Resistance to School Segregation

The Boston Busing Crisis

Introduction
Case study two can either build on case study one or stand alone. It is broken up into two one-hour lessons that explore the resistance faced as the Brown v. Board of Education decision was implemented and public schools across the nation were desegregated. The case study focuses on the Boston busing crisis and draws on photographs, artifacts, court decisions, newspaper articles, and oral histories to build students’ understanding of historical context and perspective. The goal of the tasks in these lessons is to provide students a more complex and complicated account of the legacy of segregation in one Northern city.

Note to Educators
It would be helpful for students to have a basic understanding of the judicial branch and its function in U.S. government.

Resistance to Integration in Boston

Essential Questions
- What claims have people made to support and oppose school desegregation?
- How has the fight over school desegregation affected people differently?

Key Terms and Concepts
- busing
- white flight
- gentrification
- de facto
- de jure

Standards
CCSS English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
NCSS C3 Framework

- D2.Civ.1.9-12 Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions.
- D2.His.1.9-12 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and places as well as broader historical contexts.

Materials

Class setup: Ideally class should be organized in table groups of four

Computer and Internet access for students

Texts

- Photo and Podcast: “Life After Iconic 1979 Photo: The American Flag’s Role in Racial Protest”
- “Stars and Strife”
- “Busing in Boston”

Student Facing Documents

- Photo Analysis worksheet [HANDOUT A]
- Civil Rights Done Right worksheet [HANDOUT B]
- Exit Ticket

Objective

Students will synthesize information and evidence from multiple texts on the Boston busing crisis to explain the challenges of desegregation and to complete classwork and Exit Ticket.

Agenda/Class Outline

- Warm Up
- Debrief
- Mini Lesson
- Independent Practice
- Exit Ticket

Procedure

Warm Up

1. Start by showing students “The Soiling of Old Glory,” the iconic photo taken by Stanley Foreman on April 5, 1976, during the Boston desegregation protests. Refrain from providing students with any context, including when or where the photo was taken. Have students complete the Photo Analysis worksheet [HANDOUT A] independently.

Debrief

1. Facilitate small group discussions with students sharing their observations and making predictions.
   a. What do they imagine about the men in the foreground?
b. Do they think this photograph was taken in the North or South?
c. When was this photo probably taken?
d. How many years after Brown v. Board of Education?

2. Encourage students to support their predictions and inferences with reasons and evidence from the photograph. Discussion strategies include:
   a. Timed Pair Share
   b. Single Round Robin

3. Students can then share with the whole class. Transition to Mini Lesson.

**Mini Lesson**

1. Listen to the podcast “Life After Iconic 1976 Photo” or read the article “Stars and Strife” as a class. Craft text-dependent questions for students to answer and use to collect evidence as they work through either text.

2. Teacher Tips:
   a. If you are using the podcast, pause to allow processing and answer text-dependent questions.
   b. If you want to extend the time, have students hear the podcast and read the article.

3. Have students revisit their predictions after learning the story behind the photograph.
   a. Where were they right or wrong?
   b. What did they learn about the context of this iconic photograph?
   c. How does that context change after getting insight into the perspectives of Ted Landsmark and Joseph Rakes?

**Independent Practice**

1. In the following task, students will learn about the resistance to school desegregation that followed the Brown v. Board of Education decision and boiled over during Boston’s busing crisis. Emphasize that, just like with this photograph, perspective and context are required for historical understanding. The various and divergent points of view held by Bostonians during the crisis are critical in learning about desegregation.
   a. Assign students to read about the opposition to desegregation in Boston during the mid-1970s. Select from the texts to differentiate instruction, or task students with reading each and then distinguishing the format, content, and author’s point of view: “Busing in Boston,” “Rethinking Busing,” and “Boston Busing Timeline.”
   b. Allow students to use highlighters, sticky notes, and other tools to make “thinking notes” as they closely read. Task them with reading for the content areas outlined on their Civil Rights Done Right note-taking worksheet [HANDOUT B] and to jot down their new knowledge (leaders, groups, events, context, opposition, tactics, connections).

**Exit Ticket**

1. Close by checking for understanding with an Exit Ticket in which students write down the answers to two of the following questions using evidence from the texts to support their answers.
   a. What was the outcome of Brown v. Board of Education? What questions were left unresolved?
   b. How did the courts deal with the challenges of implementing desegregation?
c. What is busing and how did the courts rule on the issue of busing?
d. How did the city of Boston react to the practice of busing?

2. Depending on time, students can turn in their Exit Ticket and/or discuss in a small group using Timed Pair-Share or Single Round Robin.

