

Américas

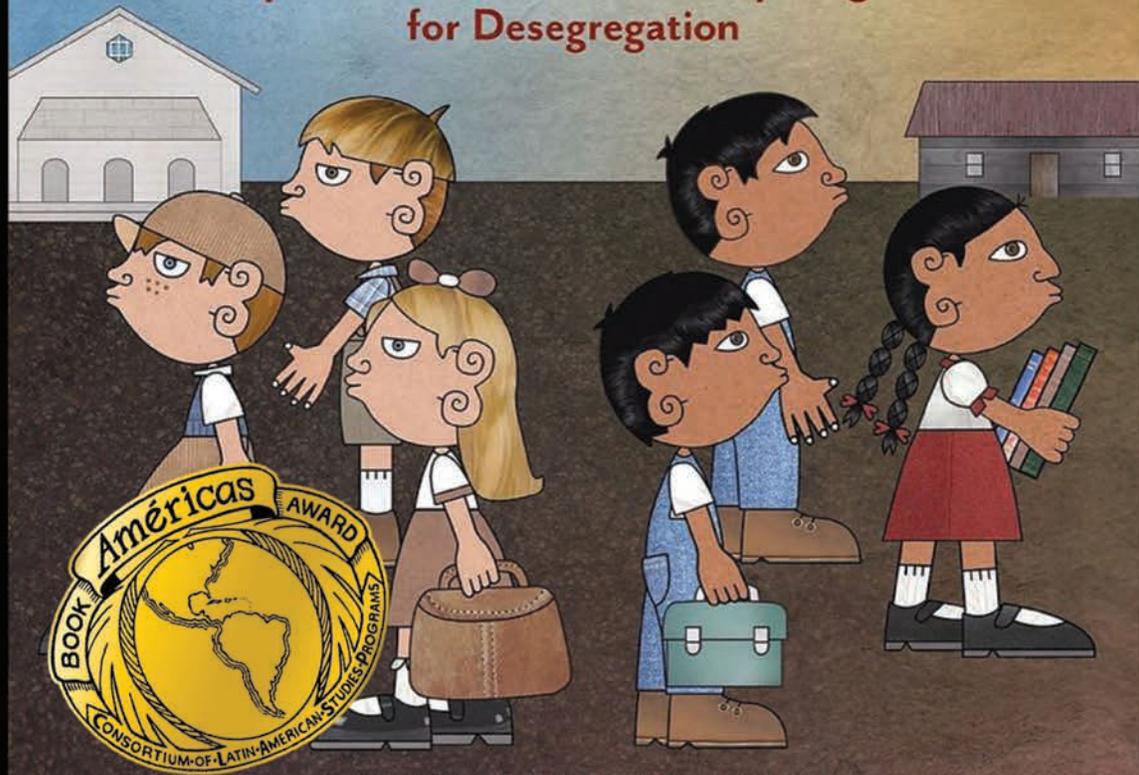
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

BOOK

AWARD

SEPARATE IS NEVER EQUAL

— Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight
for Desegregation —



DUNCAN TONATIUH

WINNER OF THE PURA BELPRÉ AWARD

PRODUCED BY THE CONSORTIUM FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

WRITTEN BY KATRINA DILLON



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This educator's guide was written to support using *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* in elementary and middle school classrooms. Produced by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) on behalf of the Américas Award, it was written in 2015 by Katrina Dillon, a project assistant at the University of New Mexico. Editorial support was also provided by UNM graduate assistant Alice Donahue.

ABOUT THE AMÉRICAS AWARD

CLASP founded the Américas Award in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use. CLASP offers up to two annual book awards, together with a commended list of titles. For more information concerning the Américas Award, including additional classroom resources, please visit the [CLASP website](#).

The awards are administered by CLASP and coordinated by both Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and Vanderbilt University's Center for Latin American Studies. Generous support is also provided by Florida International University, Stanford University, The Ohio State University, University of Florida, University of New Mexico, University of Utah, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

ABOUT CLASP

CLASP's mission is to promote all facets of Latin American studies throughout the world. Its broad range of activities include the encouragement of research activities, funding of professional workshops, advancement of citizen outreach activities, and development of teaching aids for the classroom.



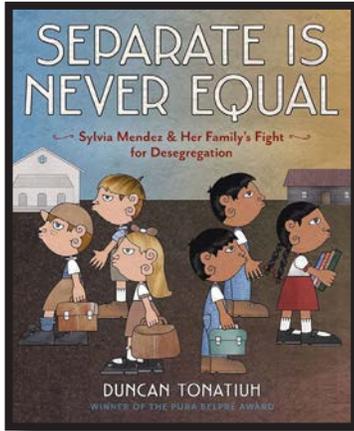
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	4
Applicable Common Core State Standards	6
About Author and Illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh	7
Author's Note	7
Classroom Relevance and Applications	9
Lesson Plans and Activities	11
Vocabulary	11
Activity 1: Vocabulary Study (Cognitive Content Dictionary).....	11
Activity 2: Sentence Illustration: The Importance of Prefixes.....	12
Pre-Reading Activities.....	13
Activity 1: Observation Charts	13
Activity 2: Picture Walk	14
Activity 3: Non-Fiction Genre Study.....	14
Activity 4: Think, Pair, Share: Equality, Segregation, Justice.....	15
Guided Reading Questions	16
Post-Reading Activities	20
Activity 1: Comprehension Check	20
Activity 2: Dear Sylvia	20
Activity 3: Acrostic Poetry.....	21
Activity 4: Persuasive Writing.....	21
Multimedia Resources	23
Featured Lesson Plans and Resources	24
Complementary Literature	25
Appendix.....	35
Images from the Book	36



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*

OVERVIEW



Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

Written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh

Published 2015 by Abrams Books for Young Readers

ISBN 1-4197-1054-0

THEMES

Segregation, Inequality, Injustice, Civil Rights Movement, Activism, Human Rights, Legal System, U.S. History, Latino History in the United States, Education, Family, Community

SYNOPSIS

Almost 10 years before *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. An American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage who spoke and wrote perfect English, Mendez was denied enrollment to a “Whites only” school. Her parents took action by organizing the Hispanic community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California.

View the [book trailer for *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*](#) produced by the Texas Bluebonnet Award.

READING LEVEL

Grades 1-5 / Ages 7-12

REVIEWS

“Tonatiuh masterfully combines text and folk-inspired art to add an important piece to the mosaic of U.S. civil rights history.”

—Kirkus Reviews, starred review



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

“Children will understand the importance of the 1947 ruling that desegregated California schools, paving the way for *Brown v. Board of Education* seven years later”

—School Library Journal

“Tonatiuh (Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote) offers an illuminating account of a family's hard-fought legal battle to desegregate California schools in the years before *Brown v. Board of Education*.”

—Publishers Weekly

“Pura Belpré Award–winning Tonatiuh makes excellent use of picture-book storytelling to bring attention to the 1947 California ruling against public-school segregation.”

—Booklist

“The straightforward narrative is well matched with the illustrations in Tonatiuh's signature style, their two-dimensional perspective reminiscent of the Mixtec codex but collaged with paper, wood, cloth, brick, and (Photoshopped) hair to provide textural variation. This story deserves to be more widely known, and now, thanks to this book, it will be.”

