In May 1954, the Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision in the case of “Brown vs. the Board of Education.” This ruling declared that state laws establishing separate public schools for Black and white students were unconstitutional. The time had come, the justices ruled, to integrate America’s public schools. Until the decision, segregated schools were the rule in most of the nation, and the battle to change that was just beginning.

It’s important to understand that War II unleashed enormous social, cultural, and political forces that reshaped race relations in American life. In the years between 1941 and 1946, hundreds of thousands of African Americans left the poverty and racism of life in the South for new lives in West Coast and Northern cities. Soldiers of all colors and beliefs fought side by side during the war, while an integrated work force – women included – worked in mills, auto factories, and shipyards.

When the war ended, these newcomers had no intention of going back to the racism and poverty of the South. Their dreams of the future were energized by the sweet taste of newly found freedom. Gone were the days when public life – including toilets, buses, and lunch counters, for example – could be routinely segregated without protest.

Still, although integration was essential to America’s future, opposition was fierce throughout the South, particularly when it came to integrating public schools. Brown vs. the Board of Education (1954) provided the legal muscle necessary to start a long battle to integrate schools (a battle that continues in various ways until the present).

Your research paper will explore aspects of the battle to segregate Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in September 1957. Here are things to consider as you think about your paper: You could concentrate your research on the nine Black students with the courage to be the first to enroll at the school, and how – personally - did they make through the difficult year? What was the role of Daisy Bates, the NAACP leader who was the backbone of the events that happened that year. Another important element was the legal struggles that were based on State and
Supreme court rulings. Arkansas Governor Orville Faubus and U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower battled each other about this situation. Find a question that you would like to explore in your paper. We will discuss possibilities in class.

1. This research paper should present a thesis that is specific, manageable, provable, and contestable—the thesis should offer a clear position, stand, or opinion that will be proven with research. You should analyze and prove your thesis using examples and quotes from a variety of sources.

2. You need to research and cite from at least five sources. Also, you must use at least four different types of sources. One source must be from a Harbor College library database. One must be a book, anthology or textbook. One must be video of film footage. You must you material from one newspaper or magazine. At least one source must be from a credible website that is appropriate for academic use.

3. The paper should not over-rely on one main source for most of the information. Rather, it should use multiple sources and synthesize the information found in them.

4. This paper will be approximately 2000 words in length, not including the Works Cited page, which is also required. The Works Cited page does NOT count towards length requirement.

5. You must use MLA format for the document, in-text citations, and Works Cited page. We will review MLA rules in class.

6. You must integrate quotations and paraphrases using signal phrases and analysis or commentary.

7. You must sustain your argument, use transitions effectively, and use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

8. Your paper must be logically organized and focused.