

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

## Characterization of Rosa Parks



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How would you describe Rosa Parks?

Write an essay describing her character traits.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fifth Grade</b> <b>End of the Year Writing Assessment</b></p>
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**Directions:**

- **Read the articles that are included in the “Characterization of Rosa Parks” packet.**
- **How would you describe Rosa Parks? What are some of her character traits? Write an essay that describes the character traits of Rosa Parks.**
- **Create a rubric (or use a template that is provided) to set goals for your writing and to self-assess your writing after the essay is completed.**
- **Create an outline (or use an outline that is provided) to help guide your work.**
- **In your essay, write an inference/claim that describes the character traits of Rosa Parks.**
- **List evidence from the texts to support your inference/claim.**
- **Use the Extended RACE Format to complete this assignment.**
- **Write as much as you can, as quickly as you can.**
- **In your writing, make sure you:**
  - **Write your inference/claim in your introduction.**
  - **Use transition words to start new paragraphs and to introduce new examples from the text.**
  - **Give as many examples from the text as you can as evidence to support your inference/claim.**
  - **Write a compelling conclusion.**
- **Check your writing for:**
  - **spelling**
  - **capitalization of proper nouns**
  - **capitalization of the beginning of sentences**
  - **punctuation**
  - **indentation of each new paragraph**
  - **sophisticated word choice**
  - **See the rubrics for more details of expectations.**

**“Remembering Rosa Parks,” February 4, 2013, by *TIME For Kids* Staff**

Civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913—100 years ago today. As an adult, she worked as a secretary on an army base and a seamstress at a department store. She also volunteered with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to fight for equal rights for blacks. At age 42, she stepped onto a bus—and quietly opened a new chapter in our nation's history.

On December 1, 1955, Parks broke the law. Her crime was to take an empty seat on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama. It's an act that doesn't seem special at all today. But in 1955, segregation laws in some states required separate seating for blacks and whites in restaurants, on buses and in other public spaces. Parks stood for racial equality by refusing to move when the driver asked her to give her seat to a white man. Parks sat quietly while the driver called the police. “People always say that I didn’t give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn’t true,” Parks said. "The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

**Sparking a Movement**

Parks was arrested, but her act of bravery set off a chain of events that changed the United States. African Americans responded to the injustice by refusing to ride buses in Montgomery, where about three-quarters of bus riders were black. Martin Luther King Jr. led the peaceful boycott, which lasted 381 days. In 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that African Americans could not be forced to sit only in certain areas on buses. And in 1964, the Civil Rights Act outlawed racial discrimination in all public places.

After the boycott ended, Parks continued living in Montgomery with her husband, Raymond, and volunteering with the NAACP. But the couple both lost their jobs and received many threats from

people who were angry about her civil rights work. They eventually decided to move north to Detroit, Michigan. Rosa Parks found work as a seamstress and continued to fight for civil rights.

In 1965, Parks took part in a 50-mile march in Alabama with Dr. King to demand equal voting rights, a cause that was especially important to her. A few months later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which made it easier for blacks to vote. That year, Parks also got a new job as an assistant to John Conyers, a black U.S. Congressman from Michigan. She later created an organization called the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development, which helped teens learn about African American History and find jobs. In 1999, President Bill Clinton presented her with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor the U.S. government can give.

### **The Mother of Civil Rights**

Many admirers call Parks the mother of the civil rights movement. She led by example, showing that peaceful protest could create dramatic change. But Parks shared the credit. "The only thing that made it significant was that the masses of the people joined in," she said.

On October 24, 2005, Parks died at her home in Detroit. She was 92 years old. On February 4, 2013, in honor of what would have been her 100th birthday, the U.S. Postal Service issued the Rosa Parks Forever Stamp. The world will continue to remember and honor a leader who took a stand by taking a seat.

## “Interview with Rosa Parks”

Rosa Parks, the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement," visited the Scholastic website in January and February 1997 to answer questions from students.

During this monthlong project, students learned how Mrs. Parks sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott by not giving up her bus seat to a white passenger in 1955. And how, as a result of that brave act, in 1956 the Supreme Court ruled segregation on buses was illegal.

Rosa Parks died on October 25, 2005 at age 92.

Below are Rosa Parks's answers to questions from students.



