

Massive Resistance: Enforcing, and Dismantling, Segregation

Generating Context and Content Knowledge Through Primary Sources

Primary sources are vital for establishing critical thinking skills and inquiry-based learning, but their lack of context can make them difficult to use for students who lack background knowledge. Similarly, written primary sources, especially those with antiquated or esoteric language, can be a nightmare for struggling readers. In this activity, you'll travel to three different stations to examine the extrapolitical ways in which segregation was enforced, combatted, and ultimately destroyed. As you go, consider the ways in which differentiating primary sources can help students at different learning levels.

Part I. Visit the three stations. As you go, note some ways in which segregation was enforced and/or combatted, particularly through extrapolitical (i.e., non-legislative) means. Connect sources from the three stations to one another.

Station 1: Pre-Civil Rights Era	Station 2: <i>Brown v. Board</i>	Station 3: Civil Rights Era

Part II. With your group, discuss the following questions:

1. How can citizenship be denied, or asserted, through extrapolitical means? What implications does this have for our democracy?
2. Why is it important to consider non-legislative methods of defining citizenship? How has this influenced American history?
3. What connections do you see between the civil rights activism of the mid-20th century, and issues taking place today?
4. How did differentiating the sources help you to construct a narrative or understanding of these issues?
5. How can you use primary sources to differentiate in other ways (such as process or product) to help your students build content knowledge and critical thinking skills?