**Enrichment Project #2: Brown v. Board of Education Analysis**

In a 4 paragraph essay, you will be analyzing a major civil rights U.S. Supreme Court case: *Brown v. Board of Education*. Using the resources available to you and the notes you have taken on this topic, you will complete 3 major learning objectives. These include:

1. Students will be able to describe the sequence of events for the case *Brown v. Board of Education*.
2. Students will be able to argue both sides of the case.
3. Students will be able to explain the effects of the case.

Thesis Statement- Your paper will be answering the questions: *How important was the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education? How did the case impact the Civil Rights Movement?*

**Essay Outline:** Complete the outline below before you write your rough draft.

**Thesis Statement**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I. **Sequence of Events**  
 Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A. Detail #1:

B. Detail #2:

C. Detail #3

D. Detail #4

E. Detail #5

F. Detail #6

II. **Proposition/Support: Pro-Segregation**  
 Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A. Detail #1:

B. Detail #2:

C. Detail #3  
  
III. **Proposition/Support: Pro-desegregation**  
 Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A. Detail #1:

B. Detail #2:

C. Detail #3

IV. **Effects**   
 Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A. Detail #1:

B. Detail #2:

C. Detail #3:

D. Detail #4:

E. Detail #5:

**Grading Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Poor** | **Average** | **Good** | **Excellent** |
| Does the response contain an **effective introduction**? | Disjointed or absent | Short and/or too general | General, relevant, makes connection to thesis | Detailed, relevant and fully connects with the thesis |
| Does the **thesis** address the prompt fully? Is it clear, well written and specific | Poorly worded; does not address the prompt; or is missing | Generally addresses the prompt, may be awkwardly worded | Addresses prompt; tends to be somewhat general, but clear | Fully addresses prompt; specific and well-worded |
| Do the **topic sentences** clearly relate to the thesis statement and thus develop the thesis? | Irrelevant to thesis | Overly general, but somewhat connected to thesis | Most are connected to thesis | Directly and specifically connected to thesis |
| How much **specific evidence** is contained in each paragraph to support the main points? | Few examples of evidence; overly general or irrelevant | Some details; too much general evidence or some irrelevant evidence | Substantial and mostly effective use of evidence | Extensive, detailed and effective use of evidence |
| How much **analytical/persuasive language** is used to support the thesis and how **well developed** are the arguments? | Response is entirely descriptive and/or under-developed | Response is mostly descriptive; contains some analysis or persuasion; may have inconsistent, imbalanced and/or superficial development | Response is mostly analytical or persuasive and/or generally well developed; may be imbalanced | Response is entirely analytical or persuasive and is well developed |
| Is the response **well organized, well structured and well written**? | Poorly organized, structured, and/or written | Inconsistent organization and structure; inconsistent writing quality | Mostly well organized, well structured or well written | Well organized, well structured, well written |
| Is this response **historically accurate and relevant**? | Contains both major and minor errors; out of time frame | Contains a major error or several minor errors or partly out of time frame | No major errors, but contains a number of minor errors that do not detract | No major errors, may contain a minor error |

**Example: *Plessy v. Ferguson***

**Part 1: Sequence of Events**       
    *Plessy v. Ferguson* was one of the most significant court cases in the history of the United States. The decision in this case led to unchecked discrimination and segregation for over 50 years and would take even longer to make more major strides in the search for equality for all. Prior to the decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, segregation was a way of life in the South. Following the ruling of the case, however, segregation became officially acceptable with the support of the federal government. On June 7, 1892 Homer Plessy purchased a first class ticket and boarded a "whites only" car of the [East Louisiana Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=East_Louisiana_Railroad&action=edit&redlink=1) in [New Orleans, Louisiana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Orleans). Plessy could easily pass for white but under Louisiana law, he was considered Black despite his light complexion and therefore required to sit in the "Colored" car. When Louisiana passed the Separate Car Act, legally segregating common carriers in 1892, a black civil rights organization known as the Committee of Citizens decided to challenge the law in the courts. Subsequently, Plessy deliberately sat in the white section and identified himself as black. Immediately, he was arrested, as expected. Soon after, in the case of *Homer Adolph Plessy v. The State of Louisiana*, Plessy argued that the segregation of the East Louisiana Railroad violated his rights as an America. However, plessy lost the case and was sentenced to pay a $25 fine. Eventually, Plessy took his case all the way to the United States Supreme Court. In the end, as a result of the decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, segregation was upheld by the law and justified as “separate but equal.”  
  
