

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka / Local History Project—Answer Key

Although *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* made segregation of public schools illegal in 1954, it took many years for some schools around the nation to desegregate. This activity is an opportunity for you to look into your own community's history during the period of desegregation and the civil rights movement.

Part I

Research how the integration of schools was accomplished in your state. Was it done “with all deliberate speed” as the Supreme Court recommended, or did it take longer?

- Use the [Chronicling America site](#) from the Library of Congress to look up newspapers in your state after 1954 using search terms like “integrate schools” or “desegregate schools.”
- Perform a general search in your state’s public archives to find any information about the integration of schools in your area.
- Interview family members who were alive during this time period. Ask them if they remember the movement to desegregate schools? What do they remember about it?

Part 2

Some activists believe that segregation still mostly exists in American schools. Rather than *de jure* segregation (segregation by law), they argue that many cities and towns have *de facto* segregation (segregation “by fact”) because many neighborhoods are still largely segregated.

Research your school’s racial and ethnic demographics and those of your town/city. Are all groups proportionately represented? (For example, if your town is 60% White, are roughly 60% of the students in your school White?)

Part 3

Based on your research, write an argumentative essay that responds to the following prompt:

- Has our local community fulfilled the promises made by *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (I and II)*?

Use the information you found as evidence in your essay.

Student responses will vary. Included below is a suggested rubric for grading the project:

	Exemplary (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Thesis Student work contains a clear, concise, and arguable thesis.				
Evidence Reputable information is used consistently to support the claim made by the thesis statement. All evidence is cited appropriately.				
Organization Student work has a clear, logical flow of ideas (including an introduction and conclusion) that suggest a predetermined organization to the essay.				
Conventions The essay contains very few (if any) errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, or capitalization.				