

LESSON: Civic Engagement and Political Cartoons

<p>GRADE LEVEL: Middle School</p> <p>SUBJECT: Civics, Government, Public Activism</p> <p>TIME REQUIRED: 45-60 minutes</p> <p>This lesson is meant to exemplify and expand upon ideas of civic participation and political art.</p>	<p>RATIONALE</p> <p>Political cartoons can particularly and more sincerely reflect the ideas of a certain community or reactions to certain events. Creating and sharing political art offers a way for individuals to spread opinions and perspectives on governmental and social developments.</p> <p>NOTE: This lesson is designed as part of a series on types of political activism. It can be adapted to fit a unit of this topic as needed.</p>
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Find lesson plans and more resources on *Brown v. Board of Education* produced by LDF and the Thurgood Marshall Institute [here](#).

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can ordinary citizens interact with and influence their local and national governments?
- What is a political cartoon?
- How do political cartoons communicate ideas and perspectives?
- To what extent did political cartoons broaden the effects of *Brown v. Board*?

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

After the lesson students will...

- define what a political cartoon is and how it can be used.
- analyze how political cartoons can be useful in making change.
- question the relationship between *Brown v. Board* and contemporary political cartoons.

PREPARING TO TEACH

- Students should have a foundational understanding of *Brown v. Board* and the basic timeline of events associated with the development of segregation and desegregation in America.
- Teachers should
 - Print a copy of the attached page for all students.
 - Print (or virtually share) copies of the selected cartoons with students.

SCAFFOLDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS TO SUPPORT LEARNERS

Reading support....

Teachers might consider providing students with definitions for the words on the cartoons or the vocabulary necessary to describe the cartoon.

Differentiation...

Teachers can choose to edit the number of cartoons used in their class activity, depending on how they think their class could manage the differences of interpretation required for the selected cartoons.

Adjusting for high school grades...

Teachers may expand this lesson for high school grades by elevating the questions on the graphic organizer, or by encouraging students to analyze multiple cartoons (thus expanding their comparison analyses). Teachers may also invite students to answer the questions they create about their cartoons by doing their own research.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SEQUENCE

1. Review any necessary information/history with students to prepare them for the content of the lesson.
2. Explain to students that today's lesson is about analyzing visual types of political activism. Divide students into six groups and assign each group one cartoon to work with. Instruct students to fill in the first side of the worksheet with their group as they analyze their cartoon.
3. Reorganize students so they are in groups with 6 members where each member has looked at a different cartoon (jigsaw sharing). Invite students to share about their cartoon and fill out the first column of the graphic organizer.
4. Invite students to discuss the second column of the graphic organizer collectively and fill in the boxes.
5. Bring students back together and invite students to share their answers in the graphic organizer for each of the cartoons. Answer any final questions about the cartoons and their meaning.

ASSESSMENT

Teachers can collect the students' worksheets from this lesson in order to analyze student learning.

If time allows, or as an extension of the lesson, teachers may invite students to design their own political cartoons around a theme of *Brown v. Board*.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ENRICHMENT

Sources

- Binder 1, Thurgood Marshall Institute, pg.29 (attached below)
- Herb Block (1909–2001). *I'm eight. I was born on the day of the Supreme Court decision*, May 17, 1962. Ink, crayon, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper. Published in the *Washington Post*, May 17, 1962. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (169) © 1962 by Herblock in the *Washington Post*

- Herb Block (1909–2001). *“And remember, nothing can be accomplished by taking to the streets,”* September 6, 1963. Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper. Published in the *Washington Post*, September 6, 1963. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (170) © 1963 by Herblock in the *Washington Post*
- Oliver W. Harrington (1912–1995). *Dark laughter. Now I aint so sure I wanna get educated,* 1963. Crayon, ink, blue pencil, and pencil on paper. Published in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, September 21, 1963. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (172) Courtesy of Dr. Helma Harrington. Digital ID # ppmsca-05518
- Vincent Smith (b. 1930). *First Day of School,* 1965. Etching (reprint, 1994). [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (178)
- Herb Block (1909–2001). *“... One nation ... indivisible ...,”* February 22, 1977. Ink, graphite, and opaque white, with tonal film overlay and porous point pen over graphite underdrawing on paper. Published in the *Washington Post*, February 22, 1977. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (182) © 1977 by Herblock in the *Washington Post*

Political Cartoons - Investigation Worksheet

Answer the following questions using your political cartoon.

1. Describe what your cartoon looks like. What does it look like is happening?
2. Who are the characters (think about clothing, facial expressions, emotions, speech, jobs, age, race)?
3. What is the setting (buildings you see, names of places, urban or rural)?
4. What words are written on your cartoon? What do those words make you think about?
5. What are some details of the cartoon that most stick out to you?
6. What do you think is the main message of your cartoon?
7. What questions do you have about your cartoon?

