

**Fact or Fiction?**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Below is a biography on Ruby Bridges. On the following page is a chart with eleven statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

## **Early Life**

Ruby Bridges was born on September 8, 1954, as the oldest of five children. At two years old, her family moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, in search of better work opportunities.

## **Reality for Black Students in the 1950s**

Bridges was born during the same year as *Brown v. Board of Education*, a famous Supreme Court case that made racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. However, despite this court ruling, many schools continued to separate students based on race, forcing Black students to attend inferior institutions and giving them fewer opportunities for success.

## **Ruby is the Only One**

Bridges attended segregated kindergarten in New Orleans. A year later, federal courts ordered New Orleans' schools to desegregate. To circumvent these laws, schools wrote challenging entrance exams that Black students had to pass to prove they were at the same academic level as white students. Ruby Bridges passed the exam along with five other students, gaining admission to the all-white William Franz Elementary School. Bridges, however, was the only one who ended up going to William Franz; two students decided to stay at their old school, and the other three were sent to another all-white school.

## **The Shocking First Day**

Bridges' first day of school was like no other. Ruby and her mother were escorted to school by four federal marshals every day, fighting through crowds of people screaming racial slurs and protesting her admission. Bridges later commented that the only moment that scared her throughout the protests was the sight of a woman holding a Black baby doll in a coffin. Her first day at school was spent solely in the principal's office due to the commotion caused by white parents pulling their children out of the school. She sat in a class of one with Barbara Henry, the only teacher who accepted her into the classroom; she ate lunch alone and played with her teacher at recess.

## Perseverance

Bridges' family suffered, too; her father lost his job and grocery stores refused to sell to her mother. Despite the oppression the Bridges family faced for nothing more than getting their daughter an education, Ruby Bridges never missed a day of school.

## The Effect and Legacy of Ruby's Bravery

Over time, other Black students enrolled at the school, including Bridges' four nieces. Ruby Bridges helped pave the way for racial integration in schools, dealing with severe racism and continuing to push for her right to learn. She wrote about her experiences in two books and won the Carter G. Woodson Award; she also established the Ruby Bridges Foundation in 1999 to promote tolerance and push for change via education.

	<b>FACT</b>	<b>FICTION</b>
Many schools were segregated before 1954		
It took a lot of courage for Ruby Bridges to go to an all-white school		
Ruby Bridges helped to ensure America's schools were segregated		
Ruby's family was given lots of support by the community		
Ruby's brothers and sisters also eventually went to William Franz		
School segregation resulted in fewer opportunities for black students		
The Ruby Bridges Foundation was started in 1999 to punish those who support segregation		
Some schools made black students pass difficult exams to enroll in school		
Ruby Bridges was threatened by parents of white students and ignored by teachers at her school		
Ruby Bridges never missed a day of school in her first year at William Franz		
Integrated and Segregated mean the same thing		

**Answers:**

	<b>FACT</b>	<b>FICTION</b>
Many schools were segregated before 1954	<b>X</b>	
It took a lot of courage for Ruby Bridges to go to an all-white school	<b>X</b>	
Ruby Bridges helped to ensure America' s schools were segregated		<b>X</b>
Ruby's family was given lots of support by the community		<b>X</b>
Ruby's brothers and sisters also eventually went to William Franz		<b>X</b>
School segregation resulted in fewer opportunities for black students	<b>X</b>	
The Ruby Bridges Foundation was started in 1999 to punish those who support segregation		<b>X</b>
Some schools made black students pass difficult exams to enroll in school	<b>X</b>	
Ruby Bridges was threatened by parents of white students and ignored by teachers at her school	<b>X</b>	
Ruby Bridges never missed a day of school in her first year at William Franz	<b>X</b>	
Integrated and Segregated mean the same thing		<b>X</b>