Busing Crisis in Boston

Standards

CCSS English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NCSS C3 Framework

- D2.Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.
- D2.His.12.9-12 Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.
- D4.6.9-12 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

Materials

Primary Source Lab materials

Student Facing Documents

- What Would They Say? worksheet [HANDOUT C]
- Civil Rights Done Right worksheet [HANDOUT B]

Objective

Students will explain different perspectives on an issue using primary and secondary sources about the Boston busing crisis to complete the Exit Ticket.

Agenda/Class Outline

1. Warm Up
2. Primary Source Lab
3. Exit Ticket
Procedure

Warm Up
1. Use the Stand Up, Hands Up, Pair Up discussion structure to help students review the previous lesson’s materials. Ask questions that will reactivate prior knowledge.

Primary Source Lab
1. Prepare all of the materials required for a Primary Source Lab in advance of class. You can set the lab up in six stations that students rotate through or have them work in groups or jigsaw style. The lab focuses on desegregation in Boston, and each station studies the busing crisis through a different lens or type of primary source. Print the following documents and images, placing them in separate folders or taping them to separate pieces of chart paper.

2. Tell students to move through the circuit of primary source stations in groups, pairs, or individually. Explain that they are expected to closely read and examine the materials at each station. What information or themes are repeated throughout the stations? What unique insights were they only able to gain with particular sources?
   a. Station 1: Artifacts (seven items)
   b. Station 2: Newspaper articles (four items)
   c. Station 3: Oral histories (three items)
   d. Station 4: Court decisions (six items)
   e. Station 5: Community responses (four items)
   f. Station 6: Photographs (eight items)

3. Task students with completing the What Would They Say? worksheet [HANDOUT C] while they examine the primary sources. Choose, or have students choose, five of the figures/people listed below and write them onto the worksheet. Remind them to read for point of view and try to imagine how diverse people may have felt about school desegregation and busing in Boston in the mid-1970s. They must cite evidence from the Primary Source Lab to defend each claim or hypothesis they make on the worksheet.
   b. Bus driver
   c. Police officer
   d. School principal
   e. School board member
   f. Black teacher
   g. White teacher
   h. Black parents
   i. White parents
   j. Black student
   k. White student

Exit Ticket
1. Close with students revisiting their Civil Rights Done Right note-taking worksheet [HANDOUT B] and jotting down any new knowledge in these areas: leaders, groups, events, context, opposition, tactics, and connections.
Busing in Boston (Excerpt)

Moakley Archive and Institute
Suffolk University, Boston

The Brown decision of 1954 brought de jure segregation to an end but de facto segregation remained a reality in both the North and South decades after the Brown decision. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, racial tension and violence escalated in Boston. In anticipation of a ruling on school desegregation, anti-busing rallies and protests were held at city hall and elsewhere around the city.

Elementary and high school students, already subject to long bus rides across the city, experienced rocks thrown at their buses, verbal harassment by people as they entered school buildings, and in some cases harassment by their peers and school administrators once inside the building. The stabbing of Michael Faith, a white South Boston High School student, by a black student inside the walls of the school is just one example of the violence that broke out between students.

Busing proponents and opponents were subject to harassment on a daily basis. Pro-busing activists experienced death threats and harassment by motorcades that hurled insults and rocks at their homes. An iconic image taken by Stanley Forman depicts violence at a rally in April 1976. In the photograph it appears that Ted Landsmark is being attacked with an American flag by anti-busing activist, Joseph Rakes. The accounts of what actually happened between Landsmark and Rakes vary widely; ultimately Landsmark sustained injuries at the hands of other protestors that day. This image won Forman a Pulitzer Prize and catapulted Boston’s race problems into the national spotlight.

South Boston was a hot bed of protest and violence. Boston policemen were initially assigned to protect South Boston High School but as the crowds and tension escalated, the National Guard and State Police were called in to maintain order. In his oral history interview Congressman Moakley, a resident of South Boston, recalls his treatment: “I was against busing too, but I just couldn’t march in the streets and scream and holler like some of the people were doing it, and that cost me… On a Monday, I was picketed by six hundred whites. On a Tuesday, I was picketed by six hundred blacks.” Many Boston families initially protested by refusing to send their child to school. Many later chose to move out of the city to the suburbs; this mass migration, commonly known as “White Flight,” began between 1950 and 1960. Options of families who did not want their children to be bused and could not afford to move out of the city were slim. Families who could afford it abandoned public schools altogether in favour of private education.

