

# Sample Case Brief:

## Brown v. Board of Education



### **Case Name and Citation:**

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

### **Facts:**

Black children had been denied admission to their community public schools which were only attended by white children under the State segregation laws in several places, including Topeka, Kansas where Brown resided. The tangible factors that schools rely upon to function were equalized or are being equalized, although the plaintiffs argued they would never receive the same public education in the black schools. This was acknowledged through a lack in motivation and educational and mental development because of the constant inferiority imposed by segregation. The black students sought admission to the white schools.

### **Issues:**

Whether the Fourteenth Amendment permitted the “separate but equal” doctrine, and whether the educational environments of the plaintiffs were equal to their white counterparts.

### **Holding:**

The doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ was unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause and the students were ordered to gain admission to white public schools in which they had applied for and been denied admission.

### **Rationale:**

The court found that the doctrines of separate but equal educational facilities “are inherently unequal.” Thus, no manner of equalized segregation could ever reach the demand imposed by the Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Education had changed so substantially in the time since the Fourteenth Amendment was passed that its prior interpretation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* is no longer valid. Further, Segregation has inherent inequalities for children, and these inherent inequalities have detrimental effects of the black children of segregated schools limiting the long term abilities as citizens. This is what the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment sought to prohibit, and does in the case, therefore the plaintiffs and all other children should not be denied admission to a public school simply on the basis of race.

Having reached this conclusion for public education, the court then extended the reach of the prohibition of separate but equal to all aspects of society. Thus, the court directly overturned the Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* which sanctioned the doctrine as constitutional in 1896.

### **Dissenting/Concurring Opinions:**

None