

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Guide by
Val Brown, MEd

 BEACON PRESS | beacon.org

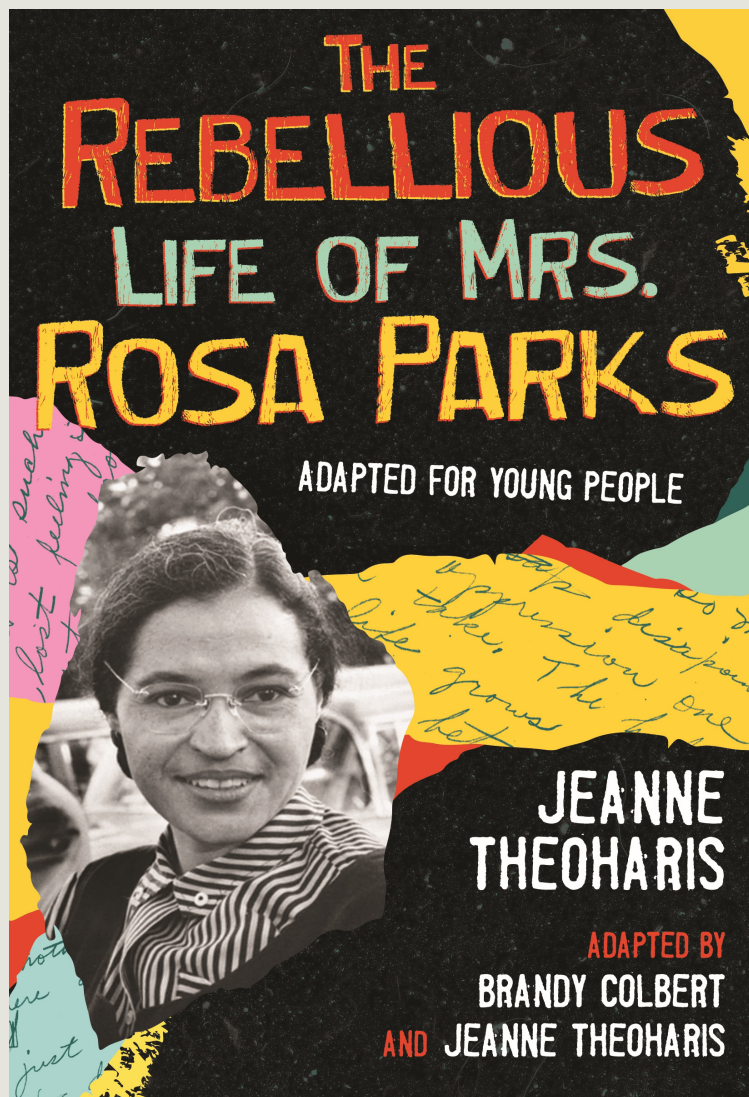


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A Note to Educators
2. Before You Begin
 - Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
for Grades 6–8
 - Teaching Tolerance Social Justice
Standards
3. Essential Questions for the Text
 - Pre-Reading Discussion Questions
4. Chapter Summaries and Questions
32. Additional Digital Resources for Educators
33. About the Authors of *The Rebellious Life of
Mrs. Rosa Parks Young Readers' Edition*
 - About the Author of This Guide

A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

When I reflect on what I learned about the civil rights movement in middle school, it was limited to the names and images with which many are so familiar—black-and-white photographs of well-dressed marchers, Martin Luther King Jr. animated at a podium, and Rosa Parks sitting on a bus. There was far more to the story. Activists and scholars have worked tirelessly to deepen our collective understanding of the richness and complexity of what we know as the civil rights movement.

In *The Rebellious Life of Rosa Parks Young Readers' Edition* authors Jeanne Theoharis, PhD, and Brandy Colbert provide us with an in-depth look at one of the movement's most recognized but narrowly understood activists:—Rosa Parks. Mrs. Rosa Parks's activism began decades before her refusal to give up her seat on a bus and lasted decades after. The fullness of her story, which takes place in Montgomery, Alabama, and Detroit, Michigan, mirrors the movement itself. The work for racial justice was a national one, led primarily by the most marginalized. Black sharecroppers, domestics, and educators sacrificed their livelihoods, and even their lives, for a chance to claim full citizenship. The struggles for Black liberation were long and the hard-fought victories immediately met with resistance from the white supremacist power structure. There was little time for rest. Eventually, decades-long grassroots activism and multiracial coalitions transformed America as we knew it.