—The Horn Book Magazine

AWARDS

- Américas Award Winner 2015
- Pura Belpré Award, Honor, Illustrator 2015
- Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award 2015
- IRA Notable Books for a Global Society Winner 2015
- NCTE Orbis Pictus Honor Book 2015
- Robert F. Sibert Medal, Honor Book 2015
- ALA Notable Books for Children, Middle Readers 2015
- Jane Addams Award Winner, Young Readers 2015
- SLJ Best Books, Nonfiction 2014
- Kirkus Reviews Best Books of 2014, Picture Books
- Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature, Best Multicultural Books of 2014
- New York Public Library, 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, Nonfiction 2014
- Cybils Awards Finalist, Nonfiction for Elementary & Middle Grades 2014



APPLICABLE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

K-12 READING

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

K-12 WRITING

Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*

DUNCAN TONATIUH: AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

ABOUT TONATIUH



Duncan Tonatiuh (toh-nah-tyou) is an award-winning author and illustrator. Tonatiuh was born in Mexico City and grew up in San Miguel de Allende. In 2008 he received his BFA from Parsons School of Design and his BA from Eugene Lang College, both divisions of the New School University in New York City. His work is inspired by ancient Mexican art, particularly that of the Mixtec codex. His aim is to create images that honor the past, but that address contemporary issues that affect people of Mexican origin on both sides of the border.

In addition to *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*, Tonatiuh has published three other children's books, all to notable acclaim. *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* received an honorable mention from both the 2014 Américas Award and the 2014 Pura Belpré. *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours* won the 2012 Pura Belpré illustration award and the 2012 Tomas Rivera Mexican-American Children's book Award. In addition, his first book, *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin*, received an honorable mention from the Pura Belpré Award in 2011 and was named an Américas Award Commended Title and included on the Notable Book for a Global Society List.

If you would like to learn more about the author, including his other books and awards, visit his [website](#).

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the 1940s, segregation based on race or national origin was common throughout the United States. The *Mendez v. Westminster School District* case paved the way for the desegregation of schools in America. After the Mendez lawsuit, similar suits were filed and won in Texas and Arizona. In 1954, seven years after the Mendez victory, the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregated schools in the entire country.

Two people who played key roles in the *Brown* case had also been involved in the *Mendez* case: Thurgood Marshall and Earl Warren. As a member of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People, Marshall had sent friend-of-the-court briefs to the judge in the *Mendez* case. In these letters he argued against segregation. He later used several of the same arguments when he became the lawyer in the *Brown* case. Earl Warren was the governor who signed into law the desegregation of schools in California after the Mendez's victory. He later became the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. He presided over the *Brown* case and ruled in Brown's favor.

Sylvia (b. 1936) and her brothers attended the Westminster school until her family moved back to Santa Ana. Sylvia graduated from an integrated high school and attended California State University, where she studied to become a registered nurse. She worked for thirty-three years at a medical center in Los Ange-



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

les and then retired to take care of her ill mother. Sylvia remembers that before Felicitas passed away, she regretted the fact that so few people knew about the *Mendez* case and her family's fight for equality. Indeed, the *Mendez* case is seldom taught in schools. Unlike *Brown v. Board of Education*, which is widely known, *Mendez v. Westminster* is known by few Americans to this day. After her mother died, Sylvia made it her mission to educate people about her family's fight for desegregation.

In recent decades, the *Mendez* case has finally begun to receive some attention and recognition. Documentaries have been made about it, and books and articles have been written about it. In 2002, a public school in Santa Ana was named after Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez. In 2007, a commemorative stamp was issued by the U.S. Postal Service to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Mendez victory. In 2009, a high school in Los Angeles was named the Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez Learning Center. And in 2011, Sylvia Mendez received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama. It is the highest civilian award a person can receive in America.

Thanks to the efforts of courageous people like the Mendez family, the segregation of public schools is illegal in the United States. Unfortunately, a great deal of inequality—and a kind of unofficial segregation—still exists today.

According to a 2012 study by the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles, across the United States segregation has increased significantly in recent years. It reported that 43 percent of Latino students and 38 percent of black students attend schools where fewer than 10 percent of their classmates are white. The study, which analyzes data from the Department of Education, also reveals that Latino and black children are twice as likely to be in schools where the majority of students are poor. Therefore, their schools are likely to have fewer resources and less experienced teachers. All too often I see this inequality when I visit schools in different parts of the country to read and to talk about my books.

The Mendez family went to court almost seventy years ago, but their fight is relevant today. As the education specialists in the trial argued, the segregation of children creates feelings of superiority in one group and inferiority in another. We need to be able to interact and mingle so that prejudices break down, so that we can learn from one another, and so that everyone has a fair shot at success.

My hope is that this book will help children and young people learn about this important yet little known event in American history. I also hope that they will see themselves reflected in Sylvia's story and realize that their voices are valuable and that they too can make meaningful contributions to this country.

—Duncan Tonatiuh



CLASSROOM RELEVANCE AND APPLICATIONS

There are a number of reasons why Duncan Tonatiuh's book, *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*, is so important. In writing it, he did something that no one else has. No other children's picture book on the *Mendez* case exists. Moreover, the book is well-researched and compellingly illustrated. By drawing on primary source documents, court transcripts, and interviews with Sylvia Mendez herself, Tonatiuh has created an important historical book for younger and older children alike.

Too often the content knowledge we present in our classrooms on the Civil Rights Movement is dictated by a "holidays and heroes" approach to education. Our discussions of civil rights are narrowed, limited to Black History Month and lessons on Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks. But this narrow focus is misleading. We can't provide an accurate picture of the depth of the Civil Rights Movement by limiting our discussions to just the involvement of the African-American community and a handful of its leaders. The Civil Rights Movement was diverse and the literature and content we use in our classrooms should reflect that. Tonatiuh's book on Sylvia Mendez and her family's fight against desegregation helps to communicate the diversity of the movement. Most people are familiar with the *Brown v. Board of Education* court case, but few have heard about *Mendez v. Westminster School District*. Many have argued that the *Mendez* case laid important groundwork for the success of the *Brown* case. In telling the story of the Mendez family and their legal battle, we complicate our understanding of the fight for desegregation and the ways in which key civil rights victories were won.

With *Separate is Never Equal* we move beyond the canonical multicultural children's literature that focuses solely on heroes such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Cesar Chavez, or Dolores Huerta. Here, Tonatiuh has called attention to the lesser known aspects of the history of Latin@s in the U.S. and Latin@ activism. Not only does this book show the role of Latin@s in the Civil Rights Movement, but it focuses on the role of a young woman in fighting discrimination and racism. What better way to empower our own students than to provide them with books that tell the stories of other youth who have had the courage to be activists?

Furthermore, the book contextualizes the fight for equality beyond simply the individual, including also the roles of the family and their community. As others have critiqued, too frequently we're presented with heroes who are portrayed as if they operate in a vacuum. Tonatiuh's book clearly shows the essential role both community and family played in the success of the Mendez case.

This is a book that belongs in all classrooms, from elementary through high school. Younger students will benefit from read-aloud exercises, while older students can dig deeper and use it as a research aid. For both, it serves as an excellent model for engaging students in historical non-fiction. Discussing Tonatiuh's process and the way in which he based all of the dialogue on what he found in primary source documents and interviews demonstrates the ways in which non-fiction can be both creative and exciting, something that can often be hard to convince students of. His book also provides a way to discuss art as a means of



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

resistance and social justice. Tonatiuh's digitally rendered collage illustrations are as powerful a means of telling the Mendez's story as his text. Through his text and illustrations he brings the story to life. The extensive back matter provides excellent resources for furthering this conversation with students.

Discussions of discrimination and racism can often be complicated and complex, but with this book Tonatiuh makes it as clear and concise as possible so that students can easily engage with the narrative. In communicating the pain of the Mendez's family's experiences of racism, he not only gives voice to all those who have suffered discrimination, but also encourages empathy and courage so that readers will hopefully be moved to challenge injustice when they see it.



LESSON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

VOCABULARY

- Equal
- Equality
- Inequality
- Segregate
- Segregation
- Integrate
- Integration
- Desegregate
- Desegregation
- Justice
- Injustice
- Inferior
- Superior
- Labor
- Fieldworker
- Lawyer
- Lawsuit

If many of these words are unfamiliar to students, you may want to choose the most important ones for your unit and use the Cognitive Content Dictionary Activity below. This activity will span multiple days, so will be useful if you plan on discussing *Separate Is Never Equal* and its themes over a period of days.

