

Boston school desegregation

1974 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

segregation — forced separation of people, often by race

equality — having equal rights or standing

access — a way to reach, enter, or use something

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

A federal judge ordered changes after finding that Boston schools had been deliberately segregated. Busing became part of the response. Students and families experienced conflict, danger, and efforts toward fairer access.

Judge W. Arthur Garrity's order addressed government responsibility for segregation. Resistance included racist violence. Study students' experiences and court evidence alongside debates about transportation.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: DEC introduces the VAX

1977

Digital Equipment Corporation introduced the VAX-11/780 computer. The Massachusetts company was part of the region's growing technology industry. Computer systems helped researchers and businesses work in new ways.

The Route 128 technology region grew through companies, universities, investment, and skilled workers. No single machine created the whole system. Ask who gained access to technology and who made it possible.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: A federal judge ordered changes after finding that Boston schools had been deliberately segregated. Busing became part of the response. Students and families experienced conflict, danger, and efforts toward fairer access. Judge W. Arthur Garrity's order addressed government responsibility for segregation. Resistance included racist violence. Study students' experiences and court evidence alongside debates about transportation.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.