



CIVILDISCOURSE

An American Legacy Toolkit

■ **Module:** Civil Rights

Overview

Timeframe: 3-4 days / 50-minute sessions

Podcast and Video Alignment

60-Second Civics Podcast:

- Civil Rights at the Founding
- Frederick Douglass' Speech
- Reconstruction Amendments
- *Brown v. Board of Education*
- Civil Rights Challenges Today

Beyond the Legacy Video:

- Civil Rights in America

Scholar:

Dr. Lester Brooks
American History Professor Emeritus
Anne Arundel Community College

American Legacy Text & Additional Texts

Primary Sources:

- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* (1954)

Instructional Materials:

- Beyond the Legacy
Video Guide: Civil Rights
- Paideia Seminar Plan –
Brown v. Board of Education
- Structured Academic
Controversy Plan – Civil Rights
- SAC Note-Taking Graphic Organizer

Inquiry Question

Was *Brown v. Board of Education* successful?

Objective

Participants will learn about the constitutional underpinnings of civil rights and how they relate to racial segregation today to engage in a civil discourse model to expand their perspectives on the issue.

Vocabulary

- 14th Amendment
- “compulsory school attendance”
- equal protection
- jurisdiction
- ratification
- rudimentary
- “separate but equal”
- state-imposed discrimination

Facilitator Background

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was a landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court in 1954 that declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. A group of African-American parents brought the case forward on behalf of their children, who were denied admission to white schools due to their race. The Court found that segregation in education violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, which guarantees equal treatment under the law to all citizens.

The decision overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine established in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896, which allowed for racial segregation in public facilities as long as they were deemed equal in quality. *Brown v. Board of Education* marked a significant turning point in the Civil Rights Movement and paved the way for the desegregation of other public institutions, including public transportation, housing, and employment.

Implementing the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was met with resistance from some white communities, leading to a long and tumultuous process of school desegregation across the United States. Nonetheless, the decision set a precedent for eliminating institutionalized segregation and discrimination, and it remains a powerful symbol of the struggle for civil rights in the United States.

Additional Resources:

- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), Khan Academy
- *Brown v. Board of Education Decision* (Unabridged)
- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), National Archives
- “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”
National Museum of African American History & Culture
- “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852) (Unabridged)

Assess & Authentically Engage

Students demonstrate their understanding of civil rights by making real-world connections between the context surrounding the Supreme Court’s decision on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* and that of the present-day United States and the role of civil rights today.