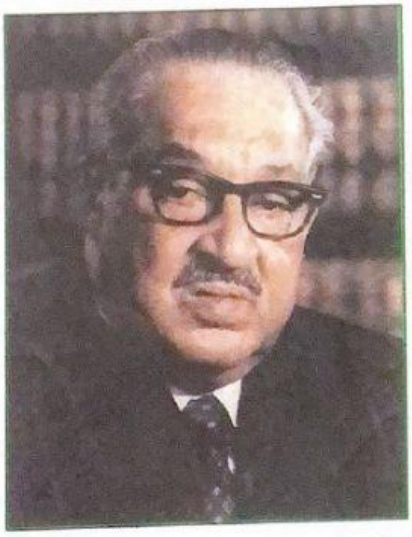
On Your Own

Read the article about Thurgood Marshall. Look for words and phrases that help you understand the sequence of events in Marshall's life.

Justice Thurgood Marshall

by Lou Ann Walker

In 1908, when Thurgood Marshall was born, most African American and white students in the United States went to separate schools. In many states, African Americans could not vote. Marshall's grandfather had been a slave who was taken from Africa and brought to Maryland. Marshall's father was a waiter on trains and later worked at a club that admitted only white members. All of these things made Marshall question why African Americans were treated differently.



Growing up in Maryland, young Thurgood often got into trouble at school. To punish him, a teacher made him learn parts of the U.S. Constitution. That was excellent training for a student who dreamed of becoming a lawyer. He went to Howard University Law School because the University of Maryland's law school would not accept African Americans. He graduated at the top of his class in 1933.

Thurgood Marshall was a lawyer on many civil rights cases. One of them opened up the University of Maryland to African American students.

His most famous case was in 1954 and was known as *Brown vs. Board of Education.* The case was against the Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education, which had not allowed a black third grader to go to an all-white school near her home. The Supreme Court decided that the segregation, or separation, of black and white students should not be permitted. Marshall had spoken plainly in court, saying, "Equal means getting the same thing, at the same time, and in the same place."

Marshall was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1962. Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress was passing important civil rights laws. These laws outlawed discrimination by race. They also helped African Americans in the South to vote as equal citizens.

In 1967, Thurgood Marshall triumphed again. He became the first African American in history to become a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. He served on the Court until 1991.

When Thurgood Marshall died in 1993 at age 84, thousands of people came to bid him farewell. He had shown that the law could help all people to be treated fairly.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Checking Comprehension

1. Why was the court case *Brown vs. Board of Education* so important?

2. What inspired young Thurgood Marshall to work for equal rights for African Americans?

Practicing Comprehension Skills

3. Use the selection to complete the time line below. Write a year or an event from Marshall's life on the lines.

1908	Thurgood Marshall is born.
1933	
	Wins *Brown vs. Board of Education*
1967	
1991	
	Thurgood Marshall dies.

4. What was happening in the United States at the same time that Thurgood Marshall became a judge?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

5. Before Thurgood Marshall was appointed to the Court of Appeals, he

- served on the Board of Education.
- practiced law.
- became a justice on the Supreme Court.
- lived in Kansas.

6. Before *Brown vs. Board of Education*,

- all children had to go to their local school.
- only top students could go to school.
- African American children did not go to school.
- African American and white children went to separate schools.

Practicing Vocabulary

Choose a word from the box that best matches each definition.
Write the word on the line.

appointed	citizens	civil	Constitution	farewell	segregation	triumphed

_____ 7. goodbye

_____ 8. separation

_____ 9. chosen for an office

_____ 10. members of a nation

_____ 11. describes people's rights

_____ 12. the rules of government for the United States

_____ 13. won, overcame the odds

LIVEWORKSHEETS