And yet, the march continues. In the summer of 2020, millions of people in the United States participated in anti-racism protests, creating an atmosphere reminiscent of the Selma march or the March on Washington. Therefore, complicating our understanding of the civil rights movement and the everyday people who powered the movement is vital for honoring our past, understanding our present, and creating our future.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Our country is still learning how to engage in conversations about race and racism inside and outside of schools. Our attempts are often clumsy, flawed, and can be filled with a range of emotions such as grief, anger, guilt, and sadness. This should be expected and should not prevent us from trying. With each attempt we will become less afraid of messing up and more confident that the conversations we are having will lead to lasting change. Remember, the ultimate goal is to be able to talk about racism so that we can dismantle it once and for all.

Prior to reading this text, it is essential for teachers to develop a classroom culture where rich and deep discussion can occur. Some intentional steps educators can take include:

- **co-creating community agreements with students**
- **practicing speaking and listening**
- **using protocols that increase the opportunities to learn from various perspectives**

Teaching Tolerance’s guide *Let’s Talk!* offers practical advice and strategies for preparing for these discussions. You may access it by [clicking here](#) or visiting <https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/TT-Lets-Talk-December-2019.pdf>.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS) FOR GRADES 6–8

This reading guide uses the Common Core State Standards Reading Informational Text for grades 6–8. The abbreviation for the standard can be found after each question. Specific grade-level standards can be found by [clicking here](#) or visiting <https://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI>.

TEACHING TOLERANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS

FOR GRADES 6–8

This reading guide also uses Teaching Tolerance’s Social Justice Standards for grades 6–8. The Social Justice Standards are organized by four domains: identity, diversity, justice, and action. The standards support academic and social emotional standards and can be used to deepen learning. Specific grade-level standards can be found by [clicking here](#) or visiting <https://tolerance.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards>.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR THE TEXT

Essential questions are written to encourage reflection and ongoing inquiry and to provide opportunities for deep learning.

- What role does race, gender, or socioeconomic status play in who I consider a leader?
- Why is it important to learn about other people's experiences?
- How are people treated unfairly based on their identities?
- What does it mean to persevere in the face of injustice?
- What are the forms that unfairness can take?
- How do individual biases impact systems and institutions?
- How can I work toward change now?
- How do some people benefit while others suffer based on their identities?
- Who fought for racial justice and what can I learn about them and from their stories?
- What is my responsibility to stand up to injustice?
- How do I take action when I see injustice around me?
- Who can I work with to fight injustice?

Pre-reading discussion questions

1. What do you know about Rosa Parks? How do you know it?
2. Why is it important to study someone like Rosa Parks?

CHAPTER SUMMARY: INTRODUCTION

Summary

The introduction opens with a description of Rosa Parks’s funeral and the thousands of Americans who paid tribute to her life and work. The author argues while many honored her work in the civil rights movement, the story of Rosa Parks that most of the general public knows has become a national fable. The goal of this text, the author explains, is to tell a fuller story of Mrs. Rosa Parks.

Vocabulary

- Whitewashed

Key Concepts

- Segregation
- Desegregation
- Integration

Questions

1. What is the author’s view of Rosa Parks? How can you tell? (RI.6-8.6)
2. “In many ways, her larger political beliefs were whitewashed in favor of an endless replay of that photo of her looking out the bus window” (p. 2). What does “whitewashed” mean in this selection? (RI.6-8.4)
3. “Because Rosa Parks was a woman activist, the narrow way her story was told reflected biased gendered assumptions about what a leader looks like and what issues a person like Rosa Parks would care about” (p. 4). Create a graphic organizer to use throughout the text to identify evidence the author presents to support this claim. At the conclusion of the text, determine which evidence is most relevant. (RI.6-8.8)

CHAPTER 1: A (SHY) REBEL IS BORN

Summary

In chapter 1, readers are introduced to Rosa Parks, her family, and her life as a child in Alabama in the 1910s. One of her most important memories was sitting with her armed grandfather on their porch after nightfall as he protected the family from the Ku Klux Klan. Mrs. Parks's grandfather taught her early about standing up for herself.