Cartoon	What is the main idea/argument of this cartoon?	Who is the cartoon meant to influence? What does this cartoon want people to do differently?
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
#5		

#6		
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NAACP NEWS

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May 17, 1954

SEGREGATED SYSTEM 'SYMBOL' OF INFERIORITY

"The school is society's chief agency for conserving and transmitting its culture; educational segregation has extra significance. A segregated educative system is likely to transmit to each succeeding generation the superiority-inferiority value attitudes of a racially conscious society. Furthermore, it provides public approval and reinforcement of private privileges which has become the primary symbol of the Negro's inferiority," Judge Bernstein declared.

'INTANGIBLE INEQUALITIES': SEGREGATION

".....The courts have held without exception that (such) a denial of equal facilities is a violation of the equal protection of law and a consequent deprivation of liberty and property without due process of law, as guaranteed by the ^{Fourteenth} Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

"In all the cases the courts have discussed the physical equality of facilities in teaching and school plant; however, there are intangible inequalities in segregation. These are more difficult to demonstrate. However, we know the impact on the child of the Negro race. These children would seem either to be in conflict about their status or to have resigned themselves to inferior self-images. Our general experience as we observe human status each day, tells us that segregation intensifies rather than eases racial tension. Instead of encouraging racial cooperation, it fosters mutual fear and suspicion which is the basis of racial violence," Judge Bernstein concluded.

COUNTY ATTORNEY APPRISES LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DECISION

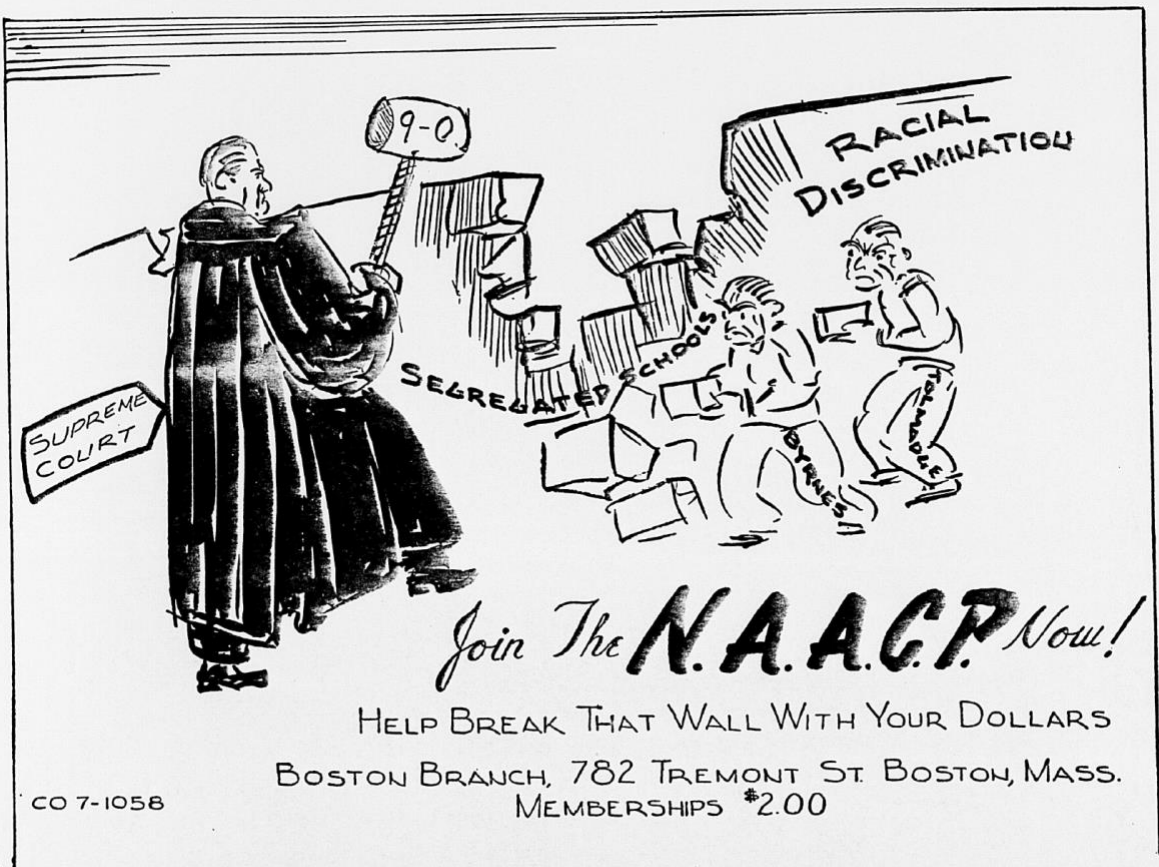
County Attorney Wm. P. Mahoney, Jr. immediately apprised Maricopa County school districts of Judge Bernstein's opinion in a letter in which it was stated:

"The decisions (above), in effect, hold that expenditures for racially segregated facilities are for a purpose no longer authorized by law in Arizona, and we feel that this pertains not only to expenditures for construction but to those for maintenance of existing facilities.

