

# Separate Is Never Equal

## A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

**Themes:** Civil Rights, Equality, Latino History

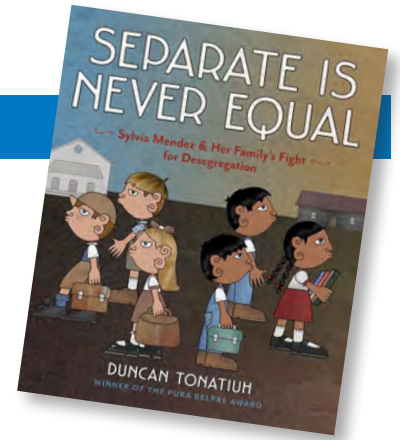
**Book Brief:** When Sylvia and her family moved from Santa Ana to Westminster in 1944, they were told that she and her siblings couldn't attend the school closest to them. Instead, they were sent to the "school for Mexicans." This book tells the true story of Sylvia's fight for the right to attend her

neighborhood school.

**Author and Illustrator:**

Duncan Tonatiuh

**Content Connections:**  
Social Studies



## TIME TO READ!



### BEFORE WE READ, LET'S LOOK AT...

**The Cover:** What do you notice about the children on the cover? Why do you think they're walking in different directions? Based on what they're carrying, where do you think they're going?

**The Pictures:** Compare the picture of Westminster School (p. 7) with the picture of Hoover Elementary (p. 15). What differences do you notice? Which of these schools would you rather go to? Explain.

**Prior Knowledge:** Read the book's subtitle. What are "segregation" and "desegregation"? Have any students ever heard these words? Explain that many places, including schools, used to be *segregated* by race. White students were able to attend the wealthiest schools, while students of color were sent to schools that were given fewer resources and less money.

**Vocabulary:** spacious, descent

**Purpose for Reading:** As we read today, we are going to practice asking questions to help us remember and understand the story.

## WHILE WE READ

### MONITORING COMPREHENSION

- ◆ Why did Sylvia feel sad about her first day of school?
- ◆ How did her father's job change from Santa Ana to Westminster?
- ◆ How did Sylvia's feelings change from when she first arrived at school to when she left?
- ◆ What happened when Mr. Mendez tried to enroll

the children in Westminster School? How do you think he felt?

- ◆ Why were people afraid to sign Mr. Mendez's petition?
- ◆ What did Sylvia learn during the trial time? Did everyone who spoke tell the truth?
- ◆ Describe the outcome of the story, after Sylvia was allowed to attend Westminster.

## LET'S THINK ABOUT

**Our Purpose:** How did asking questions help you to remember and understand the story?

**Extending Our Thinking:** Were all of your questions answered? If not, how could we find answers to these questions? Did anyone in your family attend a segregated school? What questions could you ask them to help you better understand the awful practice of segregation?

### NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- ◆ Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- ◆ Vocabulary Scaffolding Sheet also available.



Reading Is  
Fundamental