Anticipate Activity

☐ I can summarize the context for the landmark Supreme Court case Brown v. Board of Education.

☐ I can make predictions based on historical evidence.

Essential Vocabulary

| **segregation** | Legal separating groups of people based on race. |
| **litigation**  | The process of taking legal action in the court system. |
| **integrate**   | To de-segregate or end the policy of legally separating groups of people based on race. |

Directions: Complete the short reading and answer the following questions.

Building Context

After the Civil War, the Fourteenth Amendment was passed to grant citizenship to former enslaved people and protect them from civil rights violations in their home states. Beginning in 1877, many states passed “Jim Crow” laws requiring segregation in public places. In 1896, the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruled there was nothing inherently unequal — nor anything unconstitutional — about separate accommodations for races. Public schools were relatively rare throughout the United States, but were often segregated by race where those existed.

In the twentieth century, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began a litigation campaign designed to bring an end to state-mandated segregation, calling attention to the shabby accommodations provided for Black Americans, as well as arguing the damaging psychological effects that segregation had on Black school children. One case was brought on behalf of Linda Brown, a third-grader from Topeka, Kansas. Several additional school segregation cases were combined into one, known as *Brown v. Board of Education*. This case reached the Supreme Court in 1953.

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the court ruled that segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment and was therefore unconstitutional, reversing its ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The court also urged that public schools be integrated with “all deliberate speed.” The *Brown* decision was a landmark in the fight for equal rights for African-Americans, but the work to desegregate schools was far from over. The Supreme Court cannot write or enforce laws. Local legislative bodies must write laws and the executive must enforce them.
Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Summarize this information in your own words. Try to use no more than two sentences.

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2. Write two questions you have about the information you read above.

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3. Based on the information you read above, what conclusions can you draw about how an individual (Eckford) might act after this Brown v. Board of Education ruling? What do you expect to see in her story?

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For additional background on the Brown v. Board of Education case, watch the following Homework Help video (https://bit.ly/3gp0wce)