

Part II: Personal Beliefs about School Integration (20–30 minutes)

Time

20–30 minutes

Procedures

1. Prior to conducting this portion of the lesson, post the selected quotes from the [Quotes about School Integration](#), prepared in advanced, around the classroom.
2. Ask for a few volunteers to share what they learned from the interview they read/heard for homework, what they know about Little Rock and its relationship to *Brown v. Board of Education* and to ask any questions they have as a result of the homework. Spend about 10 minutes on this discussion.
3. Tell students that you asked them to reflect on the events that occurred at Little Rock Central High School in 1957 in preparation for today's lesson about an important Supreme Court case that also relates to school desegregation and integration, decided 50 years after the events in Little Rock. Ask students to bear in mind the experiences and perspectives of the "Little Rock Nine" as they consider this modern-day court case.
4. Tell students that before delving into the facts of the court case, they will be asked to reflect on their beliefs about school integration. Draw their attention to the quotes about school integration displayed around the classroom. Instruct students to walk silently around the room, read all of the quotes and then stand by the one that most resonates for them or that most reflects their opinion about school integration at the moment.

Optional: To keep small groups to a manageable size, tell students that there may not be more than five people gathered at any one quote, and to select their second choice if their first choice is already "full."

5. When all students have selected a quote, instruct the members of each small group to discuss why they chose that particular quote, what it means to them and how they think it relates to the debate in U.S. society about school integration. Allow 5–10 minutes for discussion.

Optional: If you feel it would not be safe or productive for students to physically stand next to a quote and publicly reveal their opinion on the issue of school integration, have them privately select a quote and do some individual reflective writing in response to the above discussion prompts.

Quotes about School Segregation

“What was wrong in 1954 cannot be right today...Because ‘our Constitution is colorblind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens’*...race-based decision making is unconstitutional.”

—Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, 2007

“The purpose of the Equal Protection Clause [of the U.S. Constitution] is to ensure that people are treated as individuals rather than based on the color of their skin.”

— Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, 2007

“There is no question but that the principle of *Brown* is that a child’s skin color should not determine what school he or she should be assigned to.”

—Roger Clegg, President and General Counsel, Center for Equal Opportunity, 2007

“You just don’t sort kids by color and deny benefits to them because of the color of their skin.”

—Chester Darling, Massachusetts Constitutional Lawyer, 2007

“Instead of spending zillions of dollars around the country to place a black child next to a white child, let’s reduce class size. All the schools are equal. We will no longer accept that an African-American majority within a school is unacceptable.”

—Teddy Gordon, attorney from Louisville, KY, 2007

“Without meaningful social contact, talk of tolerance and cooperation is nothing but an abstraction.”

—US Federal District Court Judge Nancy Gertner, 2007

“You don’t get rid of racism unless you deal with the issues of racial segregation and separation [in schools]...There’s no other way to do it.”

—Jean McGuire, Executive Director, The Metco Program, Massachusetts, 2007

“Racially integrated schools prepare students to be effective citizens in our pluralistic society...reinforce democratic values...reduce prejudice, improve...academic achievement, and enhance life opportunities for students of all races.”

—From Amicus Brief of 553 American Social Scientists in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, 2006

“The notion that race-conscious efforts to address racial inequality are racially discriminatory is like telling a physician that she cannot make a diagnosis when treating a disease because the diagnosis equals the disease. There is no equivalency, moral or legal, between race-conscious attempts to address racial inequality on the one hand, and racial discrimination based in notions of superiority and inferiority on the other.”

—Theodore Shaw, Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2007

“The work of racial justice does not require us to gouge out our eyes so that we cannot see race...The question is not whether we see race; the question is, having seen it, what is its significance? This is not a time for blindness. This is a time for sight.”

—Theodore Shaw, Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2007

*The reference to a “colorblind” Constitution is from Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan’s dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, where the Court held that “separate but unequal” was constitutional.