



BrainPOP and Macmillan/McGraw-Hill present:

BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA

Tim and Moby are in a field in Kansas, making piles of hay. A cow moos.

MOBY

Beep.

TIM

No, we're not done. Unfortunately.

Moby waves a letter

Maybe we could take a break...

**DEAR TIM & MOBY,
MY GRANDMA TOLD ME THAT SHE WENT TO A SEGREGATED GRADE
SCHOOL. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
DANIELLE**

Um...

MOBY

Beep.

TIM

Yeah, I'm with you. We're going to need some help with this one... Let's take a trip to our nation's capital.

Moby fires up his rocket engine. Tim grabs on and they blast off. They fly to Washington, D.C. and land on the steps of The Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

So, segregation...

We see a page from a dictionary :

seg·re·gate 'se-gri-gAt

to separate or set apart from others : ISOLATE

If you look up segregate in the dictionary, it says:
Segregate - to separate or set apart from others: ISOLATE

Back before the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 60s, African Americans were often treated differently than everybody else. They were sometimes set apart from others because of the color of their skin.

MOBY

Beep.

TIM

Yeah, that's called **Racism** - when one group of people is treated less fairly than others because of their race.

MOBY

Beep.

TIM

You're right – it's wrong to set anyone apart because they are different – even robots!

MOBY

Beep!

TIM

Moving on... Back then, public places, like bathrooms, schools and buses were segregated.

We see people on a bus--Whites in front of bus and Blacks in back.

White people and black people did not even drink from the same water fountains.

We see two water fountains. One has a "Whites Only" sign and is nice and clean and the other one is lower and not so nice with a sign that says "Coloreds only".

African Americans used to be called "colored"

MOBY

Beep!!

TIM

I know, it sounds crazy, but people lived this way day in and day out.

MOBY

Beep!!

TIM

So how did the segregation laws come about? Well, that's a complicated story. The laws were made right here in Washington, D.C.

We see the U.S. Capitol Building.

After the Civil War, in 1868, congress passed the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment protected the rights of all the newly freed African Americans.

This addition to the Constitution guaranteed that all people were to be treated equally under the law. It said that you couldn't take away anyone's life, liberty, or property. But it didn't quite work out that way... People were still treated differently because of the color of their skin.

In 1896, the United States Supreme Court heard the Plessy vs. Ferguson case.

The Supreme Court decided that segregation was OK as long as the separate things were equal in quality. So, public property was segregated into "separate but equal" areas: one for African Americans, and one for everyone else.

We see two water fountains again. This time, they are more similar to each other, but the signs are still there.

Problem was... most of the stuff that got separated wasn't very equal.

We see two schools, one looking well kept with white students in front – the other one run down with African American students in front.

That's how things were all over the country for a long time.

MOBY

Beep.

TIM

Separate but equal was a way of life that didn't make sense. Lots of people were unhappy about segregation, but it took a little girl, younger than me even, to change history.

In 1950 in Topeka, Kansas, Oliver Brown tried to enroll his daughter, Linda, in the local grade school, which was all white.

But, because she was African American, the district made her go to a segregated school that was much farther away.

We see little Linda Brown walking long way to school.

Mr. Brown decided to sue the board of education for the right to send his daughter to the local school. So he took them to court.

The case made it all the way here to the Supreme Court in 1952.

The lawyer for the Brown's – Thurgood Marshall – argued that separate schools could never be equal.

In 1954, all nine Supreme Court justices decided in the Brown family's favor, making segregation in schools illegal!

Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka
May 17, 1954

MOBY

Beep!

TIM

That's right, Moby. Thurgood Marshall later served on the Supreme Court himself.

So, FIFTY YEARS AGO this landmark decision became law and schools began the process of integration.

It was a good decision, but it didn't get enforced in lot of places for many years.

Still, Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka was one in a long line of victories for the civil rights movement

MOBY

Beep.

TIM

Yeah, it's strange. I mean, even though the law doesn't separate us anymore, it's still a challenge for people of different races and backgrounds to mix together.

Sadly, racism and separateness are still part of our world.

MOBY

Beep?

TIM

Well, hopefully someday they won't be. That's up to us.