".....we feel that it is incumbent upon this office to bring this situation to your attention as you begin the business of preparing budgets for the coming fiscal year."

NAACP LAWYER COUNSEL IN CASE

Attorney H. B. Daniels of Phoenix, who is chairman of the Maricopa County NAACP and the Southwest Area Conference legal redress committees, was co-counsel in this case. Atty. Daniels was also counsel of record in the Phoenix School Case wherein a similar decision was handed down by Judge Fred C. Struckmeyer. Mr. Daniels, who has served in the Arizona Legislature, had as co-counsel Attorney Carl Finn.



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"I'M EIGHT. I WAS BORN ON THE DAY OF THE SUPREME COURT DECISION"



HERBLOCK
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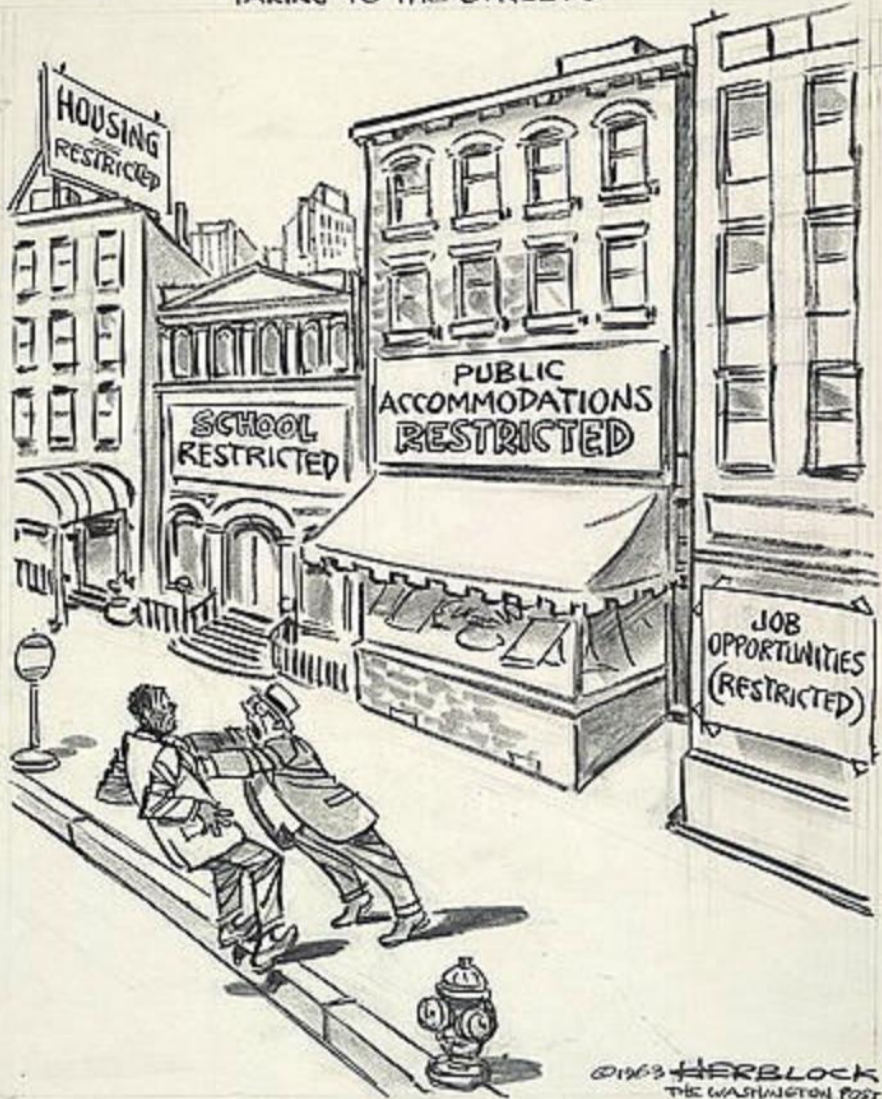
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AND REMEMBER, NOTHING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED

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"AND REMEMBER, NOTHING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY
TAKING TO THE STREETS"



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Courtesy of Dr. Helma Harrington

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First Day of School

Wood 15

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"...ONE NATION...INDIVISIBLE..."

