

WORKSHEET: THESIS DEVELOPMENT

Sample: Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

WHO: Who was involved? Who was affected? Rosa Parks; citizens in Montgomery, Alabama; civil rights leaders, Montgomery's city government officials.

WHAT: What happened? What was the main event? Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger, which violated a law enforcing segregation on Montgomery city buses. She was arrested and went to jail. Civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., organized a boycott of buses and challenged the law as unconstitutional.

WHERE: Where was/were the place(s) it took place? Montgomery, Alabama

WHEN: When did it happen? How long of a time period was it? Parks was arrested on Dec. 1, 1955; the boycott started on Dec. 5 and lasted for 382 days.

WHY: Why did it happen? What caused it? Civil rights leaders wanted to overturn segregation laws.

WHY: Why is it important? What were the outcomes? The boycott forced change in Montgomery and succeeded in overturning the law requiring segregation on public transportation. This success inspired other civil rights protests and helped Martin Luther King, Jr. develop his non-violent strategies to fight segregation.

THEME CONNECTION: Rights & Responsibilities in History

- **What is the topic's connection to rights and responsibilities in history?** African Americans asserted their civil rights under the 14th Amendment and sought to break down segregation in the south. Civil rights activists like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. took on the responsibility of challenging the city of Montgomery. City leaders were responsible for upholding existing laws and maintaining segregation.
- **Why is your topic significant in history? What impact did it have?** Before the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the impact of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision was limited to the segregation of schools. Civil rights leaders used the Montgomery Bus Boycott to expand the protection of equal rights to public transportation. This effectively ended the "Separate but equal" standard established in the Plessy v. Ferguson decision. The success of the boycott inspired other challenges to segregation and was a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement as new leaders, like Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged from the struggle in Montgomery.

Put it all together into a thesis statement. In 1955, Rosa Parks took the responsibility for initiating a civil rights confrontation when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. The resulting bus boycott and a successful Supreme Court lawsuit demonstrated the effectiveness of non-violent economic protest and legal strategies in securing equal rights.

Name: _____

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TOPIC: _____

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WHY: Why is it important? What were outcomes?

CONNECTION TO THEME: Rights & Responsibilities in History

- What is the topic's connection to rights and responsibilities in history?

- Why is your topic significant in history? What impact did it have?

Put it all together into a thesis statement.

What evidence have you found that supports your thesis?
