

## **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka / Newspaper Analysis—Answer Key**

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Access the **primary source document** from the **New York Times** at <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1957/09/24/issue.html>.

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**Before reading the articles, answer the following questions about the front page.**

1. Inspect front page of the newspaper, what information can you gather from it right off the bat?

Student answers will vary but might include:

- Headline: PRESIDENT THREATENS TO USE U.S. TROUPS, ORDERS RIOTERS IN LITTLE ROCK TO DESIST; MOB COMPELS 9 NEGROES TO LEAVE SCHOOL
- Photo of man of man kicking a Black supporter at Central High
- Headline “Little Rock Police, Deployed at Sunrise, Press Mob Back at School Barricades
- Headline: President’s Statements
- Other headlines and/or photos.

2. When was this newspaper published? Why is the date significant?

This newspaper was published on September 24, 1957, during the Little Rock Nine crisis in Arkansas. The paper was published after *Brown v. Board* was decided in 1954. The date is significant because even three years later, there were still battles raging over the integration of public schools.

**Read the article entitled “Students Unhurt: Return Today Unlikely—City Authorities Yield to Crowds” and answer the following questions, referencing the source as needed.**

3. Summarize the news story “Students Unhurt.”

Student answer will vary but should include a mob of white supremacists gathered at Central High School protesting the integration of the school. They were joined by some students who walked out of school. The Black students were forced to leave the school. They may also note that while the headline is “Students Unhurt” there were reports of attacks on the Black students inside the school.

4. Why do you think this event is significant in the history of desegregation?

The event is significant because it illustrates the power of national vs. state governments – that our federal system causes tensions between states and the national government when they are not in agreement on public policy. Further, it shows that the decision in *Brown v. Board*, while hugely significant, was only the beginning in terms of the fight for racial equality. Integration was the “law of the land” according to this landmark case, but it took a while for it to spread *throughout* the land.

**Read the article entitled “Eisenhowerirate: Says Federal Orders ‘Cannot be Flouted with Impunity’” and “President’s Statements,” and answer the following questions, referencing the sources as needed.**

5. What was President Eisenhower’s reaction to the events in Little Rock?

President Eisenhower was angry at Governor Faubus of Arkansas for not heeding a court order that Central High School should be integrated. The President issued a proclamation that authorized the use of federal troops to integrate the school and ordered that the “mobs” who were barring the Black students’ entry must “cease and desist and disperse.”

6. What presidential powers can be used to enforce Supreme Court decisions?

As evidenced by this article, the president can authorize federal troops to keep the peace and issue proclamations. The president can also use executive orders to mandate that the federal bureaucracy enforce a Supreme Court decision.

7. In Federalist #78, Alexander Hamilton wrote that the judicial branch is the “least dangerous branch” of government. Based on this article, would you agree? Why or why not?

Student answers may vary. Some students may point to the fact that places like Little Rock, Arkansas did not heed the court case, as evidenced by this article, to prove that the judicial branch has no real power if the executive branch does not enforce its decisions. Some may point to the fact that the case (and the reaction to it) sparked the Civil Rights Movement and schools were eventually desegregated, and therefore, shows the power that the Court can have on American society.