

Backward Design Teacher Guide

Answer guidance and an analytic check for the Civil Rights unit on the companion article. Review primary sources, reading level, local standards and classroom suitability before use.

Purpose and evidence

Unit question: How did legal decisions, organized action and federal legislation interact in the Civil Rights Movement? The student sheet prepares the existing four-day unit's final strategy memo. Collect the comparison grid, evidence paragraph and final memo as different kinds of evidence.

Expected distinctions

Card A establishes a constitutional ruling about public schools. Card B shows sustained collective action alongside litigation about buses. Card C concerns federal legislation in specified areas. Do not suggest that the boycott itself enacted federal law or that the Civil Rights Act caused Brown.

Annotated model paragraph

The Brown ruling changed the law on segregated public schools, but communities and authorities still had to implement it [Card A detail and limit]. In Montgomery, residents sustained a boycott while a separate court challenge proceeded [Card B shows action and law together]. These examples suggest that a legal decision can establish a right while organized people and institutions determine how it is put into practice [reasoned inference, not a fact stated by one card].

Feedback by evidence

If a learner lists dates, ask for the mechanism connecting an event to an outcome. If they claim a tactic guaranteed success, ask for a limiting condition. If they rely only on the summary cards, assign one selected primary source and ask what it adds or complicates.

Four-level analytic check

Criterion	1 Starting	2 Developing	3 Secure	4 Extending
Historical accuracy	Confuses cases or outcomes	Names events but blurs mechanisms	Distinguishes ruling, action and legislation	Adds a justified limit or interaction
Evidence	No relevant detail	One unexplained detail	Two accurate details from different cases, explained	Compares source strengths or limits
Reasoning and transfer	Assertion or modern analogy only	Describes sequence	Explains how a tactic affected an institution or decision	Qualifies what differs in another context

Primary-source preparation

Select age-appropriate items from the Library of Congress Civil Rights Movement classroom set and verify each source's date, provenance and classroom permissions: loc.gov/classroom-materials/civil-rights-movement/. The summary cards do not replace primary-source analysis.