As the plan unfolded throughout the 1970s, students and parents gradually accepted forced busing and racial tensions eventually lessened. Judge Garrity continued to oversee most administrative functions of the Boston School Committee and to make decisions regarding schooling and desegregation. Although Garrity’s involvement ended in September 1985, the battle over schools and race continued in the federal courts into the 1990s.
Rethinking “busing” in Boston

By Matthew Delmont

On September 9, 1974, over 4,000 white demonstrators rallied at Boston Common to protest the start of court-ordered school desegregation in the Cradle of Liberty. Earlier that summer, federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr. found the Boston School Committee guilty of unconstitutional school segregation and ordered nearly 17,000 students to be transferred by bus to increase the racial integration of Boston’s schools. When Senator Edward Kennedy tried to address the crowd, the protestors booed and pelted him with eggs. As Kennedy retreated to his office, the crowd rushed and began pounding on and then shattering a glass window. Television news crews from ABC, CBS, and NBC were on hand to cover the rally, and they brought images of the confrontation to a national audience of millions of Americans.

School desegregation in Boston continued to be a headline story in print and broadcast news for the next two years, and this extensive media coverage made “busing” synonymous with Boston. Today Boston’s “busing crisis” is taught in high schools and colleges across the country as the story of school desegregation in the North and as a convenient end point for the history of civil rights, where it is juxtaposed with Brown v. Board of Education (1954) or the Little Rock school-integration crisis (1957).

Boston’s mid-1970s “busing crisis,” however, was over two decades in the making. From the 1950s onward, the city’s schools were intentionally segregated through official state and local policies regarding zoning, teacher placement, and busing. Boston civil rights advocates fought against these policies and the educational inequities they produced, but faced intense resistance from white parents and politicians. Across Boston’s public schools in the 1950s, per-pupil spending averaged $340 for white students compared with only $240 for black students. More than 80% of Boston’s black elementary-school students attended majority-black schools, most of which were overcrowded and staffed by less experienced teachers. Over the years, data of this sort failed to persuade the Boston School Committee, which steadfastly denied the charge that school segregation even existed in Boston. As Garrity’s decision in Morgan v. Hennigan (1974) made clear, however, the segregation of Boston’s schools were neither innocent nor accidental:

“The court concludes that the defendants took many actions in their official capacities with the purpose and intent to segregate the Boston public schools... Plaintiffs have proved that the defendants intentionally segregated schools at all levels, built new schools for a decade with sizes and locations designed to promote segregation, [and] maintained patterns of overcrowding and underutilization which promoted segregation.” (Morgan v. Hennigan, 379 F. Supp. 144, 146).

Court-ordered busing was intended to remedy decades of educational discrimination in Boston, and it was controversial because it challenged a school system that was built around the preferences and demands of white communities.
By showing that Boston’s schools discriminated against black students, Garrity’s ruling validated the claims that Boston’s leading civil rights activists – Ruth Batson, Ellen Jackson, Muriel and Otto Snowden, Mel King, Melnea Cass – had been making for over two decades. “When we would go to white schools, we’d see these lovely classrooms, with a small number of children in each class,” Ruth Batson recalled. As a Boston civil rights activist and the mother of three, Batson gained personal knowledge of how the city’s public schools shortchanged black youth in the 1950s and 1960s. “The teachers were permanent. We’d see wonderful materials. When we’d go to our schools, we would see overcrowded classrooms, children sitting out in the corridors, and so forth. And so, then we decided that where there were a large number of white students, that’s where the care went. That’s where the books went. That’s where the money went.”

Like black parents across the country, Batson cared deeply about education and fought on behalf of her children and her community. “What black parents wanted was to get their children to schools where there were the best resources for educational growth – smaller class sizes, up-to-date-books,” Batson recalled. “They wanted their children in a good school building, where there was an allocation of funds which exceeded those in the black schools; where there were sufficient books and equipment for all students.” In short, Batson understood that school integration was about more than having black students sit next to white students.

Boston’s civil rights activists were organized, creative, and persistent in their protests, but they received much less attention from journalists than white parents and politicians who opposed “busing.” This lack of contemporary media coverage has made it difficult to tell stories about civil rights in Boston and other Northern cities. Most of the iconic images of the civil rights era are from Southern cities like Little Rock, Montgomery, and Selma, rather than Boston, Chicago, and New York.

White parents and politicians framed their resistance to school desegregation in terms of “busing,” “neighborhood schools,” and “homeowners rights.” These slogans were designed not only to oppose Boston’s civil rights activists, but to make it appear as though white Bostonians were the victims of an unjust court order. This rhetorical shift allowed them to support white schools and neighborhoods without using explicitly racist language. As early as 1957, white parents in New York rallied against “busing,” and Boston School Committee chairwoman Louise Day Hicks made opposition to “busing” a centerpiece of her political campaigns in the mid-1960s.