### **Rosa Parks' Role in Civil Rights**

#### **What made you decide on December 1, 1955, not to get up from your seat?**

That particular day that I decided was not the first time I had trouble with that particular driver. He evicted me before, because I would not go around to the back door after I was already onto the bus. The evening that I boarded the bus, and noticed that he was the same driver, I decided to get on anyway. I did not sit at the very front of the bus; I took a seat with a man who was next to the window -- the first seat that was allowed for "colored" people to sit in. We were not disturbed until we reached the third stop after I boarded the bus. At this point a few white people boarded the bus, and one white man was left standing. When the driver noticed him standing, he spoke to us (the man and two women across the aisle) and told us to let the man have the seat. The other three all stood up. But the driver saw me still sitting there. He said would I stand up, and I said, "No, I will not." Then he said, "I'll have you arrested." And I told him he could do that. So he didn't move the bus any further. Several black people left the bus.

Two policemen got on the bus in a couple of minutes. The driver told the police that I would not stand up. The policeman walked down and asked me why I didn't stand up, and I said I didn't think I should stand up. "Why do you push us around?" I asked him. And he said, "I don't know. But the law is the law and you

are under arrest." As soon as he said that I stood up, the three of us left the bus together.

One of them picked up my purse, the other picked up my shopping bag. And we left the bus together. It was the first time I'd had that particular thing happen. I was determined that I let it be known that I did not want to be treated in this manner. The policemen had their squad car waiting, they gave me my purse and bag, and they opened the back door of the police car for me to enter.

### **Did you think your actions would have such a far-reaching effect on the Civil Rights movement?**

I didn't have any idea just what my actions would bring about. At the time I was arrested I didn't know how the community would react. I was glad that they did take the action that they did by staying off the bus.

### **What was it like walking all those miles when the bus boycott was going on?**

We were fortunate enough to have a carpool organized to pick people up and give them rides. Of course, many people walked and sometimes I did too. I was willing to walk rather than go back to the buses under those unfair conditions.

Very shortly after the boycott began, I was dismissed from my job as a seamstress at a department store. I worked at home doing sewing and typing. I don't know why I was dismissed from the job, but I think it was because I was arrested.

### **What did your family think about what happened?**

After I was in jail I had the opportunity to call home and speak to my mother. The first thing she asked me was if they had attacked me, beat me. That's what they used to do to people. I said no, that I hadn't been hurt, but I was in jail. She gave the phone to my husband and he said he would be there shortly and would get me out of jail.

There was a man who had come to my house who knew I had been arrested. He told my husband he'd give him a ride to the jail. Meantime, Mr. E.D. Nixon, one of the leaders of the NAACP, had heard about my being arrested from a friend of mine. He called to see if I was at the jail. The people at the jail wouldn't tell him I was there. So Mr. Nixon got in touch with a white lawyer named Clifford Durr. Mr. Durr called the jail, and they told him that I was there. Mr. Nixon had to pick up Mr. Durr before he could come get me. Mr. Durr's wife insisted on going too, because she and I were good friends. Mr. Nixon helped release me from jail.

**Were you scared to do such a brave thing?**

No, actually I had no fear at that particular time. I was very determined to let it be known how it felt to be treated in that manner — discriminated against. I was thinking mostly about how inconvenienced I was — stopping me from going home and doing my work — something I had not expected. When I did realize, I faced it, and it was quite a challenge to be arrested. I did not really know what would happen. I didn't feel especially frightened. I felt more annoyed than frightened.

**Did you know that you were going to jail if you didn't give up your seat?**

Well, I knew I was going to jail when the driver said he was going to have me arrested. I didn't feel good about going to jail, but I was willing to go to let it be known that under this type of segregation, black people had endured too much for too long.

**How did you feel when you were asked to give up your seat?**

I didn't feel very good about being told to stand up and not have a seat. I felt I had a right to stay where I was. That was why I told the driver I was not going to stand. I believed that he would arrest me. I did it because I wanted this particular driver to know that we were being treated unfairly as individuals and as a people.

**What were your feelings when you were able to sit in the front of the bus for the first time?**

I was glad that the type of treatment — legally enforced segregation — on the buses was over...had come to an end. It was something rather special. However, when I knew the boycott was over, and that we didn't have to be mistreated on the bus anymore, that was a much better feeling than I had when we were being mistreated.

## “Meet Rosa Parks”

### Scholastic News

Rosa Louise Parks has been called the "Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement." By not giving up her seat to a white passenger on a city bus, Rosa Parks started a protest that was felt throughout the United States. Her quiet, courageous act changed America and redirected the course of history.

**Name:** Rosa Louise McCauley Parks

**Birth:** February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama, to James and Leona McCauley

**Childhood:** Grew up on a small farm with her brother, mother, and grandparents.

**Childhood Fears:** Hearing the Ku Klux Klan ride at night, listening to lynchings, and being afraid the house would burn down.