If students have a basic understanding of the vocabulary, this is an opportunity to study the significance of the prefixes in- and de-. Through an examination of the words above, students can discuss why these prefixes are important and how they change the meaning of a word. They can apply what they learn in these discussions to the Sentence Illustration Activity below.

ACTIVITY 1: VOCABULARY STUDY (COGNITIVE CONTENT DICTIONARY)

The purpose of this activity is to expose students to new vocabulary in a way that encourages engagement, comprehension, and retention of the information. Students will practice oral language skills and kinesthetic learning.

This vocabulary activity is modeled after the Cognitive Content Dictionary (CCD) strategy created by GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design). The following description, reprinted from the [Project G.L.A.D. website](#), offers more information on this teaching approach:

Project GLAD® is a model of professional development in the area of language acquisition and literacy. The strategies and model promote English language acquisition, academic achievement, and cross-cultural skills. Project GLAD® was developed and field tested for nine years by the United States Department of Education and is based on years of experience with integrated approaches for teaching language. GLAD is an instructional model with clear, practical strategies promoting effective interactions between students and students and teachers and students that develop metacognitive use of high-level language and literacy.



PREPARATION:

Note: An internet image search for “Cognitive Content Dictionary” will provide example photographs of this chart.

Create a large table on butcher paper or chart paper. It will have as many rows as you have words (or as many rows as you can fit on your paper; you can always tape additional pages together to make your chart longer). It will have four columns (five if you want to include a picture/clue column). The column titles are: WORD, PREDICTION, FINAL MEANING, ORAL SENTENCE, and possibly PICTURE/CLUE. Write the first vocabulary word that the class will learn in the first row in the WORD column. Directly under that word (still in the same row) write an “H” and an “NH”. To aid in the visual chunking of content, the chart is typically color coded by column, so you will need as many different colored markers as you have columns. Write the following questions where they can be viewed by all students: “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this image make you feel?”

PROCESS:

1. For the sake of clarity, let's use the word “equal” for the explanation here. With the chart posted for the whole class to see, ask students to raise their hand if they've heard the word equal before today. Count the number of students who have heard the word and write this number next to the H. Then, ask students who have never heard the word equal to raise their hands. Count the number of students and write this number next to the NH. This serves as an informal assessment tool to gauge students' familiarity with the word.
2. Ask students to turn to their tablemates, partner, or small group and discuss what they predict the word equal means. Give students one minute to come up with a prediction. If students are unfamiliar with the word prediction, be sure to discuss that first.
3. Give a predetermined signal for students to come back to whole group and ask students to take turns sharing their predictions. You can use this as an opportunity for language fluency and oral language practice. Encourage them to create complete sentences such as “We predict that equal means. . .” As students share, write their predictions in the PREDICTION column.
4. The next step is to create a signal movement that ‘shows’ the word. You can teach the students one you have in mind, or ask them for help in creating it and see what they come up with. They may need some guidance if they are not yet clear on the meaning of the word. Once students know the movement, they practice doing the movement while saying the word. If you want students to create the move, but don't think they have a strong enough understanding of the word, you can postpone the signal movement until after the “Final Meaning” discussion on day two. If adhering to GLAD strategy, your vocabulary instruction for the day stops here.
5. The following day write the final meaning of the word on the chart under the appropriate column. Read the definition out loud and discuss it in comparison to their predictions. This is also a good opportunity to discuss parts of speech. You can identify the part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.) and then write it underneath the word. Give a couple of examples of how this word can be used in a sentence.
6. Ask students to create their own sentence using the word, and then turn to their partner or tablemate



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

and practice saying the sentence. This should take one or two minutes. Signal for students to come back to whole group. Go around the room having each student share his or her sentence. Correct the student if necessary and help them fix the sentence and say it again.

7. Introduce students to the next vocabulary word, repeating steps 2-5 for the next word.

REVIEW:

Each day review the words from the chart, practicing the signal movement and asking a few students to share an example sentence.

NOTE:

This may seem like it is very time consuming, but once students understand the process, it goes quickly.

ACTIVITY 2: SENTENCE ILLUSTRATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF PREFIXES

PROCESS:

1. Review with students the significance of the prefixes de- and in- using word pairs such as inequality/equality; injustice/justice; desegregate/segregate from *Separate Is Never Equal*.

De-: used to form verbs that denote motion or conveyance down from, away, or off; **reversal or undoing of the effects of an action;** extraction or removal of a thing.

In-: not

2. Once students have a firm understanding of the meanings of these words, ask them to pick one of the pairs of words to use to write and illustrate two sentences (one for each word). Students can create sentences based on *Separate Is Never Equal* or use a different context.
3. After writing their sentences, provide blank paper for students to illustrate each of their sentences. Students should write their sentence across the bottom of their illustration. Group the illustrated sentences by the chosen word pair and display in the classroom or hallway.



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: OBSERVATION CHARTS

As the title suggests equality/inequality and segregation/desegregation are important themes in the story. Observation charts are a way to introduce these themes and begin a classroom discussion.

PREPARATION:

Find images through an internet image search, magazines, or newspapers that represent equality/inequality (especially in schools if possible) and segregation/desegregation. Look for images that will be thought-provoking and interesting to students. You may want to look for images from various Civil Rights movements, perhaps a mix of well-known and lesser-known images. Glue each image to the top of a large piece of butcher paper, poster board, or chart paper to create the observation charts. Write the following questions where they can be viewed by all students: “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this image make you feel?”

PROCESS:

1. Explain to students that they are going to be working in small groups. Each group will rotate around the room to view and discuss each image. One person will be the recorder at each table. When looking at an image, students will spend at least one minute silently reflecting on what they see and thinking about the questions “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this image make you feel?” Then, students will discuss their thoughts in the small group. The recorder will write down their reflections and answers to the questions on the observation chart. Sticky notes can also be used to record the group's thoughts. Explain to students that they will have a set amount of time at each image. When time is up, the teacher will give a signal and each group will move to the next image.
2. Divide students into small groups. Place an image and marker at various tables or stations in the classroom. Direct each group to the table or station where they will begin. Begin the activity. Continue rotating groups through the images until each group has seen each image.
3. Hang up all of the observation charts with comments. As a whole group, discuss each image, giving students time to share and respond to what they posted. Keep the charts posted throughout the reading and discussion of *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*.

NOTE:

This activity can also be used as an alternative version of a picture walk by using image from *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* for the observation charts. For images from the book, see the end of this guide.

To reuse the observation charts in different classes or subsequent years, laminate each chart and use sticky notes for students to record their thoughts and reflections.



ACTIVITY 2: PICTURE WALK

Pique students' interest, activate prior knowledge, and introduce the book through a picture walk.

PROCESS:

1. Show students the front and back cover of the book. Ask them to predict what they think the story will be about. Then, slowly flip through the pages of the book without reading any of the words. As students ask questions about each picture they see, guide them to make inferences based upon their observations. Focus on who, what, when, where, why and how questions such as: "What is happening here?" "What will happen next?" "Who do you think this is?" "How does this character feel?" "What do you notice about the characters on this page?" "How does this picture make you feel?" "Where does the story take place?" "How do you think the story will end?"
2. Once students have read the book, return to their thoughts and predictions, comparing them to the actual events of the story.

ACTIVITY 3: NON-FICTION GENRE STUDY

Prepare students to read *Separate Is Never Equal* by introducing or reviewing the definition of non-fiction with students.

