

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Brown V. Board of Education

Muralists design murals, which are large pieces of art that are directly painted and applied on a wall or ceiling. Murals are often in public places, such as outside a building or on the ceiling of churches. Artists create murals for a variety of reasons. Some murals are meant to entertain viewers while others are meant to play an important role in politics. Some muralists create art about events that happen in history. Their art represents freedom of expression and can be used to depict a story, dream, value, or change that is needed in society.

Today, you will create a mural about a time in American history when African Americans were discriminated against in almost all aspects of their lives, including education. Follow the steps below.



## Step 1: Learn about Brown v. Board of Education

Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions.

In 1865, slavery became illegal in the United States. This meant that white people could not own African Americans and treat them as property. Because slavery became illegal, African Americans gained freedom and rights. This meant they were to be treated the same as white people. The problem was that African Americans were still not treated equally. They still faced racial discrimination. Racial discrimination refers to when one group is treated unfairly because of the color of their skin. African Americans still were denied opportunities to live better lives.

The photograph below is of a sign outside a community where white people lived. They posted this sign to prevent African Americans from moving into their neighborhood. The word “tenant” means someone who rents a house or apartment to live in. White people posted these signs because they only wanted to live near other white people. This sign is an example of racial discrimination.



In addition, African Americans were often segregated based on the color of their skin, especially in the South. The word “segregated” means “to set apart or remove from others.” For example, there were separate restaurants, schools, drinking fountains, and bathrooms for each group to use. At this time, segregation was legal. This meant that African Americans could be forced to use different facilities. If African Americans tried to use “white only” facilities, they broke the law and were arrested.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Brown V. Board of Education

This is a photograph of two segregated water fountains that people could use. They were labeled so that African Americans and white people knew which water fountains they could drink out of. The word “colored” was used to describe African Americans during a time when they did not have the same rights as white people. We no longer use this word today because it is hurtful and disrespectful.



Credit: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/36/e8/10/36e81008f2a213da3413e74dc8dd004c.jpg>

The schools that African American and white students attended were very different and not equal. For example, the schools that African American students attended had old, left-over textbooks and sports equipment that white students no longer used. Sometimes, these schools didn't have bathrooms or electricity. The schools were often far away from where African American students lived. This meant that students had to walk miles to a bus stop or to school even though there were closer schools that white students attended. On the other hand, white students went to schools that were nicer and newer. These schools had new materials as well as bathrooms and electricity. These schools were also located close to students' houses. The schools that African American students attended had old, left-over textbooks and sports equipment that white students no longer used. Sometimes, these schools didn't have bathrooms or electricity. The schools were often far away from where African American students lived. This meant that students had to walk miles to a bus stop or to school even though there were closer schools that white students attended. On the other hand, white students went to schools that were nicer and newer. These schools had new materials as well as bathrooms and electricity. These schools were also located close to students' houses.



Photo of Linda Brown walking past her elementary school. Credit: CNN.com

In 1951, an African-American man named Oliver Brown walked into an all-white school to speak with the principal. He told the principal he wanted to enroll his daughter at the school. His daughter, Linda, was a third grade student. The principal refused. Oliver Brown was furious. The current school that Linda attended was not as nice as the school the white students attended. In addition, the all-white school was closer to the Brown's house than the school for African American students. Linda had to cross a dangerous railroad track every day to get to a bus stop. Then, she had to wait in the cold, rain, and snow for the bus to come. The bus took her two miles to the other side of town to school.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Brown V. Board of Education

After the principal refused to let Linda go to the all-white school, Oliver talked with the school board. A school board is made up of a group of leaders who are in charge of all the schools in an area. The school board also refused to let Linda attend the all-white school.

Oliver Brown did not give up. He decided to take the school board to court. This meant that he wanted a judge to hear his complaint. He hoped the judge would tell the school board to let his daughter go to the all-white school. Courts in Kansas and the Supreme Court listened to Oliver's complaint. In 1954, the Supreme Court decided that segregation in public schools was illegal. This meant that all schools across the country could no longer separate students based on the color of their skin.

This court case was called Brown v. Board of Education. The judges ruled that segregation in all public schools in the United States was illegal. This meant that African American and white students could go to the same schools. This Supreme Court decision became one of the most important decisions in United States' history.

## What is the Supreme Court?

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. This means that a decision made by the Supreme Court stands as a final decision for a court case. The Supreme Court is made up of 9 judges.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

# **Brown V. Board of Education**

**Answer the questions below using complete sentences.**

1. What is racial discrimination? Write a definition in your own words.
2. How were schools that African American students attended different compared to schools that white students attended?
3. How did Oliver Brown show bravery and courage?
4. What was the result of Brown vs. Board of Education?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Brown V. Board of Education

## Step 2: Create a Mural

Many artists have created murals about Brown v. Board of Education. Take a look at the mural below. It was created by an artist named Michael Toombs. He painted the mural on a large wall in Topeka, Kansas. Michael Toombs wanted to promote a message of equality in his mural. What other important themes do you think he wanted viewers to think or feel when they look at the mural?



Credit: Michael Toombs

**Want to see more murals about Brown vs. Board of Education? Check out other examples here:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yHpJsHUsLRjyQ5MgjmQH05LZmyDrP68n?usp=sharing>

You will create your own mural about Brown vs. Board of Education. Your mural's words and images must be serious and respectful. You can design a mural on a separate piece of paper or on a computer. You can also use the template on the next page to create your mural.

Your mural should include the following:

- A written description about Brown v. Board of Education
- A message about the importance of equality

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Brown V. Board of Education

Design your mural using the template below.

