

## WORKSHEET 7

*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was a landmark 1954 Supreme Court case in which the justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.

*Brown v. Board of Education* was one of the cornerstones of the civil rights movement, and helped establish the precedent that “separate-but-equal” education and other services were not, in fact, equal at all.

### A. Watch the video to find out more about this historical decision:

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/brown-v-board-of-education-of-topeka>

### B. Conduct a mock trial

#### Roles

- Judge
- Attorneys for plaintiff (Oliver Brown)
- Attorneys for defendant (Board of Education)
- Witnesses for plaintiff (these witnesses oppose the Board of Education)
- Witnesses for defendant (these witnesses support the Board of Education)
- bailiff (swears in witnesses and marks evidence)
- radio, television or newspaper reporters

### C. Get into groups and help each witness and attorney prepare for trial.

#### Attorneys

- What are you trying to prove?
- Do you have any factual evidence that supports your case?
- Who are you questioning in the trial and why?
- Prepare your opening statement.
- Prepare questions to ask your own witnesses and rehearse your direct examination with these witnesses.
- Think about how you will cross-examine the witnesses for the other side. The purpose of cross-examination is to make the other side's witnesses seem less believable.
- Prepare your closing statement.

#### Witnesses

- Who are you supporting and why?
- Write 3 questions your attorney should ask you if they wanted to prove their side of the case. Include questions and answers.

**D. Follow this procedure.**

1. Prosecution Opening Statement (1 minute)
2. Defense Opening Statement (1 minute)
3. Plaintiff Questioning of Witnesses (6-8 minutes)
  - 1-2 questions per witness
4. Defense Questioning of Witnesses (6-8 minutes)
  - 1-2 questions per witness
5. Plaintiff Cross Examination (5 minutes)
6. Defendant Cross Examination (5 minutes)
7. Plaintiff Closing Statement (1 minute)
8. Defendant Closing Statement (1 minute)
9. Verdict issued by the Judge