PROCESS:

1. Ask students to point out examples of fiction around the classroom. Then, ask them to point out examples of non-fiction. (Have some examples ready to use in case students need guidance).
2. Based on the examples, create a T-Chart on the board with fiction on one side and non-fiction on the other. Ask students to provide words that describe the two genres. As a class, generate a definition of non-fiction (Writing that is based on facts, real events or real people. It explains, informs or persuades by giving information).
3. Turn to the bibliography on page 39 of *Separate Is Never Equal*. Review or explain what a bibliography is to students. Count with students the number of resources that Tonatiuh consulted to research and write the book. Discuss how this reinforces the idea that non-fiction provides information and is based on research.
4. Before you begin reading the book, ask students to look and listen for elements of non-fiction. When students have finished the book, return to the conversation about non-fiction. Ask them to share clues or elements of the book that show it is non-fiction. Include these underneath the T-Chart so that students can return to the graphic organizer as a reference and reminder of what differentiates non-fiction from fiction.



ACTIVITY 4: THINK, PAIR, SHARE: EQUALITY, SEGREGATION, JUSTICE

Access prior knowledge and engage students in a discussion of relevant themes of *Separate Is Never Equal* through a think, pair, share activity.

PROCESS:

1. Access prior knowledge and engage students in a discussion of relevant themes of *Separate Is Never Equal* through a think, pair, share activity.
2. Write the words “equality,” “segregation,” and “justice” on three separate large pieces of butcher paper. You can substitute other related words that may connect to previous units or class discussions. If these are topics that have already been discussed in class, this can serve as both a review of previously taught material and preparation for the reading of *Separate Is Never Equal*.
3. Hang the papers where they can be seen by the whole class.
4. Read each word out loud to the class. Ask students to think about the words using the following guiding questions.
 - What do you think about when you hear these words?
 - What pictures come to mind?
 - Do these words make you feel anything?
 - What do you associate with these words?
5. Ask students to write down their thoughts about these questions.
6. Once students have written their thoughts down, have them share at least one of their thoughts with a partner.
7. Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts with the class. As they share, write down their responses on the appropriate butcher paper chart.
8. Once the class has read *Separate Is Never Equal*, return to the charts. Ask students if they would add anything new to the charts now that they read the book. How did their thoughts compare to what was presented in the book? Do they have a new understanding of these words? What did they learn? Are these important words to talk about in school? Why or why not?

POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT:

Ask students to pick one of the words to write a short individual essay about it. In the essay, the students will explain the meaning of the word they chose, how it connects to the story, why it's an important word to know and discuss, and possibly why it is as relevant today as it was when Sylvia Mendez was in school.



GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

1. What are *trenzas*? If you're not familiar with the Spanish word, use context clues from the sentence and the illustration to help you. (p. 2)
2. **Analyze/Question/Infer:** What does the young boy yell at Sylvia in the hallway? Have you ever heard someone say something like that to another student? Why do you think people say things like this? What motivates people to say these kinds of things to each other? (p. 2)
3. **Analyze/Question/Infer:** Think about the young boy yelling, "Go back to the Mexican school! You don't belong here!" How do you think he felt when he yelled this? How do you think Sylvia felt hearing this? How do you think the other students in the hallway felt as they watched and listened to this interaction? (p. 2-3)
4. **Geography Connection:** Find California on a map with the students. Point out where California is in relation to their own school.
5. **Contextualize:** Draw students' attention to the year 1944 mentioned on page 5. As a class complete the subtraction problem Current Year – 1944 to determine how long ago this story took place.
6. **Question:** Discuss the idea of a "flashback" with students. Re-read the first sentence on page 5: "Three years earlier, in the summer of 1944, Sylvia and her brothers, Jerome and Gonzalo Jr., and their parents had moved to the crowded city of Santa Ana, California, to a farm in nearby Westminster." Ask students to identify what part of the sentence shows that this is a flashback. (p. 5)
7. **Question:** Why does the Mendez family move to Westminster? What will they do there? What did Mr. Mendez do when they lived in Santa Ana, CA? (p. 5)
8. **Question:** Who takes Sylvia and her cousins to the new school to enroll? (p. 7)
9. What does Sylvia notice about the school when they arrive to enroll for the upcoming year? (p. 7)
10. **Question:** What does the secretary say to Aunt Soledad when she tries to enroll all five children? (p. 8)
11. **Evaluate/Analyze:** Does the secretary ever tell Aunt Soledad why Sylvia and her brothers can't attend that school? (p. 8)
12. **Question/Clarify:** Why is Sylvia confused by the secretary's statement that she must attend the Mexican school? (p. 9)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

13. **Question/Make a personal connection/Infer:** What does Sylvia realize when she compares her and her brothers to their cousins? How are they different? How do you think this makes Sylvia feel? How would you feel if you were in Sylvia's place?
14. **Clarify:** Does the secretary ever actually state what the rules are in terms of who can attend the Westminster school? (p. 11)
15. How does Aunt Soledad respond to the secretary? How would you respond in this situation? (p. 11)
16. How many different people does Mr. Mendez talk to about getting his children enrolled in the school on 17th Street? What do they all say to him? Why do you think no one will give Mr. Mendez an answer other than "That is how it's done"? (p. 13)
17. On pages 14 and 15 the illustrations and text describe the Mexican school. Compare and contrast the Mexican school with the Westminster school on 17th Street (p. 7). How are the two schools different? Which school would you want to attend? Do you think that it is fair that certain children are forced to attend the Mexican school? (p. 14-15)
18. On page 16 Mr. Mendez says, "It's not fair that our kids have to go to an inferior school." Based on your comparison of the two elementary schools in the question above, what does the word inferior mean? (p. 16)
19. How will attending the Mexican school affect the children's future? Will they be prepared to go to high school and college? If they aren't prepared to be successful in high school or college, how will this affect the jobs that they can get? (p. 16)
20. What is the purpose of Mr. Mendez's petition? Why are the other parents afraid to sign the petition? (p. 17)
21. What does Mr. Mendez learn from the truck driver? (p. 18)
22. What did David Marcus do in San Bernardino? What was it like in San Bernardino? (p. 18)
23. Imagine that you are one of the Mexican children in the illustration of San Bernardino. How would you feel reading the sign "No Dogs or Mexicans Allowed"? What do the bars separating the Mexican children from the white children in the pool remind you of? Why do you think Tonatiuh chose to illustrate the experience this way? (p. 18-19)
24. What kind of work do Mr. Marcus and Mr. Mendez have to do in order to prepare for the lawsuit? How did this affect Mrs. Mendez and the children? (p. 20-21)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

25. Why does Mr. Estrada join the *Mendez* case? (p. 22-23)
26. How many students were affected by the school segregation in California? (p. 23)
27. Where is the trial held? How many days does it last? (p. 24)
28. Who is Mr. Kent? What does he say when he is questioned during the trial? Are these things true? How does the Mendez family feel listening to Mr. Kent? How would you feel? What does Mr. Kent's testimony say about his character? (p. 24-27)
29. During the trial Mr. Mendez finally gets an answer to why his children can't attend the Westminster school. What is the reason? (p. 24-27)
30. How does Mr. Marcus disprove Mr. Kent's testimony on the second day? (p. 28)
31. What do we learn about the affects of segregation from the education specialists who testified at the trial? How does segregation hurt us? (p. 29)
32. How long does it take the judge to make a decision in the case? What does the judge decide? (p. 30)
33. Does the school district accept the judge's decision? (p. 31)
34. Why does the Mendez family have to go to trial again? What kind of support do they receive during this trial? When Sylvia is surprised by this support, what does her mother say to her? (p. 32-33)
35. What decision do the judges make in the second trial? What law does Governor Earl Warren sign as a result of the trial? (p. 33)
36. How long did it take for the Mendez family to win the right for their children to attend the Westminster school?
37. How can you tell that Sylvia is at the Westminster school on pages 34-35?
38. How does Sylvia decide to deal with the students who bully and make fun of her? (p. 34)
39. In the author's note on page 36 Tonatiuh writes, "My hope is that this book will help children and young people learn about this important yet little known event in American history. I also hope that they will see themselves reflected in Sylvia's story and realize that their voices are valuable and that they too can make meaningful contributions to this country." How can we support causes for justice in our communities the way that the Mendez family and the many people who supported their fight for integration did? What ways can we make "meaningful contributions"? How can we be brave like Sylvia was?



