On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a black seamstress, refused to give up her seat to a white man on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and she was arrested. On that day, Rosa Parks became the mother of the modern civil rights movement. This study guide may be used as a companion to "The Rosa Parks Story" video which aired on CBS television February 24, 2002. It is intended for students in grades 9-12. The guide presents a synopsis of Rosa Parks's life and the events surrounding her actions and offers tips for using the guide and Web site, suggesting before-viewing activities and after-viewing activities. It also lists "names to know," discusses Jim Crow laws, and provides relevant vocabulary and terms. The study guide furnishes discussion questions for social studies and history activities, for English and language arts activities, and for media literacy activities, and also provides a timeline. It suggests diverse student activities and informs teachers that "The Rose Parks Story" addresses themes developed by national professional educational organizations to meet national standards for those disciplines. Lists several resources (books, Web sites, and videos and films). (BT)
"The Rosa Parks Story"

Guide for Educators

Written by Liane B. Onish

KIDSNET
A bus in Montgomery, Alabama...
A black woman tired of injustice...

An arrest... A boycott...
The birth of the modern
civil rights movement!
It is 1956, in Montgomery, Alabama. Rosa Parks (Angela Bassett) steels herself to be photographed and grilled by reporters as she takes a seat in the front of a city bus. The press wants to know if she intends to be the NAACP's test case against segregation.

Cameras flash and reporters shout questions, but Rosa doesn't hear them. Instead, Rosa recalls her mother taking her to her very first day at Miss White's Montgomery Industrial School for Girls. It was a special school in the city of Montgomery, run by Northern Quakers to educate black girls. There, Rosa befriended by Rebecca Daniels, known as Johnnie (Latosha Simone-Howell portrays Johnnie as a child). They became best friends.

As Rosa learned how city people lived, she also discovered city-style segregation. One afternoon in the park with Johnnie and her brother Sylvester (Horace Lamar III portrays young Sylvester, Slayton Underwood portrays adult Sylvester), the children played near two water fountains: one "For Whites," one "For Coloreds." Did the water in the "white" fountain taste different? Sylvester switched the signs to find out. A white man and his dog came by and the man shoed the children away. Then he drank from the fountain relabeled "For Whites." When he let his dog drink from the "Colored" water fountain, the children ran home, without switching the signs back.

When she was 18 years old, Rosa met Raymond Parks (Peter Francis James), her future husband. The handsome barber was active in the NAACP's defense of the Scottsboro Boys, nine young black men unjustly accused of raping two white women. Rosa greatly admired Raymond's courage as he could have been beaten or killed for his involvement in trying to help the defendants in the controversial case.

On a rainy night in 1943, Rosa had her first clash with authority on a bus. At her bus stop, Rosa paid her fare, and walked through the bus to a seat in the back. The driver, J. Blake (Sonny Stroyer), demanded that she get off the bus and reenter through the back door like every other Negro. As Rosa began to leave by the front door, she dropped her purse. Blake glared. Then Rosa deliberately sat in a seat for white passengers, ostensibly to pick up her purse. Enraged, Blake barely let her step off the bus before speeding off. Soaked to the skin, trembling with rage, Rosa walked the more than five miles home in the rain.

Later that night, Rosa's mother, Leona (Cicely Tyson), saw a picture in the newspaper of her daughter's old school chum, Rebecca "Johnnie" Daniels, now Johnnie Carr (Tonea Stewart portrays adult Johnnie), and a member of the Montgomery branch of the NAACP.

Rosa visited the NAACP office to see Johnnie and became the branch secretary of the NAACP. Raymond was not pleased, as he now blamed the NAACP for not being more effective in getting the Scottsboro boys out of jail. Despite her husband's disapproval, Rosa volunteered her free time to work for the NAACP. She did secretarial chores for the president, E. D. Nixon (Von Coeller), and she also taught young black children in the NAACP's Youth Council. One of her tasks was putting up a banner outside the office door after a lynching. The black banner with white lettering read "A man was lynched today."

The NAACP inspired Rosa to register to vote. The first time she took the required literacy test, she was told she had failed. The second time, the registrar barely glanced at the test before balling it up and throwing it away. The third time, Rosa copied the literacy test questions and her answers. She let the registrar see her copy, politely explaining that she wanted to show her answers to a lawyer if, by chance, she failed the test. She passed.