Vocabulary

- Belligerent
- Agitate
- Dehumanize

Key Concepts

- Red Summer
- Ku Klux Klan

Questions

1. Describe Mrs. Parks's familial influences. What did she learn from them? (RI.6-8.1)
2. How would you describe Mrs. Parks' early childhood? Use textual evidence to support your claim. (RI.6-8.1)
3. Visit the timeline on rosaparksbiography.org. How does reviewing the timeline impact your understanding of Rosa's early life? (RI.6-8.7)

CHAPTER 2: FOLLOWING RULES

AND BREAKING SOME TOO

Summary

Black students in Alabama in the 1920s struggled to get the same education as white students. Mrs. Parks had to live with her aunt in Montgomery, Alabama, to attend a private school for all Black girls. After the school closed, she attended another school but had to drop out to care for her ailing mother and grandmother. Researchers found personal papers from Mrs. Parks during that time in her life that recounted a story of sexual harassment, where Mrs. Parks was the victim. She never spoke about the incident, and it is unclear if the incident is fully or partially true for her. However, the story does illustrate the sexual violence many women in Mrs. Parks's life experienced.

Vocabulary

- Racist

Key Concepts

- Sexual assault

Text-based Questions

1. What influence did schools have on gender roles in Alabama in the 1920s? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Describe the ways in which Mrs. Parks resisted mistreatment in this chapter. Would you consider her actions early forms of activism? Explain. (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCING RAYMOND PARKS—

“THE FIRST REAL ACTIVIST I EVER MET”

Summary

At eighteen, Mrs. Parks was introduced to Raymond Parks, who would eventually become her husband. She was impressed by his bold thinking and action. Mr. Parks “refused to be intimidated by white people” and even worked to defend a group of boys known as the Scottsboro Boys, nine young Black men who were falsely accused of rape. After Raymond and Rosa married, Mrs. Parks joined him in working on the Scottsboro Boys case.

Vocabulary

- White supremacy

Key Concepts

- Scottsboro Boys
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Text-based Questions

1. What are some ways in which Rosa and Raymond were similar? How was Raymond different from her family? (RI.6-8.3)
2. What inferences can you make about being a Black activist in Alabama in the 1930s? What evidence can you provide to support your inferences? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Read the Scottsboro Boys meeting flyer on pg. 27. What message was the flyer trying to convey? What would the authors like for readers to do as a result of reading the flyer? (RI.6-8.1)
4. Visit rosaparksbiography.org to learn more information about the Scottsboro Boys. What impact did the Scottsboro Boys case have on Mr. and Mrs. Parks personally and on their activism? (R.I.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 4: THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE NAACP

Summary

During a tumultuous time in the 1940s, Mrs. Parks wanted to become more involved in fighting against discrimination and racial inequality. Mrs. Parks attended her first NAACP meeting in 1943 and was elected secretary her first day. She was the only woman in attendance at the meeting, and her gender played a role in her election. The leader of the NAACP branch was Edgar Daniel (E. D.) Nixon. Their partnership would change the face of American history. Two other key events occurred during this time. After several years, despite the institutional barriers put in place by election officials and with the help of E. D. Nixon, Mrs. Parks was able to register to vote. The second key event was Mrs. Parks became involved in the Recy Taylor case. Taylor, a twenty-four-year-old Black woman, was raped at gunpoint, and the police refused to investigate. Although Mrs. Parks enjoyed working with Nixon, she often had to ignore or laugh off sexist comments.

Vocabulary

- Sexist

Key Concepts

- Double V Campaign
- Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
- Recy Taylor

Text-based Questions

1. What systems were in place that prevented Black people from exercising their rights as full citizens? (RI.6-8.1)
2. How did a Black woman's experience differ from a Black man's experience in the NAACP? (RI.6-8.3)
3. What role did E. D. Nixon and the NAACP play in Mrs. Parks's activism? What inferences can you make about why the partnership was successful? (RI.6-8.1)
4. The author writes, "A decade before she made her historic stand on the bus, Rosa Parks's fierce determination was clear" (p. 37). What evidence does the author provide to support this claim? (RI.6-8.6)