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: COMPREHENSION CHECK

Assess students' comprehension of the story by asking them to re-tell the major events that led to the Mendez's successful fight for the integration of California schools.

PROCESS:

1. As a class, have students identify the major plot events that led to the legal integration of California schools. As students provide events, create a chart or timeline of the plot as a visual reference for students to refer back to throughout the unit.

ACTIVITY 2: DEAR SYLVIA

One of the reasons literature can be so powerful is its ability to create empathy and understanding for another's reality. In this activity students will imagine that they are one of Sylvia's classmates on her first day of school at Westminster School (referenced on page 2 of the book).

PROCESS:

1. Read the following to students. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine that they are part of the scenario below.

Sometimes we see someone being treated unfairly, being bullied, or made to feel bad about themselves. Fear can keep us from standing up for them or offering to be a friend. Imagine that you are in Sylvia's class on her first day at the Westminster School. You see her being bullied and treated unkindly. You know that how she is being treated isn't right, but you're afraid to say anything. You're afraid that you will also be bullied if you say something. After school you keep thinking about Sylvia. You decide that you care more about being a friend to Sylvia than being bullied by the other students. You make a plan for what you are going to do at school the following day and how you are going to support Sylvia and help her to handle the bullying situation.

2. Explain to students that they are going to write a letter to Sylvia to show that they want to support her and be her friend or ally. They should think about the following: What can you say to make Sylvia feel better? How are you going to support her and be her friend? What advice can you give her? Have you had a similar experience that you can share with her? What is your plan for the following day at school? What do you think is the best way to handle the bullies and support Sylvia?
3. Students write their individual letters following the classroom writing process. Once completed, ask for volunteers to share their letters.



ACTIVITY 3: ACROSTIC POETRY

In this activity students will use poetry to think more deeply about the significance of the *Mendez v. Westminster* trial and the vocabulary connected to it.

PROCESS:

1. Introduce students to the idea of an acrostic poem if they are not familiar with it. An acrostic poem is a type of poetry where the first, last or other letters in a line spell out a word or phrase. The most simple version is where the first letters of each line spell out the word or phrase. Acrostic poems can be adapted across grade levels. For younger students, one word descriptions for each of the letters of the word chosen for the poem may be sufficient. For older students, you may want to require a sentence of multi-word description, a rhyming scheme, or even alliteration. If acrostic poetry is a new concept, you may want to create one as a class, in order to model the activity for students. Connect the activity to literacy content appropriate for your grade level, highlighting the meaning and use of adjectives, synonyms, rhyme scheme, alliteration, etc.
2. As a class brainstorm possible words to use as the base of the acrostic poem. Separate, Equality, Inequality, Integration, Segregation, Justice, Injustice, or Sylvia could all be possibilities. You can guide students to choose words that connect to the theme or idea that you are focusing on in using *Separate Is Never Equal*. You can also connect this to the vocabulary words you've chosen to highlight.
3. Explain that once they have chosen their word, they will write that word vertically on their paper. Then, they will create a word or sentence that describes, connects to, or explains the meaning or importance of the word for each of the letters of the word. For example, if they choose the word "separate," they need sentences or words that start with s, e, p, a, r, a, t, e.
4. Have students complete their poem. Once finished, ask volunteers to share their poem with the class. This can also be used for a classroom writing display.

ACTIVITY 4: PERSUASIVE WRITING

Despite all of the legal rulings against segregation, this is still an issue more than seventy years after the Mendez family won their case. As Tonatiuh points out in his Author's Note, segregation is still very much an issue as many schools continue to be segregated. In this activity students will write a persuasive essay or paragraph (depending on grade level) on the topic of school segregation.

Process:

1. Read aloud to students the following taken from Tonatiuh's "Author's Note" on page 36 of the book.

"Thanks to the efforts of courageous people like the Mendez family, the segregation of public schools is illegal in the United States. Unfortunately, a great deal of inequality—and a kind of unofficial segregation—still exists today.

According to a 2012 study by the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles, across the United States segregation has increased significantly in recent years. It reported that 43 percent of Latino students and 38 percent of black students attend schools where fewer than 10



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

percent of their classmates are white. The study, which analyzes data from the Department of Education, also reveals that Latino and black children are twice as likely to be in schools where the majority of students are poor. Therefore, their schools are likely to have fewer resources and less experienced teachers. All too often I see this inequality when I visit schools in different parts of the country to read and to talk about my books.

The Mendez family went to court almost seventy years ago, but their fight is relevant today. As the education specialists in the trial argued, the segregation of children creates feelings of superiority in one group and inferiority in another. We need to be able to interact and mingle so that prejudices break down, so that we can learn from one another, and so that everyone has a fair shot at success.”

2. Explain to students that they are going to write a persuasive essay (or paragraph) explaining why it is important that we continue to fight for school desegregation. Individually or as a class, have students brainstorm why integration is important and how segregation is unjust.
3. Encourage students to use information from *Separate Is Never Equal*, vocabulary they've learned, and experiences from their own lives.
4. Once students have completed a rough draft, have them exchange essays with a partner and suggest any ways that their partner can make their arguments stronger.
5. Once edits and revisions are complete, have students complete a final copy.



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

To complement and enhance teaching about *Separate Is Never Equal*, we've compiled the following selective multimedia resources that are available at no cost online.

DUNCAN TONATIUH'S THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK:

- Watch “[An Interview with Duncan Tonatiuh](#)”
Tonatiuh talks about what inspired him to write about Sylvia Mendez in this video interview produced by the Texas Bluebonnet Award.
- Read “[Five Questions with Duncan Tonatiuh](#)”
Tonatiuh answers five questions about writing *Separate Is Never Equal* in this print interview with the International Literacy Association
- Read “[Duncan Tonatiuh Wants Latino Children to See Themselves in Books](#)”
Tonatiuh talks about the importance his work has for young children, and why it's so critical for Latino/a readers to see themselves in the books they read in this NBC article.

FILM AND AUDIO ON SYLVIA MENDEZ & HER FAMILY

- In this [StoryCorps audio interview](#), Sylvia Mendez talks to her sister Sandra Mendez Duran about *Mendez v. Westminster*, their family's 1945 lawsuit that won Mexican-American children the right to attend white schools.
- In this [video segment through PBS Learning Media](#) Sylvia Mendez recalls the conditions that triggered the lawsuit and her parents' involvement in the case.
- In this [NPR interview](#) Sylvia Mendez talks about the *Mendez v. Westminster* court case.



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

FEATURED LESSON PLANS AND RESOURCES

The conversation that emerges from *Separate Is Never Equal* goes far beyond literary analysis. Below, we've compiled additional resources that address the historic court case and the related, ongoing issue of school (de)segregation.

LESSON PLANS

[Separate Is Never Equal: ADL Book of the Month](#)

The Anti-Defamation League created a classroom guide for *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* that includes discussion questions, extension activities, and links to other resources.

[Mendez v. Westminster, A Pioneer Movement of Chicano Education](#)

In this lesson plan written by Lupe Avila students will learn that the *Mendez v. Westminster* case was a movement that set a basis for the permission of fair education for minority students.

[A Tale of Two Schools](#)

This lesson plan created by Teaching Tolerance provides reading material on the *Mendez v. Westminster* case to accompany discussion questions, writing assignments and project ideas for further study.