Rosa enjoyed working as a seamstress in a large department store although she had long, hard hours. On December 1, 1955, she had to run for her bus. She boarded, paid her fare, and sat in an empty seat in the first row of back seats reserved for Coloreds without noticing that the driver was J. Blake. At the next stop in front of the Empire Theater, a white man boarded. Rosa heard Blake tell the Negroes to vacate the seats so the white man could sit. The black man sitting next to her did get up. Rosa moved...to the window. She did not get up. Gazing out the window, she recalled another childhood memory in which her Grandfather (Charles Black) told her that she was just as good as anyone else. Rosa had believed him then, and she believed him now. Blake called the police to arrest Rosa.

The news of Rosa's arrest spread quickly. E.D. Nixon along with Clifford and Virginia Durr (Mike Pniewski and Susan Williams), a white lawyer and his wife who were activists in the budding civil rights movement, helped arrange Rosa's release. Shaken by her brief time in jail, Rosa agreed to be the test case that the NAACP needed to challenge the bus segregation laws. On December 5, 1955, Rosa was tried and found guilty of violating the segregation laws. The NAACP and the new minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Martin Luther King Jr. (played by his son Dexter Scott King), protested the verdict by leading a boycott of the Montgomery public buses. The original idea was to boycott the buses for a single day, the day of Rosa's trial. The boycott lasted 381 days.

The trial and the publicity took their toll on Rosa and her family. Rosa lost her job, as did Raymond, and they were targets of harassment such as terrifying, threatening telephone calls. Rosa and Raymond's marriage suffered, yet survived, stronger for the struggle, until his death in 1977.

The following year, 1956, the Supreme Court declared the Alabama bus segregation laws to be unconstitutional. We return to the present with Rosa. She sits on a city bus, in front of a white man, braced for the press photo session. Johnnie, E.D. Nixon, and other supporters watch from the opposite side of the street. Raymond hurries across the street to the side of the bus. He takes off his hat, smiles, and blows a kiss to Rosa. Rosa almost smiles.

The drama ends with news footage from 1999. President William Clinton introduces Rosa Parks. She is receiving the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor. Clinton invites Mrs. Parks to get up...but only if she wants to.

Rosa Parks's "quiet strength,"—coupled with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision—began the modern civil rights movement.
BEFORE VIEWING:
BUILDING BACKGROUND

To get the most out of "The Rosa Parks Story," use some of the following activities to introduce vocabulary, people, and the historical setting. Most of these background activities involve information that can be found on "The Rosa Parks Story" website at: <www.kidsnet.org/cbs/rosaparks>.

Background Activities

- The Glossary on the website contains brief biographies of each of the Names to Know listed below. Assign students to research the Names to Know and report to the class.

- Use some of the Background Activities to familiarize students with vocabulary, concepts, and names of people who appear in or are mentioned in the movie.

- Use the Annotated Timeline on the website to familiarize students with civil rights landmarks prior to the bus boycott.

- Give students a brief description of the reasons for the Montgomery bus boycott. Ask students to predict what the obstacles were for the boycotters in order to integrate the buses. After viewing the movie, see if the students' predictions were correct. Check the website for more details on the struggles.

- Print out the information from the websites <www.mkgandhi.org> and <www.thekingcenter.org> to familiarize your students with the philosophy of non-violence espoused by both Gandhi and Dr. King.

- Discuss shades of meaning between synonyms: lynch/hang, segregation/separation; humiliated/embarrassed; assassination/killing; redress/payment; perpetuated/continued.

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NAMES TO KNOW

The Reverend Ralph Abernathy
Marian Anderson
Rebecca "Johnnie" Carr
Paul Laurence Dunbar
Clifford Durr
Virginia Durr
Mahatma Gandhi
Dexter Scott King
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Ku Klux Klan (KKK)
NAACP
E.D. Nixon
Quakers
Eleanor Roosevelt
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Scottsboro Boys
Harriet Tubman

VOCABULARY

- Review the meaning of vocabulary words students will hear in the movie: arbitrary, boycott, dignity, humiliated, integrity, lynch, segregation.

- Introduce other vocabulary words that will be useful for class discussions: altercation, assassination, belligerent, controversial, discrimination, humanitarian, incident, Jim Crow laws, miscegenation, oppression, ostracize, perpetuated, persistence, redress, retaliation, sharecropper, symbol, Uncle Tom.

