

# Unit Plan: The Desegregation of Portland Public Schools

Authors: Sadie Adams and Dia Nelson  
A 3-4 week lesson plan for 8-10<sup>th</sup> grade students

Target Grade Level: 8-10

Target Courses: U.S. History, Oregon History, Civil Rights History

Approximate Time Needed: Approximately 3-4 weeks for entire unit

Unit Essential Questions:

- How did the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision impact desegregation in Portland schools?
- To what extent has the effort for desegregation in Portland Public Schools (PPS) been successful?

## Unit Overview

The greatest turning point in United States history was when the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision outlawed the policy of “separate but equal.” It paved the way for equal rights to become a reality across the nation. This unit starts with the national context educating students on segregation before the *Brown* decision. As students move through the lessons they build background knowledge on the impact of *Brown* from a national context down to a more local context by focusing on the desegregation in Portland Public Schools in Portland, Oregon. Students will develop reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through a variety of activities.

This unit can be taught chronologically or thematically in relation to a Civil Rights unit. This unit can be placed in a unit/class with the broader theme of national and local equal rights. It is the teacher’s discretion whether students should have explicit instruction on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prior to teaching this unit.

## Teaching Guide:

This unit is designed for 3-4 weeks of instruction and can be taught chronologically or thematically in relation to a Civil Rights unit. This unit can be placed in a unit/class with the broader theme of national and local equal rights. It is the teacher’s discretion whether students should have explicit instruction on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prior to teaching this unit.

### Student Prerequisite Knowledge:

Students should have general knowledge of the following:

- Dred Scott decision  
[http://www.oyez.org/cases/1851-1900/1856/1856\\_0/](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1851-1900/1856/1856_0/)
- Emancipation Proclamation  
[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/emancipation\\_proclamation/](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/)
- Slavery  
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>
- 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments  
<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/reconstruction-amendments/>  
[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_amendments\\_11-27.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html)
- *Plessy v. Ferguson*-”Separate but Equal”  
[http://www.oyez.org/cases/1851-1900/1895/1895\\_210](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1851-1900/1895/1895_210)
- Civil Rights Act 1964  
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97&page=transcript>
- Voting Rights Act 1965  
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97&page=transcript>

### Curriculum Standards:

Oregon Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts – Grade 9-10

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

Reading Informational Text:

- 9-10.RH.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- 9-10.RH.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- 9-10.RH.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- 9-10.RH.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.
- 9-10.RH.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 9-10.RH.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.

*Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies*

Writing:

9-10.WHST.1 Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

- a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.

9-10.WHST.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

- a. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

9-10.WHST.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

9-10.WHST.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

9-10.WHST.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### Unit Assessment:

Students will write an argumentative essay using information learned throughout this unit and primary and secondary sources from the DBQ to write a summative essay answering the unit questions.

#### **Lesson 1 - Desegregation in the National Context: Separate but Equal**

This lesson introduces students, on a national level, to the historical background of the concept “separate but equal” as a means to justify segregation in public schools. Students will gain background knowledge on the landmark “Brown vs. the Board of Education Case” and become acquainted with the legal terms frequently used in such cases. In order to establish the importance of this Supreme Court decision, the students will also analyze and debate how the concept “separate but equal” might play out in real life situations and decide for themselves if the term has any merit. At the end of the lesson, students will have established whether they believe separate can ever really be equal.

-Lesson designed for two 50-minute classes or one 90-minute block.

#### **Handouts:**

Desegregation Legal Vocabulary Activity

#### **Lesson 2 - Brown v. Board of Education (1954) and Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971)**

Though *Brown vs. the Board of Education* was a landmark decision, desegregation didn’t happen overnight. The road to desegregation has been long and difficult, and some might argue that segregation is still rampant in our public education system. This lesson examines the legacy of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* and examines another, much later case, *Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, and asks students to look at how these cases might have

affected school in Portland. Students will also be asked to reflect on their own schools and discuss whether or not some forms of segregation are still in place today.

-This lesson is designed for three 50-minute class sessions or 150 minutes total.

**Handouts:**

- Brown vs. Board Reading (printer friendly version)  
<http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/brown-v-board-general-discussion-questions>
- Brown vs. Board Discussion Questions: (<http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/brown-v-board-general-discussion-questions>)
- Swann vs. Mecklenburg Document 5 Worksheet

### Lesson 3 - Desegregation Bridges National to Local Context

In the previous two lessons, students gained a background about school segregation in the United States, and have learned about two important Supreme Court cases that were part of the desegregation movement. They have been asked to critically analyze continued instances of segregation they might see in schools today. In lesson 3, students will analyze the racial demographics of Portland and Oregon as a whole and identify connections between Brown vs. the Board decision and desegregation in Portland.

To do this, students will look at assess primary documents with census data as well as a variety of sources written by local organizations such as the Urban League and the Coalition of Communities of Color. Students will be asked to rate how successful PPS has been at desegregation. The culmination of the lesson is a web quest in which students will explore online resources that which help them gain a wider view of desegregation in Oregon and nationwide.

This lesson is designed for four 50-minute class periods.

