

## **Article: This Student Helped to Desegregate American Schools- 5th grade lesson plan**

The following lesson plan was adapted from this lesson plan on junior scholastic <https://junior.scholastic.com/pages/content-hubs/the-civil-rights-movement/lesson-plan-desegregation.html#:~:text=In%201951%2C%20a%20courageous%20protest.and%20changed%20the%20nation%20forever>

- 1) Before reading you may wish to review terms such as; bigotry, integration, equality, loitering, and segregation
- 2) Together or individual have the kids read the following article about Barbra Jones. Barbra Jones staged a walk out of her school in protest of school segregation. Her protest and following lawsuit was bundled with other lawsuits to form Brown vs Board of Education, a landmark lawsuit that made segregation illegal in public schools in 1954.

<https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2018-19/012819/this-student-helped-desegregate-america-s-schools.html#960L>

### **Discussion Questions:**

Have students write their answers to each question, or use these prompts to guide a discussion.

1. **COMPARE AND CONTRAST:** How did the all-black high school Barbara Johns attended compare with the all-white high school located in the same town? (*The all-black school building was falling apart. The ceilings were cracked and leaky. The toilets barely worked. It had no gym, cafeteria, or science lab. The school was overcrowded, holding more than twice the number of students it was supposed to hold. Some classes were held in run-down busses, in the parking lot or in shacks made of wood and paper in the schoolyard. The all-white high school had spacious classrooms, modern heating, and a cafeteria.*)
2. **MAKING INFERENCES:** Why did Barbara need the principal to be out of the school to carry out her plan? (*Barbara had written notes calling for an assembly, signing them "BJ," as the principal usually did. If the principal had been in the building, he might have found out about the notes and stopped the assembly from happening, which would have prevented Barbara from giving the speech that inspired the walkout.*)
3. **CLOSE READING:** What arguments did Barbara use to convince her classmates to walk out in protest? (*She reminded them that the conditions of their school were inferior to the conditions of the nearby all-white school. She pointed out that the school board had denied their school proper funding. She reminded them how hard it was to learn in their school environment.*)
4. **CAUSE AND EFFECT:** What were some of the short-term responses to the students' walkout? (*The local newspaper ridiculed the students. The superintendent threatened to fire teachers and the principal at the all-black school. The NAACP agreed to help the students file a lawsuit.*)

### **Other activities**

You can have the kids watch this video <https://youtu.be/ad2eNCZhWu8> about Ayanna Najuma. There are pausing points in the video you can pause and discuss. After the video you can compare and contrast the two young girls' experiences. They both fought for equal rights but how were their approaches different? How were they the same?

If short on time you could just watch the video rather than the article. A copy of the article is attached and will be printed for your students for in class use.