Speaking in 1972, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) co-founder and Georgia State Legislator Julian Bond described the underlying motivations for opposing “busing” for school desegregation in clear terms. “What people who oppose busing object to,” Bond told the audience, “is not the little yellow school buses, but rather to the little black bodies that are on the bus.” Indeed, the crisis in Boston and in other cities that faced court-ordered school desegregation was about unconstitutional racial discrimination in the public schools, not about “busing.” Describing opposition to “busing” as something other than resistance to school desegregation is a choice that obscures the histories of racial discrimination and legal contexts for desegregation orders.
School desegregation was about the constitutional rights of black students, but in Boston and other Northern cities, the story has been told and retold as a story about the feelings and opinions of white parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1963</td>
<td>Many African Americans, under the leadership of the Boston chapter of the NAACP, stage a “Stay Out for Freedom” boycott of public schools. The event draws attention to the racial disparities of Boston public schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Boston City Council passes the Racial Imbalance Act (RIA), which defined a school with over 50 percent non-white students as racially imbalanced. If a school was declared racially imbalanced, the school system could lose state funds if the situation was not corrected. Advocates of RIA proposed busing as a solution. Louise Hicks (a Boston school board leader) reacts by claiming that busing is a symptom of an overly involved federal government. She rallies the community of South Boston (mostly white) to repeal RIA. *Note that this is BEFORE the Swann case declares that busing is an acceptable solution to segregation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1974</td>
<td>Boston’s black community brings the case of <em>Morgan v. Hennigan</em> before a federal district court, encouraged by the precedent of the recent Swann case. Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr. upholds that the segregation of the Boston public system is the result of de jure methods, and that the city must work to create a busing plan to remedy this before the following school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1974</td>
<td>Phase one begins. It involves busing kids from the poorest white neighborhoods (South Boston) and from the poorest black neighborhoods (Roxbury). It also included an effort to racially balance the teaching staff at the newly integrated schools. Daily attendance at schools affected was 50-65 percent. State police officers were stationed at each high school (some remained for up to three years). Restore our Alienated Rights (ROAR) calls for boycotts of the school throughout the school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1975</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Education sends $1.9 million to Boston as emergency aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1975</td>
<td>Supreme Court refuses to hear any appeals to Judge Garrity’s ruling in favor of busing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1975 (end of the school year)</td>
<td>Anti-busing activists file an appeal to attempt to delay Judge Garrity’s court order by a year. This appeal is later rejected. In an effort to clarify the federal court’s role in the desegregation of Boston schools, Judge Garrity states that the court’s power supersedes both the School Board and the City Council, and that neither have any power to make decisions contrary to the court’s plan. He also clarifies that any expert appointed by the court has the same power as the court itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1975 (beginning of the school year)</td>
<td>Phase two begins. It affects all neighborhoods in Boston (except East Boston). It divides the city into eight zones, each of which had to be racially balanced. Half of all Boston students would be bused. White enrollment in public schools had fallen so sharply that in the second year of busing, schools opened with more minority students than white students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1975</td>
<td>The offices of the Boston NAACP are firebombed following the order by Judge Garrity to place South Boston High School under court receivership due to mistreatment of black students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1976</td>
<td>African American lawyer, Theodore Landsmark, is attacked by a white protester wielding an American flag. The photo of the incident appears in the <em>Boston Herald</em> and goes on to win the Pulitzer Prize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1977</td>
<td>John O’Bryant becomes the first black man elected to the Boston School Board since 1895.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1978</td>
<td>Judge Garrity ends receivership of South Boston High School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1987</td>
<td>U.S. Court of Appeals releases Boston from court supervision, ruling that the School Board had “a commitment to elimination racial discrimination.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1988</td>
<td>New busing plan known as “Controlled Choice” is developed. By this point, enrollment in public schools has fallen from 96,696 in 1970 to below 50,000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photo Analysis worksheet [HANDOUT A]

Step 1: Observation
Study the image. Look at the whole image and at the individual parts. List your observations below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2: Making Inferences
Based on what you have observed, make three inferences. List three things you believe are true based on the information from this image.

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________

Step 3: Asking Questions
What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________
Civil Rights Done Right worksheet [HANDOUT B]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content areas</th>
<th>What I already know</th>
<th>What I learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to the past and present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topic: _________________________________
What Would They Say? worksheet [HANDOUT C]

Directions
As you study the various primary sources related to the Boston busing crisis, imagine what it was like for
different people living in Boston at the time. What inferences or hypotheses can you draw based on the
materials? Jot down notes in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judge Garrity</th>
<th>School board member</th>
<th>White parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus driver</td>
<td>Black teacher</td>
<td>Black student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officer</td>
<td>White teacher</td>
<td>White student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School principal</td>
<td>Black parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are they?</th>
<th>How do they feel about busing in Boston?</th>
<th>What makes you think that? (What evidence did you find?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>