**School:** Attended a school for African-American children. The old, one-room schoolhouse was only open five months a year and just went up to sixth grade. In 1924, at age 11, she was sent to Montgomery to continue her studies. Five years later, she left school in order to care for her sick grandmother, and later, her mother.

**Marriage/Young Adult Years:** Married barber and civil rights activist Raymond Parks in 1932. With Raymond's support, Rosa finally graduated from high school in 1934. Together, they worked for the Montgomery chapter of the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) (NAACP).



## **Jobs:**

- 1930s–1955: Seamstress
- 1943: Appointed secretary of the NAACP's Montgomery branch and later its youth leader.
- 1965–1988: Worked as a receptionist and office assistant for John Conyers, an African-American congressman. Part of her job involved helping homeless people get housing.
- 1987–Present: Established the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development. Its ongoing mission is to motivate and direct youth to achieve their highest potential.

**Greatest Achievement:** Sparking the modern civil rights movement in the United States by refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. Rosa Parks' arrest for breaking Montgomery segregation laws started a boycott of the city bus line that lasted 381 days. This eventually led to the 1956 Supreme Court ruling declaring segregation illegal on public buses.

**Later Adult Years:** After moving to Michigan in 1957, Rosa Parks continued the fight for equal rights and treatment for African Americans. On several occasions, Mrs. Parks returned to Montgomery to support Dr. King in demonstrations and civil rights marches.

**Awards:** Over the years, Rosa Parks received hundreds of awards and honors, including the Medal of Freedom Award, presented by President Clinton in 1996.

**Death:** Rosa Parks, who inspired a generation to fight for civil rights, died in 2005 at the age of 92.

# Remembering Rosa Parks

## The nation honors the civil rights icon on her 100th birthday

By [Molly Pribble](#) | February 4 , 2013



The Rosa Parks Library at Troy University in Alabama honors Parks's contributions to civil rights. (Rob Carr / AP Images)

America is celebrating the 100th birthday of civil rights icon Rosa Parks.

Parks was born on February 4, 1913. For the first 42 years of her life, she was an ordinary citizen. But all that changed during a single bus ride.

Parks lived and worked in Montgomery, Alabama, during a time of intense racism. As a black person, she wasn't allowed to sit in the same places as white people in restaurants, to use the same bathrooms or even doors as white people, or to attend the same schools. The practice of keeping people apart is called **segregation**.

On December 1, 1955, Parks boarded a bus after a long workday. She sat down in the first row of seats in the "colored" section. This section was behind the seats where white people were allowed to sit. But as the bus filled up and more white people got on, the bus driver demanded that Parks give up her seat. She refused.

The driver called the police and Parks was arrested.

Parks's act of defiance sparked the Montgomery Bus **Boycott**, a turning point in the Civil Rights movement. A boycott is a type of protest in which people refuse to use a service or buy a product.

Under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, citizens were urged not to ride the bus until the unfair laws were changed. The Montgomery boycott lasted 381 days, until the U.S. Supreme Court banned segregation on public buses.

## **AN EVERYDAY HERO**

In an interview from 1956, Parks explained why she refused to give up her seat. “I would have to know once and for all what rights I had as a human being and a citizen,” Parks said.

Almost overnight, the arrest turned Parks into a hero. She inspired a new generation of civil rights advocates. She also became a leader in her own right in the fight for equality.

“She had a unique personality,” says Donna Braden, curator of the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. The museum houses the bus that Parks rode on that historic day. “She was also an ordinary person. When people heard about what she did, they thought, ‘I can do that too.’ ”

Parks continued to fight for equal rights until her death on October 24, 2005. When she died, her casket was placed in the rotunda of the United States Capitol for two days so people could honor her. This is usually reserved for U.S. Presidents. Parks was the first woman and the second African-American to receive this honor.

## **LEGACY OF A LEGEND**

Although Rosa Parks was an ordinary person, she showed that anyone can make a difference if they stand up—or in this case, sit down—for what they think is right.

Decades after Parks’s refusal to give up her seat, she still influences and inspires people—including kids. Students today think that what Parks did nearly 60 years ago was special.

“Rosa Parks did a simple thing that began something big,” says Emily, a student at Emerson School, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

On Friday, President Barack Obama gave a special proclamation in honor of the hero’s 100th birthday.

“Just wanting to get home after a long day at work,” the President said, “Rosa Parks may not have been planning to make history, but her defiance spurred a movement that advanced our journey toward justice and equality for all.”

*Molly Pribble is a member of the Scholastic News Kids Press Corps.*

# Rosa Parks Biography

<http://www.biography.com/people/rosa-parks-9433715>

Civil Rights Activist (1913–2005)

Civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, spurring the Montgomery boycott and other efforts to end segregation.