[Mendez vs. Westminster: Separate is not Equal](#)

This unit plan written by Meghan Cox covers a variety of literacy skills, including reading, writing, and researching, while asking students to think critically and craft persuasive arguments. The lesson culminates in a class debate in which students must take on the personas of the people or groups involved in the court case.

[PBS NewsHour's on "Racial Equality: How far have we come and how far do we still need to go?"](#)

In this multimedia based lesson students will consider discrimination through examining the historical civil rights movement and present day examples of discrimination through viewing photographs, speeches, and video.

RELATED RESOURCES

[United States Court's website for Mendez v. Westminster](#)

This website includes information on the case and a re-enactment script.

[Sylvia Mendez's website](#)

This website includes information about Sylvia Mendez, background information on the *Mendez v. Westminster* case, and photographs of Sylvia and the Mendez family.



COMPLEMENTARY LITERATURE

The following books share some of the relevant themes addressed in *Separate Is Never Equal*, including school segregation and desegregation, the Civil Rights Movement, Latino activism, and young people as activists in general. These books can be used to extend and expand on conversations generated by the reading and discussion of *Separate Is Never Equal*.

It is worth clarifying with students that although some of the books below focus specifically on the history of migrant farm workers and undocumented laborers, the Mendez family was neither. This conversation can open up additional discussions about difference, commonality, and solidarity.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words by Karen L. Abouraya and illustrated by L.C. Wheatley. StarWalk Kids Media, 2014.

The inspiring, true story of Malala Yousafzai, a young Pakistani girl who stands up and speaks out for every child's right to education. Though she and two of her schoolmates were targeted by a Taliban gunman, a life-threatening injury only strengthened her resolve. Malala spoke at the U.N. on her 16th birthday in 2013, nine months after she was shot. Author and journalist Karen Leggett Abouraya, author of *Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books*, brings Malala's story to life for young readers. Malala's story is more than a biography of a brave and outspoken teenager. It is a testament to the power of education to change the world for boys and girls everywhere. (Grades 3-5)

Classroom Resource: [Anti-Defamation League to "Who is Malala Yousafzai?"](#)

Amelia's Road by Linda J. Altman and illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee and Low Books, 1995.

Amelia Luisa Martinez hates roads. Los caminos, the roads, take her migrant worker family to fields where they labor all day, to schools where no one knows Amelia's name, and to bleak cabins that are not home. Then one day, Amelia discovers an "accidental road." At its end she finds an amazing old tree reminiscent of the one in her dreams. Its stately sense of permanence inspires her to put her own roots down in a very special way. The richly colored illustrations bring to life the landscape of California's Central Valley farmland. *Amelia's Road* is an inspirational tale about the importance of home. (Grades Kindergarten and up).

Classroom Resource: [Classroom guide for Amelia's Road](#), produced by Lee & Low Books



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

Friends from the Other Side / Amigos del otro lado by Gloria Anzaldua and illustrated by Consuelo Mendez. Children's Book Press, 1997.

"Did you come from the other side? You know, from Mexico?" So begins the friendship between Prietita and Joaquín, the young boy who, with his mother, has crossed the Rio Grande River to Texas in search of a new life. Prietita, a brave young Mexican American girl, defends Joaquín from the neighborhood kids who taunt him with shouts of "mojado" or "wetback." But what can she do to protect Joaquín and his mother from the Border Patrol as the van cruises slowly up the street toward their hiding place? Writer Gloria Anzaldúa is a major Mexican American literary voice. Illustrator Consuelo Méndez is a noted Latin American artist. Both grew up in South Texas. In this, their first collaboration, they have captured not only the hardship of daily life on the border, but also the beauty of the landscape and the dignity and generosity of spirit that the Mexican Americans and the Mexican immigrants share. (Grades K-3)

César: Si, se puede! / Yes, We Can by Carmen T. Bernier-Grand. Two Lions, 2011.

Born in 1927 in Yuma, Arizona, César Chávez lived the hard-scrabble life of a migrant worker during the Depression. Although his mother wanted him to get an education, César left school after eighth grade to work. He grew to be a charismatic leader and founded the National Farm Workers Association, an organization that fought for basic rights for farm workers. In powerful poems and dramatic stylized illustrations, Carmen T. Bernier-Grand and David Díaz pay tribute to Chávez's legacy helping migrant workers improve their lives by doing things by themselves for themselves. (Grades 4-7)

Side by Side: The Story of Dolores Huerta and César Chávez/ Lado a lado: la historia de Dolores Huerta y César Chávez by Monica Brown, illustrated by Joe Cepeda. Rayo, 2010

Every day, thousands of farmworkers harvested the food that ended up on kitchen tables all over the country. But at the end of the day, when the workers sat down to eat, there were only beans on their own tables. Then Dolores Huerta and César Chávez teamed up. Together they motivated the workers to fight for their rights and, in the process, changed history. Award-winning author Monica Brown and acclaimed illustrator Joe Cepeda join together to create this stunning tribute to two of the most influential people of the twentieth century. (Grades 1-5)

Classroom Resource: [Curriculum Guide to Side by Side / Lado a Lado](#) by Monica Brown

¡Sí, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can: Janitor Strike in L.A. by Diana Cohn and illustrated by Francisco Delgado. Cinco Puntos Press, 2005.

¡Sí, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can! is a bilingual fictional story set against the backdrop of the successful janitors' strike in Los Angeles in 2000. It tells about Carlitos, whose mother is a janitor. Every night, he sleeps while his mother cleans in one of the skyscrapers in downtown L.A. When she comes home, she waves Carlitos off to school before she goes to sleep. One night, his mamá explains that she can't make enough money to support him and his abuelita the way they need unless she makes more money as a janitor. She and the other janitors have decided to go on strike.



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

How will Carlitos support his mother? Carlitos wants to help but he cannot think of a way until his teacher, Miss Lopez, explains in class how her own grandfather had fought for better wages for farmworkers when he first came to the United States. He and the other children in his class join the marchers with a very special sign for his mom. (Grades 3-5)

Classroom Resource: [Lesson Plan for ¡Sí, se puede / Yes, We Can!](#) by Marcy Fink Campos

The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles and illustrated by Greg Ford. Scholastic Paperbacks, 2010. The year is 1960, and six-year-old Ruby Bridges and her family have recently moved from Mississippi to New Orleans in search of a better life. When a judge orders Ruby to attend first grade at William Frantz Elementary, an all-white school, Ruby must face angry mobs of parents who refuse to send their children to school with her. (Grades pre-K-3)

Classroom Resources: Ruby Bridges: [A Simple Act of Courage Lesson Plans and Teaching Resources](#) by Scholastic; [Teaching Civics with Children's Literature: The Story of Ruby Bridges](#) by Dr. Patricia Stohr-Hunt; [Ruby Bridges Lesson Plan](#) by Emily Freese.

Radio Man/Don Radio by Arthur Dorres. Rayo, 1997.

Diego and his family are migrant farmers who move from state to state picking fruits and vegetables. Each day brings a new experience--a different place, a different crop, and different people to meet. But no matter where Diego goes, his radio goes with him--it helps him to learn about the places he's going and to keep in touch with the people he meets along the way. (Grades 1-5)

César Chávez: The Struggle for Justice by Richard Griswold del Castillo, illustrated by Anthony Accardo and translated by Jose Juan Colin. Pinata Books, 2008.