CHAPTER 5: ORGANIZING IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

Summary

Mrs. Parks continued her work for the NAACP, which included traveling around Alabama and recording the testimonies of the brutality and sexual violence white people used to terrorize the Black community. There were some divisions within the NAACP. Many were middle-class Black people who wanted it to be more of a social club. Mrs. Parks and Nixon were working-class Black people who believed the organization should be more involved in politics and activism. It was during this time that Mrs. Parks met one of her mentors, Ella Baker. Baker encouraged Mrs. Parks to continue her work. Racial justice activism during this time was extremely difficult work, demoralizing and dangerous. Mrs. Parks's work with incarcerated Black people was hard because it was hard to get justice. The case of high school senior Jeremiah Reeves was especially trying for Mrs. Parks. "It's hard to keep going," she said, "when all our efforts seemed in vain."

Vocabulary

- Retaliation
- Cultivate

Key Concepts

- Ella Baker
- Great Migration
- Jeremiah Reeves

Text-based Questions

1. By the 1940s who would you say was Mrs. Parks's greatest inspiration? Explain by citing evidence from the text. (RI.6-8.1)
2. Although Black people in Alabama faced incredible injustices, many people chose to not speak up for themselves. Why? Use the text to support your answer. (RI.6-8.1)
3. Visit rosaparkbiography.org to learn more about Mrs. Parks's work with the Montgomery NAACP. What made her work "dangerous and depressing"? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 6: THE NAACP YOUTH COUNCIL

GETS A FRESH START

Summary

Mrs. Parks shifted her focus to working with young people through the NAACP Youth Council. She helped them see past daily oppression and supported their activism efforts.

Vocabulary

- Discrimination
- Complacency

Key Concepts

- Youth activism

Text-based Questions

1. In which of the activities of the NAACP Youth Council did Mrs. Parks find hope? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Read the primary text found on pg. 60. What is the tone of Mrs. Parks's writing? What words help you to understand her tone? (RI.6-8.4)

CHAPTER 7: RESISTANCE + ANGER = SEEDS OF CHANGE

Summary

Traveling on city buses in Montgomery was one place where Black people felt segregation most immediately. In the decade prior to Mrs. Parks’s arrest, Black people engaged in resistance over bus segregation. One person, a Black veteran named Hilliard Brooks was killed by police because he refused to reboard on the back of the bus. In 1954, after the Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision found school segregation to be unconstitutional, activists believed segregation could be defeated in other areas as well, including buses.

Vocabulary

- Inherently
- Humiliation

Key Concepts

- Jo Ann Robinson
- Hilliard Brooks
- *Brown v. Board of Education*

Text-based Questions

1. What word choices in this chapter illustrate what segregation felt like for Black people? (RI.6-8.1)
2. What inferences can you make about how Black people felt about riding the buses in Montgomery? (RI.6-8.1)
3. What impact did the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision have on the Black community? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 8: CLAUDETTE COLVIN SITS DOWN (AND RISES UP)

Summary

White resistance of the order to desegregate schools came quickly. Northern states mostly ignored the order. However Southern states used more direct methods of violence and intimidation. Black parents in Montgomery were unwilling to push for implementation of the desegregation order because of fears of retribution. Young people experienced the same levels of discrimination and oppression as adults. They, too, also engaged in resistance. Claudette Colvin, fifteen, was one of those students who courageously refused to move when a bus driver asked her to give up her seat. Colvin's arrest initially galvanized the Black community, but eventually Colvin was considered the wrong person to bring suit.

Vocabulary

- Political consciousness
- Ostracized
- Exploitation
- Accumulation

Key Concepts

- Southern Manifesto
- Claudette Colvin

Text-based Questions

1. How did the white community respond to the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision? (RI.6-8.1)
2. “When law enforcement showed up, the bus driver told them, ‘I’ve had trouble with that *thing*’ before.” What is the connotation of “*thing*” in that sentence? (RI.6-8.4)
3. What role did Colvin’s age and gender play in the support she got from the community? Use the text to support your answer. (RI.6-8.1)
4. Colvin and Mrs. Parks have been pitted against one another because they both took a stand on the bus. Use the text to explain the nature of their relationship. (RI.6-8.3)
5. The author writes, “Rarely do people rise up after a single injustice. Instead, the accumulation of many injustices, anger, false promises, and unanswered demands leads to a breaking point... and then to action” (p. 78). What evidence does the author present in the chapter to support this claim? (RI.6-8.6)

CHAPTER 9: HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

Summary

Mrs. Parks continued to meet allies in Montgomery and outside of Alabama. One such connection allowed her to attend an adult leadership training program called the Highlander Folk School, where she met future mentor Septima Clark. At Highlander, Mrs. Parks was able to learn with an integrated group of people (half Black, half white) from various backgrounds: teachers, union activists, civic leaders, college students. Their goal was to figure out how to turn the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision into a reality. Although Mrs. Parks was not convinced a mass movement would be successful in Montgomery because of perceived apathy in the Black community, she believed it was still important to resist. She left Highlander energized and ready to continue her work.

