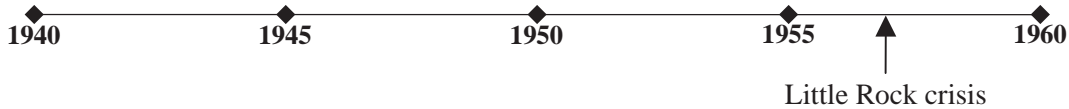


LESSON 8: CIVIL RIGHTS

Student Handout 3: Problem Little Rock, 1957



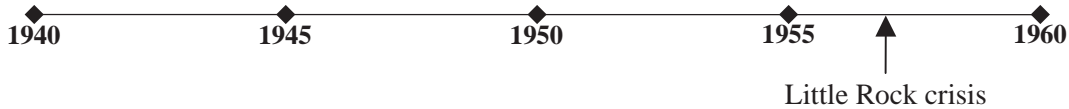
SCHOOL BOARD PERSPECTIVE

You are a member of the Little Rock, Arkansas, school board in 1957. In 1954, the Supreme Court decided in *Brown v. Board of Education* that having separate schools for whites and blacks violated constitutional guarantees of equality. Little Rock has several segregated schools, including Central High, a white school, and Horace Mann High, a black school. How should the school board respond to the court's decision? Choose one of the options below:

1. Refuse to obey the decision. Whites don't like the idea of integration: having blacks attend white schools will only decrease the quality of white schools. Instead of being forced to integrate the schools, close them down and make everyone attend private schools.
2. Integrate the two high schools in Little Rock. The Supreme Court declared separate schools illegal, and the school board must obey the law. Reassign half the whites from Central High School to Horace Mann, and relocate half the black students from Mann to Central.
3. Submit to the law but move slowly, so that people can get used to the idea of integration. Allow about ten of the best black students to attend Central High School for the first year. In the second year, expand that to 40 black students. By year three, the schools should be fully integrated.

LESSON 8: CIVIL RIGHTS

Student Handout 4: Problem Little Rock, 1957



GOVERNOR'S PERSPECTIVE

You are Orval Faubus, governor of Arkansas, in 1957. You are a political moderate (especially compared to some other Southern politicians), and in your last race you won a majority of African Americans' votes. However, you are running for reelection this year, and your advisors tell you that you need the segregationist vote in order to win.

You learn that the Little Rock school board has decided to integrate the city's high schools by enrolling nine black students into the all-white Central High School. Voters wait to see how you will respond to the situation.



Governor Orval Faubus

Which of the following options will you choose?

1. Support integration. Send the Arkansas National Guard to protect the nine black students.
2. Stay out of this situation. It's a local matter, not a state one.
3. Use the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the black students from attending Central High School. The Supreme Court has no business telling states or cities what to do with their schools. If you take a stand against this forced integration and in favor of states' rights, you'll earn the support of segregationists and likely win reelection.

LESSON 8: CIVIL RIGHTS

Student Handout 5: Problem Little Rock, 1957



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

You are President Dwight Eisenhower in 1957. In 1954, the Supreme Court declared segregation in public schools illegal. The school board in Little Rock, Arkansas, decided to integrate the schools there slowly by sending nine black students to all-white Central High School. However, Arkansas governor Orval Faubus sent the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the black students from attending. You spoke with Faubus, and he indicated that he planned to back down and let the black students attend Central High. Instead, he simply withdrew the troops. Chaos resulted as white segregationists descended on the school, threatening violence if blacks attended. Many Americans look to you for leadership. Integration has become a major issue, particularly in the South, and people fear that the type of unrest Little Rock is experiencing might spread to their communities.



A young African American boy watches from afar as angry whites march on Central High School to protest integration

Which of these options will you choose?

1. Tell Faubus that he should send in the Arkansas National Guard again, but this time for the purpose of protecting the black students.
2. Stay out of the situation. It's a local and/or state matter, not a federal one.
3. Send federal troops to make sure the students can attend school and to preserve order in Little Rock.