## Synopsis

Civil rights activist Rosa Parks was born on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama. Her refusal to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus spurred a city-wide boycott. The city of Montgomery had no choice but to lift the law requiring segregation on public buses. Rosa Parks received many accolades during her lifetime, including the NAACP's highest award.

## Civil Rights Pioneer

Famed civil rights activist Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama. Her refusal to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a public bus Montgomery, Alabama, spurred on a citywide boycott and helped launch nationwide efforts to end segregation of public facilities.

## Early Life and Education

Rosa Parks's childhood brought her early experiences with racial discrimination and activism for racial equality. After her parents separated, Rosa's mother moved the family to Pine Level, Alabama to live with her parents, Rose and Sylvester Edwards—both former slaves and strong advocates for racial equality; the family lived on the Edwards' farm, where Rosa would spend her youth. In one experience, Rosa's grandfather stood in front of their house with a shotgun while Ku Klux Klan members marched down the street.

Taught to read by her mother at a young age, Rosa went on to attend a segregated, one-room school in Pine Level, Alabama, that often lacked adequate school supplies such as desks. African-American students were forced to walk to the 1st- through 6th-grade schoolhouse, while the city of Pine Level provided bus transportation as well as a new school building for white students.

Through the rest of Rosa's education, she attended segregated schools in Montgomery, including the city's Industrial School for Girls (beginning at age 11). In 1929, while in the 11th grade and attending a laboratory school for secondary education led by the Alabama State Teachers College for Negroes, Rosa left school to attend to both her sick grandmother and mother back in Pine Level. She never returned to her studies; instead, she got a job at a shirt factory in Montgomery.

In 1932, at age 19, Rosa met and married Raymond Parks, a barber and an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. With Raymond's support, Rosa earned her high school degree in 1933. She soon became actively involved in civil rights issues by joining the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP in 1943, serving as the chapter's youth leader as well as secretary to NAACP President E.D. Nixon—a post she held until 1957.

### **Ordered to the Back of the Bus**

The Montgomery City Code required that all public transportation be segregated and that bus drivers had the "powers of a police officer of the city while in actual charge of any bus for the purposes of carrying out the provisions" of the code. While operating a bus, drivers were required to provide separate but equal accommodations for white and black passengers by assigning seats. This was accomplished with a line roughly in the middle of the bus separating white passengers in the front of the bus and African-American passengers in the back.

When an African-American passenger boarded the bus, they had to get on at the front to pay their fare and then get off and re-board the bus at the back door. When the seats in the front of the bus filled up and more white passengers got on, the bus driver would move back the sign separating black and white passengers and, if necessary, ask black passengers give up their seat.

On December 1, 1955, after a long day's work at a Montgomery department store, where she worked as a seamstress, Rosa Parks boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus for home. She took a seat in the first of several rows designated for "colored" passengers. Though the city's bus ordinance did give drivers the authority to assign seats, it didn't specifically give them the authority to demand a passenger to give up a seat to anyone (regardless of color). However, Montgomery bus drivers had adopted the custom of requiring black passengers to give up their seats to white passengers, when no other seats were available. If the black passenger protested, the bus driver had the authority to refuse service and could call the police to have them removed.

As the bus Rosa was riding continued on its route, it began to fill with white passengers. Eventually, the bus was full and the driver noticed that several white passengers were standing in the aisle. He stopped the bus and moved the sign separating the two sections back one row and asked four black passengers to give up their seats. Three complied, but Rosa refused and remained seated. The driver demanded, "Why don't you stand up?" to which Rosa replied, "I don't think I should have to stand up." The driver called the police and had her arrested. Later, Rosa recalled that her refusal wasn't because she was physically tired, but that she was tired of giving in.

The police arrested Rosa at the scene and charged her with violation of Chapter 6, Section 11, of the Montgomery City Code. She was taken to police headquarters, where, later that night, she was released on bail.

### **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

On the evening that Rosa Parks was arrested, E.D. Nixon, head of the local chapter of the NAACP, began forming plans to organize a boycott of Montgomery's city buses. Ads were placed in local papers, and handbills were printed and distributed in black neighborhoods. Members of the African-American community were asked to stay off city buses on Monday, December 5, 1955—the day of Rosa's trial—in protest of her arrest. People were encouraged to stay home from work or school, take a cab or walk to work. With most of the African-American community not riding the bus, organizers believed a longer boycott might be successful.

On the morning of December 5, a group of leaders from the African-American community gathered at the Mt. Zion Church in Montgomery to discuss strategies, and determined that their boycott effort required a new organization and strong leadership. They formed the Montgomery Improvement Association, electing Montgomery newcomer Dr. [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) as minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. The MIA believed that Rosa Parks's case provided an excellent opportunity to take further action to create real change.

