

School Integration-Just a Southern Problem?

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Lesson 2: Student Reactions to Integration

Abstract: In this four-part lesson, students evaluate pictures, newspaper articles, and documentaries concerning student reactions to initial school integration efforts during the Civil Rights Era.

Essential questions/enduring understandings:

- How can media change history?
- Why and how do people protest laws?
- Is protest effective?
- Are rights guaranteed?
- How does place affect how history is written?

Assessment:

The teacher will evaluate student understanding through completed handouts and classroom discussion.

Setting the Purpose:

Students will evaluate both pictures and written sources in order to examine student reactions to initial integration efforts as well as predict whether the reactions were regional or widespread across both the North and South.

Duration: 1-5 days, depending on how many parts of the lesson are chosen for completion.

Procedure:

Part 1:

- **Starter:** Students write down answer to following: What are the different ways people react to rules they might not want to follow? Discuss answers as a class.
- Display the pictures of classroom integration [Integrated classroom in Nashville](#), [School integration, Barnard School, Washington, D.C.](#) and [An integrated classroom at Anacostia High School, Washington, DC](#). Have students analyze pictures by using [Nara's Photographic Document Analysis Worksheet](#).
- Have students turn over their worksheets. Pick a student in one of the pictures to reflect on, and have the children write down what the student in the picture is thinking and feeling.
- **Discuss:** Why do you think the pictures do not show much emotion? (Surely, this must be an emotional event for all students).
- Now, below the reflection, have students predict what other pictures will show as to reaction to Supreme Court mandated integration. Will people

react as in the two pictures we just examined, or will the reactions you see be different? Explain how they will be different and why you think so.

- Distribute the other Civil Rights pictures: [University of Alabama Students burn desegregation literature](#), [Clinton, Tennessee, school integration conflict, 1956](#), [School Dilemma--Youths taunt Dorothy Geraldine Counts in Charlotte, North Carolina](#), [U.S. Troops escort African American students from Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas](#), and [The Birmingham News](#). Ask students to examine the pictures individually or in small groups and complete the [School Desegregation Photo Analysis worksheet](#).
- Discuss findings in small or large group. Wrap up part one by telling students that they will next look at how some reacted to school integration in Champaign, Illinois.

Part 2:

- Starter: Explain to students that Champaign-Urbana, Illinois is a large twin city university town (University of Illinois) populated by both working class citizens and academics from the University. The University has drawn students from all over the world. It is located in Central Illinois, 2 and ½ hours from Chicago, Illinois. How do you expect their public school district (Champaign Unit 4) students to react to integration? You might also refer back to the article from lesson 1: [Housing Report Here Worst In Illinois, October 20, 1961](#)
- Explain to students that today they will be developing a timeline using actual newspaper articles regarding events that happened in two Champaign schools in 1971.
- Have students get into groups of 4. Distribute a copy set of the following articles to each group:
 1. ["Racial Tension Explodes at CHS: 3 Fights Break Out"](#)

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 2. ["Racial Violence Closes Centennial"](#)
 3. ["Cease Fire Sought at Centennial"](#)
 4. ["Centennial Staff Blames 'Community' for Violence"](#)
 5. ["Timetable Says Group of Whites Started Melee"](#)
 6. ["Police Patrol Halls After Fights at Centennial"](#)
 7. ["Centennial High Quiets as Police Watch Halls"](#)
 8. ["No Comment at Centennial"](#)
 9. ["Oust Longenecker and Fight Averted at Franklin"](#)
 10. ["Five Youths Arrested At Franklin"](#)
 11. ["Davis Details Changes He's Planned at Centennial"](#)
 12. ["Suspended Students Return"](#)
 13. ["Centennial Teachers Protest as Students Escape Expulsion"](#)
- Distribute 3 copies of [Nara's Written Document Analysis Worksheet](#) to each student (copy front to back to conserve paper, or have students fill out online if you are having students evaluate articles online).
- Distribute [BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S.](#), one per group. Have students plot (by number assigned to article) Champaign events on the timeline.

- Ask group-Do you think these are the only conflicts that happened in the Champaign school district? Do you think they were all reported in the paper? Why or why not?

Part 3:

- Starter: Brainstorm-What forms can protest take? Discuss as a group which methods they think are used most often and why. Students might say picket, petition, complain, riot, boycott, etc.
- Play the documentary film [This Bus Stops](#). For time's sake, focus in on the first 25 minutes of the film, which focuses on a Decatur school walkout. (If film not available, use [transcription](#) of the roundtable talk.) Students should complete Nara's [Motion Picture Analysis Worksheet](#) before, during and after the film. Tell students to use parts A and B of the worksheet to document the events of the walkout.
- After the film, have students also look at "[Negroes Boycott Four Decatur High Schools](#)"
- Redistribute Champaign unrest articles from Part 2. Review the findings of these articles by reviewing [Nara's Written Document Analysis Worksheet](#) completed yesterday.
- Have students compare the two events using [Comparing Reactions to School Integration](#).
- Extension: Use the sites listed below to study other student reactions, including the Chicago and New York School boycotts, Little Rock Crisis and Ruby Bridges school experiences.
- Discuss student findings. Tell students they will expand upon this activity for their final project.

Analysis of local primary sources:

Students will gather information through newspaper clippings regarding violent unrest at a local Champaign high school and middle school as well as a public television documentary produced in 1969 that profiles Decatur teens that formed a walkout.

Ties to national primary sources:

Students will evaluate national primary source pictures in order to connect the visual information regarding school desegregation to local events.

Annotated list of Materials and Resources

Attachments:

- [Nara's Written Document Analysis Worksheet](#) from The National Archives (www.nara.gov).
- [Nara's Photographic Document Analysis Worksheet](#) from The National Archives (www.nara.gov).
- [Comparing Reactions to School Integration](#).
- [School Desegregation Photo Analysis worksheet](#)

Ties to Illinois State Learning Standards