

Title: Overview: Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka
Source: Oyez. Chicago-Kent College of Law at Illinois Tech
Date: undated

Doc A

Facts of the case

This case was the consolidation of four cases arising in separate states relating to the segregation of public schools on the basis of race. In each of the cases, African American minors had been denied admittance to certain public schools based on laws allowing public education to be segregated by race. They argued that such segregation violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The plaintiffs were denied relief based on the precedent set by Plessy v. Ferguson, which established the “separate but equal” doctrine that stated separate facilities for the races was constitutional as long as the facilities were “substantially equal.” In the case arising from Delaware, the Supreme Court of Delaware ruled that the African American students had to be admitted to the white public schools because of their higher quality facilities.

Conclusion

UNANIMOUS DECISION FOR BROWN ET AL.
MAJORITY OPINION BY EARL WARREN

Separate but equal educational facilities for racial minorities is inherently unequal violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment

Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the opinion of the unanimous Court. The Supreme Court held that “separate but equal” facilities are inherently unequal and violate the protections of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court also held that the segregation of public education based on race instilled a sense of inferiority that had a hugely detrimental effect on the education and personal growth of African American children.

Title: Amendment XIV to the United States Constitution

Source: United States Constitution

Date: July 9, 1868

Doc B

EXCERPT:

Amendment XIV

Section 1.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Title: A Supreme Court Bomb
Source: *Afro-American* (Richmond)
Date: May 22, 1954

Doc C



A Supreme Court Bomb!

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka
347 U.S. 483 (1954)

Title: Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

Source: *Britannica School*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.,

Date: 2016

Doc D

In a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The case was decided on May 17, 1954. In many parts of the country, especially the South, there were separate public schools for African Americans and for whites. Throughout the South nearly all other public facilities, including parks, restaurants, rail cars, and drinking fountains, were also separate. It was illegal for an African American to use a facility reserved for whites. In the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, the Supreme Court had ruled that laws requiring separate public facilities for African Americans and whites were constitutional as long as the facilities were approximately equal. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* overturned the *Plessy* decision.

In *Brown*, the court rejected the “separate but equal” doctrine. It declared that separate educational facilities for white and African American students were inherently (by their very nature) unequal. Although this decision strictly applied only to public schools, it implied that segregation was not permissible in other public facilities. Considered one of the most important rulings in the court’s history, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* helped to inspire the American civil rights movement of the late 1950s and 1960s.

...

The suits had been filed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). It had brought the lawsuits on behalf of African American elementary and high school students who had been denied admission to all-white public schools.

...

The Supreme Court ruled unanimously—9 to 0—in favor of the students. It found that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment prohibits the states from denying equal protection of the laws to any person within their jurisdictions.

Title: The first day of desegregation, on Sept. 8, 1954, at Fort Myer Elementary School in Fort Myer, Va.

Doc E

Source: Bettmann/Corbis for *The New York Times*

Date: September 8, 1954



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EXCERPT:

With courage drawn from this profession of faith in white supremacy by practically every Southern member of Congress, together with oft-repeated congressional speeches and statements to the effect that no nine honest men could possibly have come to the conclusion reached by the Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, excited and racist-minded public officials and candidates for office proposed and enacted every obstacle they could devise to thwart the Court's decision. This was aggravated by the fact that no word of support for the decision emanated from the White House. The most that came from high officials in the Administration was to the effect that they could not be blamed for anything done to enforce desegregation in education because it was the Supreme Court, not the Administration, that determined desegregation to be the law, and the Executive Branch of the government is required to enforce the law as interpreted by the Supreme Court. Bernard Shanley, the personal counsel of the President, in an effort to allay Southern animosity against the Administration, was reported in the press to have said in a speech that the *Brown* case had set race relations in the South back by a quarter of a century. The aphorism (dear to the hearts of those who are insensitive to the rights of minority groups) that discrimination cannot be eliminated by laws, but only by the hearts of people, also emanated from the White House.†

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