

Name _____



Equal Schools

For many years, African American and white children went to separate schools. These schools were supposed to be “separate but equal,” but they were not. Black schools often had fewer supplies, older books, and worse buildings than white schools. Many people knew this was unfair, and they wanted to change it.

The Fight for Fair Education

One of those people was Oliver Brown, whose daughter, Linda Brown, had to walk a long distance to her all-Black school, even though there was a white school much closer to their home in Topeka, Kansas. Brown and other families worked with a group of lawyers from the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) to fight against segregation in schools.

In 1954, their case reached the Supreme Court and became known as *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional. This meant that Black and white children could go to school together because separating students by race was unfair.

How This Decision Changed America

The ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* was one of the most important moments in the Civil Rights Movement. It gave people hope that segregation in other places—like buses, restaurants, and parks—could also be ended.

But change did not happen overnight. Some states refused to follow the ruling, and many schools stayed segregated for years. In 1957, the Little Rock Nine, a group of Black students, had to be protected by soldiers when they tried to attend an all-white school in Arkansas.

Still, the ruling inspired more protests and legal changes. Civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used this victory to push for other laws that would bring equality. Eventually, in the 1960s, new laws were passed to end segregation in all public places.

A Lasting Impact

Today, *Brown v. Board of Education* is seen as a turning point in American history. It proved that the law could be changed to make things fairer. Schools across the country are now open to all children, no matter their race. The case showed that when people work together for justice, they can change the world.

