

# Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks was a black woman, who played an important part in the American Civil Rights movement. She made changes to try to make life fair for black and white people in America.

## Early Life

Rosa Parks was born on 4th February, 1913 and grew up on a farm with her mother, brother and grandparents in a place called Montgomery in the USA. Rosa Parks grew up at a time when African-American people and other people of colour were treated as second-class citizens. They did not have the same rights as white people.

## Segregation in America

When Rosa Parks was growing up, black people were not allowed to use many of the same public places as white people. This was called 'segregation'. The laws in many American states enforced segregation between white people and black people in public places such as schools, transport, toilets and restaurants. They also made it difficult for black people to vote. Many white people did not respect black people and treated them very badly.

## The Bus Ride

On 1st December, 1955, Rosa Parks was sitting on the bus on the way home from work. She was sitting in the section segregated for black people but if the white section was full, black people had to move so white people could have a seat.

On this day, the white section was full and Rosa was told to move but she did not. The driver said that he would call the police but she stayed sitting down. Eventually, the police came and she was arrested, charged and found guilty for breaking the law and she had to pay a fine.

## What Happened Next?

Amazingly, what Rosa did on that day started a big movement. 40 000 black people in the area (and some white people) refused to use the buses at all until they were treated fairly – this was called The Bus Boycott. The huge amount of people involved could not be ignored. The newspapers reported it and the boycott went on for 381 days before finally the government took action and the segregation on buses was lifted – and all because of Rosa Parks.

Rosa's actions made history as it sparked a movement to make a change. Even though it wasn't the end of segregation and civil rights still had a long way to go, it was a victory.

"People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

Parks, Rosa; James Haskins (1992). Rosa Parks: My Story. Dial Books. p. 116



**Task: Answer the following questions about the text 'Rosa Parks'.**

1. Where did Rosa Parks grow up?
2. What does the word 'segregation' mean?
3. List three places where black and white people had to stay away from each other.
4. How did Rosa break the rules on the bus?
5. If you were sitting next to Rosa on that day, what would you have done and why?
6. How many days did people protest for until the government took action?
7. What sort of characteristics do you think Rosa has? Use evidence from the text to justify your opinion.
8. In Rosa's quote, at the bottom of the page, what was she tired of and why do you think this?

**Activity 2** - Watch the video where Rosa Parks tells the story of her life, showing how her refusal to give up her seat to a white person on a segregated bus changed the rules of American society. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/true-stories-rosa-parks/z7rtvk7>

After you have watched the video, imagine you were Rosa Parks on the bus in 1955 and complete the sentences in the speech bubble.



My name is Rosa Parks.

When the bus driver told me to move, I felt...

The reason why I did not move is because...

My actions were important because...

Task: Imagine you were a child sat on the bus on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white person. Write a postcard to a family member or friend to describe the events that took place on the bus. Write in first person and use emotive language to express your opinions.

Read the example of a postcard below to help you.

Dear Benjamin,

[illegible]

This morning, I was beginning my usual long journey to school when a commotion started on the local bus. I wasn't quite sure what was happening at first, but I noticed a white lady stood up in the aisle. You know the rules, if the bus is full, we must give up our seats for white people, even if we have to stand for the whole journey. Then I heard lots of people whispering and tutting so I stood up to get a better view. The bus driver stopped the bus and charged up the aisle towards the seats for black people. "You need to move!" ordered the bus driver. Courageously the woman didn't move out of the chair and she stayed rooted in her seat. After a while, the police came, but she still didn't move. I was terrified about what the police were going to do. I felt tremendously proud of the lady who refused to give up her seat. We are all human and we should have the freedom to sit where we want regardless of the colour of our skin.

From Jamie.

fronted adverbial	emotive language	first person
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### Activity 3 – Plan your own newspaper article about the Bus Boycott.

You are the reporter, who just happened to be on the bus when Rosa Parks was arrested. You were sitting on a crowded bus, which had stopped to let more passengers on. The driver told Rosa to stand up and give up her seat to the white woman, but she politely refused. Other people joined in and told the driver he was wrong and to leave Rosa alone. When the police arrived, Rosa was arrested. Overnight, people decided to protest and began a 'Bus Boycott'. The next day, thousands of people refused to ride the buses day or night until black and white people were no longer segregated.

**Task:** Complete the newspaper plan below to help you write your report. Include as much information as you can.



# Planning a Newspaper Report



Name of newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Story headline: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction		Interviews	
Who was involved?		Who will you interview? How are they involved in the events?	
What happened?	First, _____	What did they have to say?	
	Next, _____		
	Then, _____		
Where did the event take place?		Final paragraph	
When did it happen?		What are the characters doing now?	
		What might happen in the future?	

## Activity 4 – Write quotes for your newspaper.

You are going to practise writing quotes for newspaper article about the Bus Boycott. In the speech bubble, you need to write what the witness might say. Then turn it into a quote using all the correct punctuation.



I'm tired of giving in. We are all equal!

To write a quote start with:

The person's name, information about them, said, "Only the words spoken."

Rosa Parks, 42 years old, said, "I'm tired of giving in. We are all equal!"

Task: Look at the picture below and think about what might the witnesses say. Do they agree with Rosa and support her? Do they tell her to move and to follow the rules? Only write the words they actually say in the speech bubble.



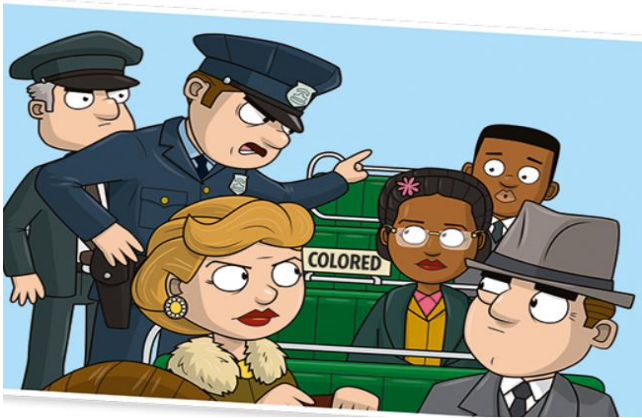
After you have written what they say in the speech bubble, then turn them into a quote using the example above. Practise saying your quotes aloud including the punctuation to help you to remember where all the commas go.

Activity 5 – Continue writing a newspaper article about the Bus Boycott and use your plan to help you. When you have written your newspaper article, proofread it for spelling and punctuation errors.

You could even set up a news studio in your house and record yourself reading the news for everyone at home. Dress up as a news reporter and ask a family member to record you.

# BUS BOYCOTT

2<sup>nd</sup> December 1955



By Reporter Miss Hughes

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December, in Montgomery, USA, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the local bus for a white woman.

The bus was crowded with many people and the driver stopped to let more people on. A white woman asked Rosa to move, but she politely declined. *Rosa Parks, a 42 year old woman, said, "We are all equal so I will not move!"*