Streets named César Chávez have begun to spring up in most major cities in the United States. His image and his cry of "Uvas no!" have appeared on television news programs, bumper stickers, and in various other places in our popular consciousness. His struggle lives on as an inspiration for activists and nonviolent protestors, and his supporters seek to educate people about his ideals and his non-violent protests. Now, his life story becomes available to a younger generation in *César Chávez: A Struggle for Justice / César Chávez: La lucha por la justicia*. Richard Griswold del Castillo's text follows the pioneering organizer from his childhood on a small farm in Yuma, Arizona, where Chávez first encountered discrimination through the family's experience as migrant workers during the Great Depression. The text goes on to trace the growth of these seed experiences through Chávez' later life. Through bold colors and true-to-life illustrations, César Chávez' life is laid out for young children and their parents to share in a discussion of the life of a visionary Latino figure who cultivated the roots of our future. (Grades 2 and up).

The Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrated by Elizabeth Gomez. Lee and Low Books, 2006.

The Upside Down Boy is award-winning poet Juan Felipe Herrera's engaging memoir of the year his migrant family settled down so that he could go to school for the first time. Juanito is bewil-



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

dered by the new school, and he misses the warmth of country life. Everything he does feels upside down. He eats lunch when it's recess; he goes out to play when it's time for lunch; and his tongue feels like a rock when he tries to speak English. But a sensitive teacher and loving family help him to find his voice and make a place for himself in this new world through poetry, art, and music. Juan Felipe Herrera's playful language and the colorful, magical art of Elizabeth Gómez capture the universal experience of children entering a new school feeling like strangers in a world that seems upside down-at first. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: ["Immersion" Lesson Plan using The Upside Down Boy](#) by Richard Levien.

Calling the Doves / El canto de las palomas by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrated by Elly Simmons. Lee and Low Books, 2001.

Calling the Doves is poet Juan Felipe Herrera's story of his migrant farmworker childhood. In delightful and lyrical language, he recreates the joy of eating breakfast under the open sky, listening to Mexican songs in the little trailer house his father built, and celebrating with other families at a fiesta in the mountains. He remembers his mother's songs and poetry, and his father's stories and his calling the doves. For Juan Felipe, the farmworker road was also the beginning of his personal road to becoming a writer. (Grades 1 and up)

Classroom Resource: [Family Literacy Guided Lesson for Calling the Doves](#) by Geneseo Migrant Center

La Mariposa by Francisco Jiménez and illustrated by Simon Silva. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2000.

In his first year of school, Francisco understands little of what his teacher says. But he is drawn to the silent, slow-moving caterpillar in the jar next to his desk. He knows caterpillars turn into butterflies, but just how do they do it? To find out, he studies the words in a butterfly book so many times that he can close his eyes and see the black letters, but he still can't understand their meaning. Illustrated with paintings as deep and rich as the wings of a butterfly, this honest, un-sentimental account of a schoolchild's struggle to learn language reveals that our imaginations powerfully sustain us. *La Mariposa* makes a subtle plea for tolerance in our homes, our communities, and in our schools. (Grades 1-5)

A Sweet Smell of Roses by Angela Johnson and illustrated by Eric Velazquez. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2007.

There's a sweet, sweet smell in the air as two young girls sneak out of their house, down the street, and across town to where men and women are gathered, ready to march for freedom and justice. Inspired by countless children and young adults who took a stand, two Coretta Scott King honorees offer a heart-lifting glimpse of children's roles in the civil rights movement. (Grades K-3)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

First Day in Grapes by L. King Perez and illustrated by Robert Casilla. Lee and Low Books, 2002.

All year long Chico and his family move up and down the state of California picking fruits and vegetables. Every September they pick grapes and Chico starts at a new school again. Often other children pick on him — maybe because he is always new or maybe because he speaks Spanish sometimes. Chico's first day in third grade turns out to be different. When the fourth-grade bullies confront Chico in the lunchroom, he responds wisely with strengths of his own. Readers of all backgrounds will relate to Chico's bravery and the creative way he finds to resolve conflict. This story of personal triumph is a testament to the inner strength in all of us. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resource: [Classroom Guide for First Day in Grapes](#) by Lee & Low

The Streets are Free by Kurusa and illustrated by Monika Dopport. Annick Press, 2008.

This book is based on the true story of the children of the barrio of San José de la Urbina in Caracas, Venezuela. Although the mayor promises the children a playground, they realize that they must build it themselves. And they do just that. (Grades 1-4)

Harvesting Hope: The Story of César Chávez by Kathleen Krull and illustrated by Yuyi Morales. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2003.

César Chávez is known as one of America's greatest civil rights leaders. When he led a 340-mile peaceful protest march through California, he ignited a cause and improved the lives of thousands of migrant farmworkers. But César wasn't always a leader. As a boy, he was shy and teased at school. His family slaved in the fields for barely enough money to survive. César knew things had to change, and he thought that--maybe--he could help change them. So he took charge. He spoke up. And an entire country listened. (Grades K-2, 3-5).

Classroom Resource: [Harvesting Hope Teacher's Guide](#) by Yuyi Morales

Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges, edited and compiled by Margo Lundell. Scholastic Press, 1999

On November 14, 1960, a tiny six-year-old black child, surrounded by federal marshals, walked through a mob of screaming segregationists and into her school. From where she sat in the office, Ruby Bridges could see parents marching through the halls and taking their children out of classrooms. The next day, Ruby walked through the angry mob once again and into a school where she saw no other students. The white children did not go to school that day, and they wouldn't go to school for many days to come. Surrounded by racial turmoil, Ruby, the only student in a classroom with one wonderful teacher, learned to read and add. This is the story of a pivotal event in history as Ruby Bridges saw it unfold around her. Ruby's poignant words, quotations from writers and from other adults who observed her, and dramatic photographs, recreate an amazing story of innocence, courage, and forgiveness. (Grades 3-7)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal*:
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

The Dream on Blanca's Wall by Jane Medina and illustrated by Robert Casilla. WordSong, 2004.

Sixth-grader Blanca dreams of being a teacher, but even at such a young age she knows obstacles block her way: Her family is poor, her Mexican-born parents speak little English, and her underachieving brother and friends chide her academic endeavors. Yet the encouragement of her classroom teacher--and a portrait that she drew in second grade of herself standing in front of a blackboard--inspires her to reach higher. Jane Medina's carefully crafted poems, in both English and Spanish, tell the story of Blanca: the barrio she knows, the people she cares for, and the young Latina's struggle for empowerment and self-esteem. (Grades 4-6)

Busing Brewster by Richard Michelson, illustrated by R.G. Roth. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2010.

Brewster is excited about starting first grade . . . until Mama announces that he'll be attending Central—a school in the white part of town. Mama says they have art and music and a library bursting with books, but Brewster isn't so sure he'll fit in. Being black at a white school isn't easy, and Brewster winds up spending his first day in detention at the library. But there he meets a very special person: Miss O'Grady. The librarian sees into Brewster's heart and gives him not only the gift of books but also the ability to believe in himself. This powerful and tender story of desegregation in the 1970s introduces readers to the brave young heroes who helped to build a new world. (Grades 1-5)

Remember: The Journey to School Integration by Toni Morrison. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Toni Morrison has collected a treasure chest of archival photographs that depict the historical events surrounding school desegregation. These unforgettable images serve as the inspiration for Ms. Morrison's text—a fictional account of the dialogue and emotions of the children who lived during the era of "separate but equal" schooling. *Remember* is a unique pictorial and narrative journey that introduces children to a watershed period in American history and its relevance to us today. (Grades 3-8).

Classroom Resource: [Remember: A Teacher's Guide](#) by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Witnesses to Freedom: Young People Who Fought for Civil Rights by Belinda Rochelle. Puffin Books, 1997

While adult leaders' contributions to the civil rights movement have been well chronicled, those made by young people have not received as much attention. Rochelle relates the pivotal roles played by young African Americans in nine major events, including the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the lunch-counter sit-ins at Woolworth in North Carolina. A chapter is devoted to each event. The author describes the circumstances surrounding each occurrence and highlights the experiences and feelings of those involved. Ranging in age from eight to their upper teens, the subjects poignantly describe how their commitment to their cause propelled them to take a stand for freedom, often at great personal risk. (School Library Journal, Jeanette Lambert) (Grades 5-8)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

That's Not Fair! / ¡No Es Justo!: Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice / La lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la justicia by Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Teneyuca and illustrated by Terry Ybáñez. Wings Press, 2008.

