



AMERICAN
CONSTITUTION
SOCIETY FOR
LAW AND POLICY

Constitution in the Classroom

Lesson Plan

The Fourteenth Amendment

Grades 7-12

- Description:** This unit introduces students to the 14th Amendment and the decision of *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision.
- Objectives:** (1) Familiarize students with the facts of *Brown v. Board*; (2) Introduce them to the concept of Equal Rights; and (3) Leave them with an understanding of the Constitution and that the rights outlined in the Constitution have not always applied equally to everyone, but that we can work to make sure they do in the future.
- Lesson Length:** 45-60 minutes
- Age Group:** 7th – 12th Grades

About Constitution in the Classroom

Lawyers, law students, and educators have a valuable resource to share with students: knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution. Constitution in the Classroom brings ACS members into high school, middle school, or elementary classrooms to raise awareness of fundamental constitutional principles and excite young minds about their constitutional rights and responsibilities.

About the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy

Founded in 2001, the American Constitution Society realizes the promises of the U.S. Constitution by building and leading a diverse legal community that dedicates itself to advancing and defending democracy, justice, equality, and liberty; to securing a government that serves the public interest; and to guarding against the abuse of law and the concentration of power.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, the American Constitution Society (ACS) continues to be the nation's leading progressive legal organization, with over 200 student and lawyer chapters in almost every state and on most law school campuses. In addition to shaping debate on key legal and policy issues, ACS is building the bench for the next generation of progressive lawyers, judges, policy experts, legislators, and academics.

I. Icebreaker

The League of Women Voters of Alameda County, in partnership with ACS, has created an online trivia game with general questions about the Constitution, VerifyIt!. This is a great, interactive way to start a virtual CITC lesson. You can either send the link to the students and they can play a round on their own or you can screen share and allow students to answer questions either out loud or by writing answers down and sharing their results at the end of the round. You can find the VerifyIt! Game [here](#).

II. Discussion Options

There are two resources available to guide the discussion portion of your lesson: The ABA Dialogue on *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Landmark Cases/Street Law Classifying Arguments Activity. Both provide more content than needed for a single lesson, so feel free to adapt however will work best for your classroom. You can also choose to use the Story of *Brown v. Board* in the ABA Dialogue with the additional discussion questions below.

[ABA Dialogue on Brown v. Board of Education](#)

[Landmark Cases/Street Law Classifying Arguments Activity](#)

III. Additional Discussion Questions

1. What do you think segregated schools were like in pre-1954 America? In what parts of the country were schools segregated? Were schools in your state segregated? How was the experience of a black student in public school different from that of a white student?
2. The *Brown* decision called for school desegregation to happen with "all deliberate speed." How quickly — and how fully — do you think schools de-segregated?
3. What is segregation? Does it still exist? Other than schools, where have segregation battles been fought?
4. Is your school segregated? In what ways? What could you do to work against that segregation, bringing more integration to your school?
5. Do you believe in what *Brown v. Board* stands for? How close to — or far from — fully embracing the *Brown* decision are we, as a society? What else needs to happen for us to move closer to the ideals of *Brown*?
6. How would schools have looked in your area had the Supreme Court not ruled against segregation in 1954? How would your life, and the lives of other students, be different?