- Review these terms: literacy test, picture show, poll tax, Pullman porter, test case.

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JIM CROW LAWS

The segregation laws and customs practiced between 1877 and the early 1970s were known as the Jim Crow laws. Those laws separated blacks from mainstream white society and severely limited blacks from being treated fairly across the United States, but particularly in the Deep South. Separation and discrimination were particularly apparent in education, employment, housing, transportation, and public facilities, such as restrooms and drinking fountains. The Jim Crow laws resulted from fear and anger and from the refusal of most southern whites to accept blacks as equals. Many blamed blacks for the destruction and loss that the Confederacy suffered during and after the Civil War.


(See the Glossary at <www.kidsnet.org/cbs/rosaparks> for more information.)
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Social Studies and History
1. To organize the boycott of the bus system in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, the black community handed out flyers and ministers urged their congregations to participate. How would you organize a similar non-violent protest today? What resources would you use that were not available in 1955?

2. Rosa Parks did not set out to spearhead social reform. What influences and experiences in her life led to her becoming the "mother" of the modern civil rights movement?

3. People in power determine the fate of others. Who must obey to get a license? What should every citizen be asked to demonstrate their knowledge in grade? You take driving tests to demonstrate that you have learned enough to pass a course or move up to the next level. Debate: You take tests to demonstrate that you have what qualities or characteristics about your choice are right for each part of the story. How does this technique add to the drama's impact? How would that impact change if the story had started at the beginning of Rosa's life and not at the beginning of the movie? How does this technique add to the story's impact? How would that impact change if the story had started at the beginning of Rosa's life and not at the beginning of the movie?

4. Debate: You take tests to demonstrate that you have learned enough to pass a course or move up to the next level. Debate: You take tests to demonstrate that you have learned enough to pass a course or move up to the next level. Debate: You take tests to demonstrate that you have learned enough to pass a course or move up to the next level. Debate: You take tests to demonstrate that you have learned enough to pass a course or move up to the next level.

5. Imagine you are two newspaper reporters—one as a white person and not social change or civil rights? Draw inferences from the movie to support your reasons.

6. In 1954, the Supreme Court's landmark ruling on segregation, separate but equal, in Brown vs. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, brought an end to much segregation. However, racial, gender, and cultural discrimination continued—and still occur. Describe incidents you have read about or witnessed. Discuss ways to improve social harmony.

7. Why do you think black soldiers returning from World War II and the Korean War were favorite targets of racist attacks?

8. Discuss examples of discrimination based on sex, religion, country, and age in the United States and other countries.

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English and Language Arts
1. In the movie, Raymond Parks recites "We Wear the Mask," by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Read and discuss the poem. What is the mask? What does it tell you about Raymond's character? Why do you think the screenwriter chose this poem?

WE WEAR THE MASK
We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes —
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be overestimating
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but, oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!

Poem "We Wear the Mask" Copyright © 1984 by Citadel Press. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Citadel Press/Kensington Publishing Corp. www.kensingtonbooks.com

Media Literacy
1. Dexter Scott King plays the role of his father, Martin Luther King Jr. in the movie. How does you think he felt about the experience? How did his appearance in the movie affect you?

2. What other actors might you cast in this production? What qualities or characteristics about your choice are right for each part?

3. When Rosa is sitting on the bus at the end of the movie, she is not smiling. She barely smiles when Raymond blows her a kiss. Explain why the director chose not to have Rosa smile.

4. Divide the class into two groups. Assign an equal number of pages in "Gone With the Wind" that stereotypes black life.

5. In "The Rosa Parks Story," flashbacks are used throughout the movie. How does this technique add to the drama's impact? How would that impact change if the story had started at the beginning of Rosa's life and had told what happened in sequential order? Why? What other books or films use flashbacks?

6. Write two accounts of Rosa's arrest: one as a white reporter, the other as a black reporter.

7. Write diary entries from Rosa's point of view about three incidents in the story. How do you imagine she felt? What did she hope for? What did she fear?