**Handouts:**

- Desegregation in Portland, Oregon Web Quest
- Analysis Questions

### Lesson 4 - Desegregation in Portland Public Schools

In this culminating unit, students will go deeper in their analysis of the desegregation movement in Portland Public Schools through the study of primary documents, role playing activities, and group discussion. The lesson leads towards the final, summative assignment of the unit, an essay based on the DBQ Guiding Question: How did the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision impact desegregation in Portland Public Schools? To what extent has the effort for desegregation in Portland Public Schools been successful?

This lesson is designed for four 50-minute class periods.

**Handouts:**

- Handouts Lesson 4 Day 1
- SOAPS+Claim Worksheet
- Handouts Lesson 4 Day 2

- DBQ Essay Assignment
- DBQ Essay Rubric

## Unit Resources:

### Articles:

- Cornell University Law School. (1971) *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*. Retrieved June 19, 2014, from <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/402/1>
- Dunca, N. (2014, May 17). Brown v Board of Education 60th anniversary: What's the state of racial integration at Portland Public Schools? *The Oregonian*. Retrieved June 19, 2014, from, [http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2014/05/brown\\_v\\_board\\_of\\_education\\_60\\_t.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2014/05/brown_v_board_of_education_60_t.html)
- Johnson, E., & Williams, F. (2010). Desegregation and Multiculturalism in the Portland Public Schools. *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 111, 1, 6-37.
- North Carolina History Project. (n.d.). *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*. Retrieved June 19, 2014, from <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/296/entry/>
- Rawley, S. (2008, July 1). The Continuing History of Racism in Portland Public Schools. *PPS Equity*. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from <http://ppsequity.org/2008/07/01/the-new-look-of-pps-equity/>
- Rector, E. (2010). Looking Back In Order to Move Forward: An Often Untold History Affecting Oregon's Past, Present and Future, Timeline of Oregon and U.S. Racial, Immigration and Education History. *Coaching for Educational Equity*. Retrieved June 18, 2014, from <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/412697>
- Schmidt, B. (2012, June 5). Failure to support Fair Housing Act leads to subsidized segregation: Locked Out, Part 1. *The Oregonian*. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from [http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2012/06/subsidizing\\_segregation\\_locked.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2012/06/subsidizing_segregation_locked.html)
- Willoughby, B. BROWN V. BOARD: An American Legacy. *Teaching Tolerance*, 25. Retrieved, from <http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-25-spring-2004/departments/brown-v-board-american-legacy>

#### Books:

- Gordly, A. L., & Schechter, P. A. (2011). *Remembering the power of words: The life of an Oregon activist, legislator, and community leader*. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press.
- Johnson, O. A., & Stanford, K. L. (2002). *Black political organizations in the post-civil rights era*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.
- Portland Bureau of Planning History Books. (1993). *The Integration of Portland Public Schools. The History of Portland's African American Community (1805 to the Present)*. Portland: Portland Bureau of Planning.
- Taylor, Q. (1998). *In search of the racial frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990*. New York: Norton.

#### Collections:

- Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford Family Collection, 1900s-1980s. Special Collections, Portland State University Library

#### Reports:

- Coalition of Communities of Color. (2010). *The African American Community in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Report*. Portland, OR: Portland State University, from <http://archives.pdx.edu/ds/psu/11503>
- Portland Oregon's Albina Neighborhood (1940-1960). (2009, July 1). *The Community Geography Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies*, Portland State University. Retrieved June 19, 2014, from [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/School\\_Integrate.html#Sub6](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/School_Integrate.html#Sub6)
- Portland Public Schools. (2011). *PPS Racial Educational Equity Policy*. Portland, OR: Portland Public Schools. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/equity-initiative/8128.htm>
- United States Commission on Civil Rights. & Jones-Booker, R. (1977). *School desegregation in Portland, Oregon: A staff report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights*. Washington: The Commission.
- Urban League of Portland. (2009). *The State of Black Oregon*. Portland, OR.

#### Videos:

- Quijano, E. (2014). *Separate and unequal: Segregation making comeback in U.S. Schools USA*: CBS News. Retrieved June 19, 2014, from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-years-after-brown-v-board-of-education-a-school-fights-for-diversity/>

Websites:

- Street Law, Inc. and The Supreme Court Historical Society:
  - [http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/500/Does\\_Treating\\_People\\_Equally\\_Mean\\_Treating\\_Them\\_the\\_Same](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/500/Does_Treating_People_Equally_Mean_Treating_Them_the_Same)
  - [http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/496/Important\\_Vocabulary](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/496/Important_Vocabulary)
  - [http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/497/Important\\_Vocabulary](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/497/Important_Vocabulary)
- United States Courts, History of Brown v. Board of Education (includes information on additional landmark Supreme Court Cases concerning Separate but Equal)  
<http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx>
- Britannica Encyclopedia online:  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/973269/Swann-v-Charlotte-Mecklenburg-Board-of-Education>
- Social Studies for Kids:  
<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/brownvboard.htm>
- Street Law, Inc. and The Supreme Court Historical Society:
  - [http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/492/Background\\_Summary\\_Questions](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/492/Background_Summary_Questions)  
(Level 1)
  - [http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/491/Background\\_Summary\\_Questions](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/491/Background_Summary_Questions)  
(Level 2)
  - [http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/509/Political\\_Cartoon\\_Analysis](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/509/Political_Cartoon_Analysis)
- Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/brown-v-board-general-discussion-questions>
- United States Courts, History of Brown v. Board of Education (includes information on additional landmark Supreme Court Cases concerning Separate but Equal)  
<http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx>