

## THE WORK OF HERBLOCK

Separate but equal. Ever since a famous U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1896, separate services for black and white Americans had been perfectly legal. Then in 1954, the Court handed down a dramatic reversal. In the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka*, every member of the Court agreed to outlaw segregation in public schools. "Separate educational facilities," the Court proclaimed, "are inherently unequal."

The news ignited the Civil Rights Movement, guided by a young minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The movement reached its peak in the summer of 1963—100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation. More than 250,000 civil rights supporters filled the streets of Washington, D.C. There, in front of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. King inspired the nation with his dream of a nation freed from the chains of hatred, racial prejudice, and inequality.

Yet Americans knew that Dr. King's dream remained far from reality. As shown in the cartoon on the other sheet, many subtle forms of segregation still persisted. This cartoon was drawn in 1963 by Herbert Block, or Herblock, one of the best-known political cartoonists of the time.

### A. Understanding the Characters

1. Study the man seated in the chair.
  - a. What profession does he practice?
  - b. Which details reveal his profession?
2. Notice the two men standing up.
  - a. How can you tell that they are doctors?
  - b. What does each represent?
3. The caption to this cartoon is a line of dialogue.
  - a. Who is speaking?
  - b. To whom are they speaking?

### B. Understanding the Main Point

4. To what "incurable skin condition" is the caption referring?
5. Why does the sign say "No Admittance"?
6. Imagine you are the doctor trying to gain admittance to the "Lily White Hospital and Medical Society." How might you respond to the doctors who work there?

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### A. Understanding the Characters

1. Study the man seated in the chair.
  - a. What profession does he practice?     *medicine*
  - b. Which details reveal his profession?     *his medical bag and his diploma*
2. Notice the two men standing up.
  - a. How can you tell that they are doctors?     *from their lab coats and head bands*
  - b. What does each represent?     *One represents a "Lily White Hospital"; the other a "Lily White Medical Society".*
3. The caption to this cartoon is a line of dialogue.
  - a. Who is speaking?     *the white doctors*
  - b. To whom are they speaking?     *the black doctor*

### B. Understanding the Main Point

4. To what "incurable skin condition" is the caption referring?  
*the skin color of the seated doctor*
5. Why does the sign say "No Admittance"?  
*The white doctors do not want to admit the black doctor into the practice of medicine at their hospital or into their medical society.*
6. Imagine you are the doctor trying to gain admittance to the "Lily White Hospital and Medical Society." How might you respond to the doctors who work there?  
*Answers will vary.*

2 THE WORK OF HERBLOCK (continued)



"Sorry, but you have an incurable skin condition", from STRAIGHT HERBLOCK (Simon & Schuster, 1968).