

Name:

## Day One

# Brown v. Board: A Close Case

### Part 1: Silent read

➔ Brown v. Board of Education ended segregation in schools. Read silently.

Brown v. Board of Education ended segregation in schools. The case established that, “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” Few people know that the case almost went the other way.

Brown v. Board was a legal case brought by several African American families. Their children were all educated in segregated classrooms. They argued that America’s “separate but equal” policy must be overturned. The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the country.

In 1953, the nine Supreme Court justices heard the case. Four justices were planning to vote in favor of desegregation, but they needed five votes. The other five justices were probably leaning towards keeping segregation. Chief Justice Fred Vinson was among these five.

Unexpectedly, in September 1953, Chief Justice Vinson died of a heart attack. Earl Warren became the new Supreme Court justice. Warren believed that the U.S. should move towards ending segregated education. With Warren replacing Vinson, they had the votes they needed!

Warren was not satisfied, however. Many people, including Warren, worried about potential violence after the case. Many White people in the South would be angry about desegregating schools. Warren worried that a split 5-4 vote would undercut the decision, validating these angry people. This could increase rioting and violence.

So, Warren convinced every one of his fellow justices to support him. The Supreme Court voted unanimously to end the “separate but equal” policy. Though fully desegregating schools would take decades, this was a landmark decision.

Source: “Looking Back at the Brown v. Board Decision,” *Constitution Daily*, November 23, 2015.



## Day One

// one minute

# Brown v. Board: A Close Case

### Part 2: First timed read

WPM \_\_\_\_\_

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Brown v. Board was a legal case brought by several African American families. Their children	45
were all educated in segregated classrooms. They argued that America’s “separate but equal”	58
policy must be overturned. The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, the highest	75
court in the country.	79

In 1953, the nine Supreme Court justices heard the case. Four justices were planning to vote	95
in favor of desegregation, but they needed five votes. The other five justices were probably	110
leaning towards keeping segregation. Chief Justice Fred Vinson was among these five.	122

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became the new Supreme Court justice. Warren believed that the U.S. should move towards	150
ending segregated education. With Warren replacing Vinson, they had the votes they needed!	163

Warren was not satisfied, however. Many people, including Warren, worried about potential	175
violence after the case. Many White people in the South would be angry about desegregating	190
schools. Warren worried that a split 5-4 vote would undercut the decision, validating these	204
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voted unanimously to end the “separate but equal” policy. Though fully desegregating	239
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### Part 3: Comprehension and discussion

Why did Justice Earl Warren want the vote to be unanimous?

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What happened in September 1953?

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## Day One

# Brown v. Board: A Close Case

### Part 4: Phrase-cued reading

- Read the passage **out loud** in phrases to your partner.
- Pause at each / mark for a phrase.
- Also pause at each // mark that shows the end of a sentence.

Brown v. Board of Education / ended segregation in schools. // The case established / that “separate educational facilities / are inherently unequal.” // Few people know / that the case almost went the other way. //

Brown v. Board was a legal case / brought by several African American families. // Their children were all educated / in segregated classrooms. // They argued that America’s “separate but equal” policy / must be overturned. // The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, / the highest court in the country. //

In 1953, / the nine Supreme Court justices heard the case. // Four justices were planning to vote / in favor of desegregation, / but they needed five votes. // The other five justices / were probably leaning towards keeping segregation. // Chief Justice Fred Vinson was among these five. //

Unexpectedly, / in September 1953, / Chief Justice Vinson died of a heart attack. // Earl Warren became the new Supreme Court justice. // Warren believed / that the U.S. should move towards ending segregated education. // With Warren replacing Vinson, / they had the votes they needed! //

Warren was not satisfied, / however. // Many people, / including Warren, / worried about potential violence / after the case. // Many White people in the South / would be angry about desegregating schools. // Warren worried / that a split 5-4 vote / would undercut the decision, / validating these angry people. // This could increase rioting and violence. //

So Warren convinced / every one of his fellow justices to support him. // The Supreme Court voted unanimously / to end the “separate but equal” policy. // Though fully desegregating schools would take decades, / this was a landmark decision. //

I read the passage in phrases out loud to my partner.