

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Brown V. Board of Education - Vocabulary in Deep Context

Define, analyze, and apply high-level terms from the civil rights legal movement and Brown v. Board decision

The Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* marked a transformative moment in American constitutional history. The ruling did more than invalidate racially segregated schools-it challenged the very **doctrine** of "separate but equal" that had governed public policy since *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). For decades, this legal principle had provided **justification** for systemic racial segregation across various institutions, particularly in the American South.

By 1954, however, changing social science research and persistent legal advocacy had eroded public confidence in the fairness of segregation. Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP's legal team argued that segregation not only violated the **Equal Protection Clause** but also inflicted psychological harm on Black students. The Court unanimously agreed, stating that separate educational facilities were **inherently unequal**, and thus **incompatible** with the ideals of the Constitution.

The decision had sweeping implications, not just for education, but for civil rights law more broadly. It shifted the **constitutional interpretation** of equality toward a more substantive understanding of justice-one in which intent and effect were both examined. However, the ruling was met with **massive resistance** in many states. Some Southern leaders signed the **Southern Manifesto**, a formal declaration opposing integration and pledging to use all lawful means to reverse the ruling.

Over time, *Brown* became a **cornerstone** of legal and moral arguments for civil rights reform. It demonstrated that the Constitution is a living document, one that must evolve to protect the rights of all citizens. Yet, decades later, many schools remain largely segregated due to factors like neighborhood demographics, funding disparities, and school zoning. This phenomenon is often described as **de facto segregation**, meaning segregation that occurs in practice-even when not explicitly supported by law.

**Define the following words or phrases using your own words, based on the passage:**

1. Doctrine
2. Justification
3. Incompatible
4. Constitutional interpretation
5. Southern Manifesto
6. Cornerstone
7. De facto segregation

**Deeper Analysis (Answer in 3–5 sentences)**

Choose **two vocabulary terms** from the list above. Explain how they are connected to the central legal or moral themes of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Use examples from the reading to support your answer.