Vocabulary

- Demeanor
- Absurdity

Key Concepts

- Highlander Folk School
- Myles Horton
- Septima Clark
- Clifford and Virginia Durr

Text-based Questions

1. How was Highlander Folk School different from the other schools Parks attended? How was it different from most other schools during that time? (RI.6-8.3)
2. Read an excerpt from Mrs. Parks's notes from Highlander on pg. 87: "Desegregation proves itself by being put into action. Not changing attitudes. Attitudes will change." What inferences can you make about the impact of these words on her? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 10: SEEKING JUSTICE FOR EMMETT TILL

Summary

In 1955, a few weeks after Mrs. Parks left Highlander, a fourteen year old named Emmett Till, was lynched in Mississippi. Two men responsible for his murder were indicted and forced to go to trial, but they were acquitted. In response a mass meeting was held at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church where a young minister named Dr. Martin Luther King was recently named pastor. Mrs. Parks left the mass meeting angry and depressed that Emmett Till's murderers were freed.

Vocabulary

- Acquitted
- Lynching

Key Concepts

- Emmett Till
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

Text-based Questions

1. What is your analysis of racial violence during the 1920s, '30s, '40s, and early '50s? (RI.6-8.1)
2. What word choice helps illustrate how Mrs. Parks felt after she left the mass meeting about Emmett Till? (RI.6-8.4)

CHAPTER 11: DECEMBER 1, 1955

Summary

On December 1, 1955, Mrs. Parks was on her way home from work, and as usual, she took the bus. It was only a few days following the mass meeting about Emmett Till but decades after she fought for racial justice in Alabama. When bus driver James Blake asked Mrs. Parks and three other Black people to vacate their seats, Mrs. Parks refused. Parks had not planned the protest but was “tired of giving in”; she had reached her stopping point. No one came to her aid or defended her on the bus, and she was arrested. Mrs. Parks’s longtime colleague E. D. Nixon was informed of the arrest. He believed it was a good opportunity to continue to push for change. Mrs. Parks, together with her family and a young attorney, Fred Gray, decided to pursue a legal case against segregation. Only knowing of Mrs. Parks’s arrest, Jo Ann Robinson, another leader in the community, decided, too, that it was time to act. Robinson called for a one-day bus boycott.

Vocabulary

- Contemplated
- Perseverance

Key Concepts

- Jim Crow laws
- James Blake

Text-based Questions

1. What event(s) most likely led to Mrs. Parks’s refusal to move out of her seat on the bus on December 1, 1955? What evidence is most supportive of your analysis? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Mrs. Parks later shared that her stand on the bus was one of the worst days of her life. What evidence in the text supports this claim? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Read the leaflet on pg. 109. What message was the leaflet trying to convey? What would the authors like readers to do as a result of reading the leaflet? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 12: A BOYCOTT BLOSSOMS

Summary

Over the weekend before the planned one-day boycott many people—local leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr.; physicians; and teachers—became involved. Nixon even tricked the white mainstream media into giving the boycott free publicity. Mrs. Parks was still unsure if the community would support her by boycotting on Monday.

Vocabulary

- Resolve
- Relinquish
- Status quo

Key Concepts

- Reverend Ralph Abernathy

Text-based Questions

1. What are some of the key roles people played that led to a successful boycott? How did the community work together? (RI.6-8.3)
2. What was Mrs. Parks's public image and what role did that play in others supporting the bus boycott? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Visit rosaparksbiography.org to view some of the images associated with the bus boycott. How is your understanding of the boycott impacted by viewing the images? (RI.6-8.7)

CHAPTER 13: ROSA PARKS GOES TO COURT

Summary

On Monday, the day of Mrs. Parks's court appearance, nearly every Black person in Montgomery stayed off the buses. Nixon later said that it was the first time he saw so much courage among Black people in Montgomery. Mrs. Parks was found guilty of violating state law and charged \$14. After the hearing, a new organization, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), was formed to coordinate the boycott. Despite their key roles, Mrs. Parks and Jo Ann Robinson were not invited to participate. Although women were key from the beginning, very early on, the boycott became a male-dominated movement. The community, however, felt empowered by the success of the one-day boycott and decided to keep it going.