**Part 2: Proposition/Solution**  
 The majority opinion in Plessy v. Ferguson stated that the case does not violate the 13th or 14th amendments.  Justice Brown asserted that the 13th amendment “implies involuntary servitude,-a state of bondage” which is not relevant in a case about separate railroad cars.  He also argued that the case was not in violation of the 14th amendment because the use of separate railroad cars does not assume inferiority of the minority race.  He proposed that if there is a feeling of inferiority, “it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it”. Therefore, what he is saying here is that it is not the majority race (white) making the minority race (black) feel inferior.  This is a distinction they put upon themselves.  Because the railroad cars are equally inhabitable, separate facilities are acceptable.  
  
**Part 3: Proposition/Solution**  
The dissenting opinion in Plessy v. Ferguson was due to the vote of one man, Justice John Marshal Harlan.  Justice Harlan made his argument by stating that the case excludes one particular race, could end up segregating other areas, and is unconstitutional.  According to Justice Harlan, this finding is meant to specifically exclude black people.  He claims that “everyone knows that the statute in question had its origin in the purpose, not so much to exclude white persons from railroad cars occupied by blacks, as to exclude colored people from coaches occupied by white persons”.  He goes on to point out later in the dissention that they allow Chinese people onto the same coaches as white people, and they aren’t even allowed citizenship.  This furthers his point that the decision is purely based on skin color and singles out the African American race.  Another point that Justice Harlan defends is that with the passing of this case it opens the door to segregating multiple other establishments.  Who is to say that people will not soon segregate “the use of the streets of its cities or towns”?  If this door is opened, where will it end?  The final argument made by Justice Harlan is that the Constitution of the United States is color-blind and should not single out one race as being dominant or superior.  In the eye of the law, all races are created equal and should be treated so.  Therefore, separate accommodations on railways or anywhere violates that right.  It is for these reasons that Justice Harlan could not assent to the majority opinion of the Supreme Court.  
  
**Part 4: Cause/Effect**

While many court cases have significantly affected life for certain groups in the United States, very few have approached the level of significance that was provided in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. Life in the south for African Americans in the decades following this decision was harsh and inherently unequal. Due to the decision made in this case, many instances of discrimination took place including the appearance of Jim Crow laws, segregated places, and abundant inequalities. Because *Plessy v. Ferguson* made segregation legal, Jim Crow laws were created in order to set up this new system in the south. This state and local laws instituted different forms of discrimination, such as job discrimination, bank lending practices, and segregating housing. This led to segregation of many different public places. Some of these places included restaurants, schools and colleges, drinking fountains, and restrooms. Consequently, the Black race became to be viewed as inferior in the South. Inequalities ran rampant as opportunities given to White people were denied to Black people. Unfortunately, the precedent set by this case altered American history for almost century in a negative way that would take decades to repair, and is still being dealt with today.

**Vocabulary**

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| **Sequence of Events** | Prior to First, Second  Following Next, later, then  On For the past  When Previously  Subsequently Since  Immediately Meanwhile  Soon After During  Eventually Initially  In the end Simultaneously  As a result |
| **Proposition/Support** | Believes Proposes  Suggests View  States Position  Agrees/Disagrees According to  Argues Evidence  Supports Therefore  Claims Defends |
| **Cause/Effects** | Due to As a result  Because Therefore  Consequently Since  Leads to/Led to One reason for  If….then Due to the fact that  For this reason Subsequently |