A vivid depiction of the early injustices encountered by a young Mexican-American girl in San Antonio in the 1920's, this book tells the true story of Emma Tenayuca. Emma learns to care deeply about poverty and hunger during a time when many Mexican Americans were starving to death and working unreasonably long hours at slave wages in the city's pecan-shelling factories. Through astute perception, caring, and personal action, Emma begins to get involved, and eventually, at the age of 21, leads 12,000 workers in the first significant historical action in the Mexican-American struggle for justice. Emma Tenayuca's story serves as a model for young and old alike about courage, compassion, and the role everyone can play in making the world more fair. (Grades 3-5)

Classroom Resource: ["Art and Community Activism" Lesson Plan](#) by Teaching Tolerance

Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue Lagarrigue. Puffin Books, 2007.

There were signs all throughout town telling eight-year-old Connie where she could and could not go. But when Connie sees four young men take a stand for equal rights at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, she realizes that things may soon change. This event sparks a movement throughout her town and region. And while Connie is too young to march or give a speech, she helps her brother and sister make signs for the cause. Changes are coming to Connie's town, but Connie just wants to sit at the lunch counter and eat a banana split like everyone else. (Grades 3-5)

Classroom Resource: [Freedom on the Menu Lesson Plan](#) by Janet Moody.

Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers by Sarah Warren and illustrated by Robert Casilla. Two Lions, 2012.

Dolores is a teacher, a mother, and a friend. She wants to know why her students are too hungry to listen, why they don't have shoes to wear to school. Dolores is a warrior, an organizer, and a peacemaker. When she finds out that the farm workers in her community are poorly paid and working under dangerous conditions, she stands up for their rights. This is the story of Dolores Huerta and the extraordinary battle she waged to ensure fair and safe work places for migrant workers. The powerful text, paired with Robert Casilla's vibrant watercolor-and-pastel illustrations, brings Dolores' amazing journey to life. A timeline, additional reading, articles, websites, and resources for teachers are included. (Grades 1-3)



YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Voices from the Fields : Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories by S. Beth Atkins. Little, Brown and Company, 2000.

This critically acclaimed book features photographs, poems, and interviews with nine children who reveal the hardships and hopes of today's Mexican-American migrant farm workers and their families. (Grades 5 and up)

Strike!: The Farm Workers' Fight for Their Rights by Larry Dane Brimner. Calkins Creek, 2014.

In 1965, as the grapes in California's Coachella Valley were ready to harvest, migrant Filipino American workers—who picked and readied the crop for shipping—negotiated a wage of \$1.40 per hour, the same wage growers had agreed to pay guest workers from Mexico. But when the Filipino grape pickers moved north to Delano, in the Central Valley, and again asked for \$1.40 an hour, the growers refused. The ensuing conflict set off one of the longest and most successful strikes in American history. In *Strike!*, award-winning author Larry Dane Brimner dramatically captures that story. Brimner, a master researcher, fills this riveting account of the strike and its aftermath with the words of migrant workers, union organizers, and grape growers, as well as archival images that capture that first strike in 1965 and the ones that subsequently followed. Includes an author's note, bibliography, and source notes. (Grades 5 and up)

Sylvia and Aki by Winifred Conkling. Yearling, 2013.

Young Sylvia Mendez never expected to be at the center of a landmark legal battle. Young Aki Munemitsu never expected to be sent away from her home and her life as she knew it. The two girls definitely never expected to know each other, until their lives intersected on a Southern California farm in a way that changed the country forever. Who are Sylvia and Aki? And why did their family stories matter then and still matter today? This book reveals the remarkable, never-before-told story—based on true events—of *Mendez vs. Westminster School District*, the California court case that desegregated schools for Latino children and set the stage for *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* at the national level. (Grades 4-7)

The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child by Francisco Jiménez. University of New Mexico Press, 1997.

After dark in a Mexican border town, a father holds open a hole in a wire fence as his wife and two small boys crawl through. So begins life in the United States for many people every day. And so begins this collection of twelve autobiographical stories by Santa Clara University professor Francisco Jiménez, who at the age of four illegally crossed the border with his family in 1947. “The Circuit,” the story of young Panchito and his trumpet, is one of the most widely anthologized stories in Chicano literature. At long last, Jiménez offers more about the wise, sensitive little boy who has grown into a role model for subsequent generations of immigrants. These independent but intertwined stories follow the family through their circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots--and back again--over a number of years. As it moves from one



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

labor camp to the next, the little family of four grows into ten. Impermanence and poverty define their lives. But with faith, hope, and back-breaking work, the family endures. (Grades 5 and up)

Breaking Through by Francisco Jiménez. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2002.

At the age of fourteen, Francisco Jiménez, together with his older brother Roberto and his mother, are caught by la migra. Forced to leave their home in California, the entire family travels all night for twenty hours by bus, arriving at the U.S. and Mexican border in Nogales, Arizona. In the months and years that follow during the late 1950s-early 1960s, Francisco, his mother and father, and his seven brothers and sister not only struggle to keep their family together, but also face crushing poverty, long hours of labor, and blatant prejudice. How they sustain their hope, their good-heartedness, and tenacity is revealed in this moving, Pura Belpré Honor-winning sequel to *The Circuit*. Without bitterness or sentimentality, Francisco Jiménez finishes telling the story of his youth. (Grades 7 and up)

Reaching Out by Francisco Jiménez. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2009.

From the perspective of the young adult he was then, Francisco Jiménez describes the challenges he faced in his efforts to continue his education. During his college years, the very family solidarity that allowed Francisco to survive as a child is tested. Not only must he leave his family behind when he goes to Santa Clara University, but while Francisco is there, his father abandons the family and returns to Mexico. This is the story of how Francisco coped with poverty, with his guilt over leaving his family financially strapped, with his self-doubt about succeeding academically, and with separation. Once again his telling is honest, true, and inspiring. (Grades 7 and up)

The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine. Puffin Books, 2013.

As twelve-year-old Marlee starts middle school in 1958 Little Rock, it feels like her whole world is falling apart. Until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is everything Marlee wishes she could be: she's brave, brash and always knows the right thing to say. But when Liz leaves school without even a good-bye, the rumor is that Liz was caught passing for white. Marlee decides that doesn't matter. She just wants her friend back. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are even willing to take on segregation and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families. (Grades 5 and up)

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Scholastic, 2012.

Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico--she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances--Mama's life, and her own, depend on it. (Grades 6-7)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

Dear America: The Diary of Dawnie Rae Johnson by Andrea Davis Pinkney. Scholastic Inc. 2011.

In the fall of 1955, twelve-year-old Dawn Rae Johnson's life turns upside down. After the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Dawnie learns she will be attending a previously all-white school. She's the only one of her friends to go to this new school and to leave the comfort of all that is familiar to face great uncertainty in the school year ahead. However, not everyone supports integration and much of the town is outraged at the decision. Dawnie must endure the harsh realities of racism firsthand, while continuing to work hard to get a good education and prove she deserves the opportunity. But the backlash against Dawnie's attendance of an all-white school is more than she's prepared for. When her father loses his job as a result, and her little brother is constantly bullied, Dawnie has to wonder if it's worth it. In time, Dawnie learns that the true meaning of justice comes from remaining faithful to the integrity within oneself. (Grades 3-11)



An Educator's Guide to *Separate Is Never Equal:*
Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation

APPENDIX

- Images from *Separate is Never Equal*. Provided courtesy of the author and illustrator, Duncan Tonatiuh.













