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The Struggle for Integration After the Ruling (BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION)

Although *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided in 1954, school integration did not happen overnight. In fact, many states—especially in the South—refused to follow the ruling. Instead of integrating, some school districts created plans to delay or avoid desegregation. Others shut down public schools entirely rather than allow Black students to attend with white students. This widespread resistance showed that a legal decision, even one from the Supreme Court, did not automatically lead to social change.



In 1955, the Supreme Court issued a follow-up ruling known as *Brown II*, which ordered that desegregation occur “with all deliberate speed.” This vague phrase gave Southern states room to stall, and many took advantage of that flexibility. Black students and families who tried to enroll in white schools often faced threats, violence, and harassment. In many cases, it took federal involvement to force local governments to act.

One of the most famous examples of this was the case of the Little Rock Nine. In 1957, nine African American students enrolled at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The governor, Orval Faubus, ordered the National Guard to block the students from entering the school. In response, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent federal troops to escort the students and protect their right to attend. The event was broadcast on national television and shocked many Americans, exposing how far some states would go to resist integration.

Despite such resistance, *Brown v. Board* was a turning point. It gave legal support to civil rights activists and inspired future efforts, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Still, challenges continued for decades. Even today, many schools are racially and economically divided, and the goal of truly equal education remains unfinished.

Comprehension Questions

1. What was the main effect of the phrase “with all deliberate speed” in the *Brown II* ruling? (Short answer – 1–2 sentences)

2. Which U.S. President sent federal troops to enforce school integration in Little Rock?

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| a) John F. Kennedy | b) Franklin D. Roosevelt |
| c) Dwight D. Eisenhower | d) Lyndon B. Johnson |

3. Why was the Little Rock Nine incident significant in U.S. history?

(Short response – 3–4 sentences)

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4. What strategies did some Southern states use to resist school integration after the ruling? *(List at least two strategies)*

5. How did the public respond to seeing the Little Rock Nine on television? What impact did that media coverage have? *(Short answer – 2–3 sentences)*

6. Despite the legal ruling, what challenges did Black families still face in trying to get equal education? *(Short answer – 1–2 sentences)*

7. Do you think federal government action was necessary to enforce the ruling? Why or why not?

(Longer written response – 4–5 sentences)