the origin of the name Jim Crow and what was the "Jim Crow Era" of history?
4. What right does the Fourteenth Amendment give citizens?
5. Who is Thurgood Marshall and how did the Brown v. Board court case foreshadow his career?
6. Why was the appointment of Justice Earl Warren important to the outcome of the Brown v. Board case?

WEB SITES

National Public Radio: Brown 50
www.npr.org/news/specials/brown50

Supreme Court Landmark Cases.
www.landmarkcases.org/brown

Brown v. Board Activity Book
www.brownvboard.org/actvtybk/cover.htm

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did African Americans react to the Brown decision? Were all African Americans in favor of the decision? How did white Americans react? Where in the United States was the strongest reaction felt against Brown?
2. What are the advantages of segregation? What are the disadvantages?
3. Is your school segregated? In what ways? What other groups need to be included besides African-Americans? What could you do to work against segregation?
4. Do you believe in what Brown v. Board stands for? What else needs to happen for us to move closer to the ideals of Brown?
5. Is watching a piece of theatre a helpful way to learn about this subject? Is it easier to "see" and "hear" the story rather than read it? What most interested you about the play? Can you think of some reasons why a

single actor played all the roles? Try using just your voice and body to become different characters and tell several sides of a story.

PUBLICATIONS ABOUT BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

"Brown v. Board of Education: School Desegregation. Dudley, Mark E. Twenty-First Century Books, 1994. Gr. 6-10

"Brown v. Board of Education : Equal Schooling For All. Fireside, Harvey. Enslow, 1994. Gr. 6-10

"Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone. Good, Diane L. Children's Press, 2004. Gr. 5-8

"Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka: Challenging School Segregation in the Supreme Court. Miller, Jake. PowerKids Press, 2004. Gr. 1-4

"Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone: The Brown V. Board Of Education Decision." Thomas, Joyce Carol. Hyperion Books for Children, 2003.

VOCABULARY WORDS

Biracial, Civil Disobedience, Democratic Society, Dissenter, Equality, Illegal, Inferiority, Inherently, Integrated, Minority, NAACP, Public Education, Prejudice, Private Education, Race, Right, Segregation, Stereotype, Tangible, Unanimous, Unconstitutional, U.S. Supreme Court.

STUDY GUIDE ANSWERS FOR TEACHERS...

1. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court of the United States declared the notion of "separate but equal" schooling unconstitutional. The court said separate was inherently unequal. In 1954 the U.S. President was Dwight D. Eisenhower, the U.S. Vice President was Richard M. Nixon. Gas cost 29 cents/gallon, minimum wage was 75 cents/hour.
2. The Supreme Court's "*Plessy vs. Ferguson*" decision in 1896 required railroads to provide "separate but equal" accommodations for black and white citizens. *Plessy vs. Ferguson* led to more than just separate railroad cars. Schools, restaurants, courthouses, bathrooms and even drinking fountains were also segregated. The law influenced most kinds of interaction between blacks and whites.
3. The term Jim Crow is believed to have originated around 1830 when a white, minstrel show performer blackened his face with charcoal paste and danced a ridiculous jig while singing the lyrics to the song, "Jump Jim Crow." By the 1850s the "Jim Crow" character had become a standard part of the minstrel show scene in America. On the eve of the Civil War, the Jim Crow idea was one of many stereotypical images of black inferiority in the popular culture of the day. The word "Jim Crow" became a racial slur in the vocabulary of many whites; and by the end of the century, acts of racial discrimination toward blacks were often referred to as Jim Crow laws and practices. The Jim Crow era in American history dates from the late 1890s, when southern states began systematically to make laws and state constitutional provisions to enforce the subordinate position of African Americans in society. Most of these legal steps were aimed at separating the races in public spaces (public schools, parks, accommodations, and transportation) and preventing adult black males from exercising the right to vote.
4. The Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution states: **All persons** born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.
5. Thurgood Marshall served as legal director of the NAACP. His tenure, from 1940 to 1961, was a pivotal time for the organization, as overturning racial segregation was one of its prime directives. Marshall, along with his mentor Charles Hamilton (who was the first Black lawyer to win a case before the Supreme Court), developed a long-term strategy for eradicating segregation in schools. They first concentrated on graduate and professional schools, believing that White judges would be more likely to sympathize with the ambitious young Blacks in those settings. As the team won more and more cases, they turned toward elementary and high schools. This culminated in the landmark 1954 decision "*Brown v The Board of Education*" which declared segregation of public schools illegal. By this time, Marshall was an experienced Supreme Court advocate, having already presented many cases before them, including challenges against white-only primary elections and restrictive covenants. He presented each of his cases in what would become his hallmark style: straight forward and plain-spoken. When asked for a definition of "equal" by Justice Frankfurter, Marshall replied, "Equal means getting the same thing, at the same time and in the same place." Thurgood Marshall is one of the most well-known figures in the history of civil rights in America and after "*Brown v. Board of Education*", Marshall went on to become the **first** Black Supreme Court Justice. He served on the Court for 24 years.
6. Justice Fred Vinson died before the *Brown v. Board* case was reargued in 1953. It is believed that he would have voted to uphold the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (separate but equal) ruling. Justice Earl Warren, a civil rights advocate and champion of *Brown v. Board* was appointed to Vinson's seat. This dramatic, sudden change in events and positions set the course for *Brown's* victory.

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