



## **Hidden Realities: School Desegregation and the Law - Brown and Black Victories during the Civil Rights Era**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.03.05  
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Court cases that sanctioned or countered black-white segregation during the civil rights era are seldom introduced at the elementary grade level. Moreover, stories regarding other non-whites impacted by Jim Crow laws are rarely told. It is for these reasons that I have developed this unit. Appropriate and modifiable for students in grades 3 to 5, the unit targets school segregation as it impacted Mexican and African American communities and the judicial and societal battles to overcome it during the early- to mid-twentieth century. Young learners will analyze, compare, and contrast *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County*, and *Brown v. Board of Education*. Authentic film footage and photos encompassing Mendez and Brown, coupled with a viewing of Disney's biographic film, "The Ruby Bridges Story," visually highlight the social climate that existed after the Brown decision. These resources, along with engaging children's literature across genre, and coupled with interactive language arts activities, help students better understand the civil rights struggle and what it entailed. Also, students will embrace how the collective efforts of diverse people (among them children) in past decades helped pave the way for culturally inclusive classrooms experienced in America today.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Language Arts, and Social Development, grades 4 and 5)

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