8. Imagine you are Rosa's mother. Write a letter to a newspaper editor on the subject of pacifism. She believes that the nonviolent tactics of civil disobedience used by Dr. King and the civil rights movement were the only way to achieve their goals. However, she does not believe that pacifism applies to every situation in life. In which circumstances might make the use of force necessary and viable? Do you think the leaders of the civil rights movement could have accomplished their goals by using force? What current events have forced you to feel? What did you stand on the issue of pacifism? Write a persuasive essay in which you explain where you stand on the issue of pacifism.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Social Studies and History
1. Select an issue in your school or community: then develop a plan for a civil disobedience protest.

2. Read about Cesar E. Chavez, who founded the National Farm Workers Association and who led a five-year strike and boycott to protest the pay and working conditions of farm workers. Compare and contrast that action to the bus boycott in 1955.

3. Research affirmative action. List four reasons for and four reasons against affirmative action. Then decide if you are for or against it. Explain your decision.

4. Debate: You take tests to demonstrate that you have learned enough to pass a course or move up to the next grade. You take driving tests to demonstrate that you know how to drive a car and what rules and laws drivers must obey to get a license. What should every citizen know about our country's history and laws? Why should citizens not be asked to demonstrate their knowledge in order to vote?

English and Language Arts
1. Read works by Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, and other black poets. Find a poem that reflects other incidents and characters in the movie. Describe the scene and recite the poem for the class.

2. Imagine you are two newspaper reporters—one white, one black—in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955.
TEACHING WITH “THE ROSA PARKS STORY”

Grades: 6-12

Curriculum Areas:
Social Studies and History, English and Language Arts, Media Literacy

Educational Objectives:

- To learn about life in a segregated society
- To understand and appreciate Rosa Parks’s role in the civil rights movement
- To recognize and celebrate the courage of individuals who changed society through words and deeds
- To identify plot details that affect character development; to understand cause and effect relationships, draw conclusions, and make inferences based on story elements
- To appreciate the use of poetry, imagery, metaphor, and irony to further the plot, to reveal characters, and to affect tone of a dramatic work
- Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- Employ a variety of writing methods to analyze and critique media and literature.
- Use a range of strategies to write and communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Apply spoken, written, and visual language to express their ideas and to aid in their development as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of society.
- Conduct research on issues and learn to gather information via technological and informational resources.
- Develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

National Curricular Standards for Social Studies

“The Rosa Parks Story” addresses themes developed by the National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards when used with this guide.

- Time, Continuity, and Change: Examine the relationship of the past to the present and extrapolate into the future.
- Individual Development and Identity: Examine how personal identity and behaviors are shaped by culture and by institutional influences.
- Culture and Cultural Diversity: Comprehend multiple perspectives of diverse cultural groups within society.
- Power, Authority, and Governance: Explore the ideals and social roles.
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption: Analyze economic issues and apply economic knowledge to societal conditions.
- Civic Ideals and Practices: Examine civic ideals and practices across time and in diverse societies.

Visit <www.ncte.org/standards> for more information.

National Curricular Standards for English/Language Arts

“The Rosa Parks Story” illuminates the following standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and by the International Reading Association when used with this guide. Your students should achieve these goals:

- Reading a wide range of print and nonprint texts will build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world, while achieving personal fulfillment.
- Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- Employ a variety of writing methods to analyze and critique media and literature.
- Use a range of strategies to write and communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Apply spoken, written, and visual language to express their ideas and to aid in their development as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of society.
- Conduct research on issues and learn to gather information via technological and informational resources.
- Develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

Visit <www.ncrel.org/standards> for more information.

OFF-AIR TAPING GUIDELINES & VIDEO AVAILABILITY

At the initiative of the classroom teacher or librarian, educators may tape this program for use two times within the first 10 school days from the time of recording. The program may be retained for review until the end of a 45-day possession period, after which the recording must be erased. These guidelines apply to programs recorded in school or at home. All tapes must be used in a school or library. The video can be purchased from the website <mustbuytv.com> or by calling (866) 777-0680. The cost is $39.95.
RESOURCES

A comprehensive fact-based history.

For young adults.

A comprehensive fact-based history.

"Roots" is a 1977 television miniseries and book by Alex Haley, depicting the story of a Gullah family from the 18th century to the present.

This guide may be reproduced for educational purposes.

Visit "The Rosa Parks Story" Website

You and your students are encouraged to visit the official website for "The Rosa Parks Story" at www.cbs.com.
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