When Rosa arrived at the courthouse for trial that morning with her attorney, Fred Gray, she was greeted by a bustling crowd of around 500 local supporters, who rooted her on. Following a 30-minute hearing, Rosa was found guilty of violating a local ordinance and was fined \$10, as well as a \$4 court fee. Inarguably the biggest event of the day, however, was what Rosa's trial had triggered. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, as it came to be known, was a huge success. The city's buses were, by and large, empty. Some people carpooled and others rode in African-American-operated cabs, but most of the

estimated 40,000 African-American commuters living in the city at the time had opted to walk to work that day—some as far as 20 miles.

Due to the size and scope of, and loyalty to, boycott participation, the effort continued for several months. The city of Montgomery had become a victorious eyesore, with dozens of public buses sitting idle, ultimately severely crippling finances for its transit company. With the boycott's progress, however, came strong resistance. Some segregationists retaliated with violence. Black churches were burned, and both [Martin Luther King Jr.](#)'s and E.D. Nixon's homes were destroyed by bombings. Still, further attempts were made to end the boycott. The insurance was canceled for the city taxi system that was used by African Americans. Black citizens were arrested for violating an antiquated law prohibiting boycotts.

In response to the ensuing events, members of the African-American community took legal action. Armed with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which stated that separate but equal policies had no place in public education, a black legal team took the issue of segregation on public transit systems to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Northern (Montgomery) Division; Rosa's attorney, Fred Gray, filed the suit. In June 1956, the district court declared racial segregation laws (also known as "Jim Crow laws") unconstitutional. The city of Montgomery appealed the court's decision shortly thereafter, but on November 13, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling.

With the transit company and downtown businesses suffering financial loss and the legal system ruling against them, the city of Montgomery had no choice but to lift its enforcement of segregation on public buses, and the boycott officially ended on December 20, 1956. The combination of legal action, backed by the unrelenting determination of the African-American community, made the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott one of the largest and most successful mass movements against racial segregation in history.

## **Racial Discrimination**

Although she had become a symbol of the Civil Rights Movement, Rosa Parks suffered hardship in the months following her arrest in Montgomery and the subsequent boycott. She lost her department store job and her husband was fired after his boss forbade him to talk about his wife or their legal case. Unable to find work, they eventually left Montgomery; the couple, along with Rosa's mother, moved to Detroit, Michigan. There, Rosa made a new life for herself, working as a secretary and receptionist in U.S.



Representative John Conyer's congressional office. She also served on the board of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

In 1987, with longtime friend Elaine Eason Steele, Rosa founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development. The organization runs "Pathways to Freedom" bus tours, introducing young people to important civil rights and Underground Railroad sites throughout the country.

In 1992, Rosa published *Rosa Parks: My Story*, an autobiography recounting her life in the segregated South. In 1995, she published *Quiet Strength* which includes her memoirs and focuses on the role that religious faith played throughout her life.

## **Death and Legacy**

Rosa Parks received many accolades during her lifetime, including the Spingarn Medal, the NAACP's highest award, and the prestigious [Martin Luther King Jr. Award](#). On September 9, 1996, President Bill Clinton awarded Parks the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given by the United States' executive branch. The following year, she was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award given by the U.S. legislative branch. In 1999, *TIME* magazine named Rosa Parks on its list of "The 20 most influential People of the 20th Century."

On October 24, 2005, at the age of 92, Rosa Parks quietly died in her apartment in Detroit, Michigan. She had been diagnosed the previous year with progressive dementia. Her death was marked by several memorial services, among them lying in state at the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., where an estimated 50,000 people viewed her casket. Rosa was interred between her husband and mother at Detroit's Woodlawn Cemetery, in the chapel's mausoleum. Shortly after her death, the chapel was renamed the Rosa L. Parks Freedom Chapel.

February 4, 2013 marks what would have been Rosa Parks's 100th birthday. In celebration of Parks's centennial, memorial ceremonies and other events honoring the civil rights activist have been planned nationwide. Among these honors, a commemorative U.S. Postal Service stamp, called the Rosa Parks Forever stamp and featuring a rendition of the famed activist, debuted on Parks's centennial birthday. Later that month, President Barack Obama unveiled a statue honoring Parks in the nation's Capitol building. He remembered Parks, according to *The New York Times*, by saying "In a single moment, with the simplest of gestures, she helped change America and change the world. . . . And today, she takes her rightful place among those who shaped this

nation's course." The sculpture was designed by Robert Firmin and sculpted by Eugene Daub.