Vocabulary

- Diminished

Key Concepts

- Montgomery Improvement Association

Text-based Questions

1. Why were Mrs. Parks and E. D. Nixon surprised when Black people supported the boycott? (RI.6-8.1)
2. What role did gender play in Mrs. Parks and Jo Ann Robinson being able to participate in coordinating the boycott through the Montgomery Improvement Association? (RI.6-8.1)
3. What were the Montgomery Improvement Association's initial demands? What inferences can you make about why they chose those? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 14: A YEARLONG BOYCOTT

Summary

The city of Montgomery responded in different ways to the boycott. Initially, city officials insisted the problem was just a few bad bus drivers. Next they framed bus segregation as a difference of opinion. Then they said that Mrs. Parks was planted by the NAACP and outside agitators were involved. Finally, they claimed that boycott leaders and NAACP were Communists. To combat false accusations and protect the movement, MIA leadership hid Mrs. Parks's long history of activism. Yet, through organized efforts, such as creating a car-pool system, the boycott continued. It was women who stayed off the buses, attended mass meetings, and did much of the fundraising. The boycott was dangerous. Many Black people were harassed by police as they walked or participated in the car pool. Some of the movement's leaders' homes were bombed, and more than 115 boycott leaders were indicted. The boycott began to get national attention.

Vocabulary

- Boycott
- Indicted

Key Concepts

- White Citizens' Council
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Text-based Questions

1. What role did Black women play in making the boycott a success? (RI.6-8.3)
2. How did the majority of white citizens of Montgomery respond to the bus boycott? What actions did they take? (RI.6-8.1)
3. What role did the government play during the boycott? What tactics were used to discourage boycotters? (RI.6-8.1)
4. Would you call the role the government played justice? What is the strongest evidence you have to support your analysis? (RI.6-8.1)
5. What was the impact of the boycott throughout the city? (RI.6-8.1)
6. What groups of people worked together who previously had not worked together in order to make the boycott a success? (RI.6-8.3)

CHAPTER 15: THE BEST OF TIMES

AND THE WORST OF TIMES

Summary

There were major consequences to the Parks family for Mrs. Parks's role in the boycott. Her husband, Raymond, was forced to resign from his job and started experiencing mental and physical health issues. Mrs. Parks also suffered health issues. The family received constant death threats and insults, and they experienced major financial trouble. In order to survive, Mrs. Parks accepted money that was collected on her behalf. At the same time she and Mr. Parks were enduring these hardships, Mrs. Parks was invited to travel the country and speak about the movement. She got to spend time with numerous heroes including Septima Clark, whom she'd met at Highlander; A. Philip Randolph; Dr. Kenneth Clark; Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall; and former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Vocabulary

- Conviction
- Harassment

Key Concepts

- First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt
- Thurgood Marshall

Text-based Questions

1. How were Raymond and Rosa Parks personally impacted as a result of the bus boycott? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Juliette Morgan was one of a few white Montgomerians who supported the boycott. How was she treated and how was this similar to or different from the way Black people were treated? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Did the author choose an appropriate title for this chapter? Cite textual evidence to support your analysis. (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 16: VICTORY AT LAST

(BUT THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES)

Summary

On December 21, 1956, more than one year after the start of the bus boycott, Montgomery's buses were desegregated and Black people could sit wherever they wanted. E. D. Nixon later shared that he cried like a baby upon hearing this news. For both Nixon and Mrs. Parks, the successful end of the boycott was based on more than a decade's worth of activism efforts. Unfortunately, there was a philosophical split when the leaders of the MIA considered which issue to tackle next. Parks and Nixon wanted to focus on a statewide voter registration campaign to increase Black political power in Alabama. Dr. King wanted to expand the work outside of the state. Additionally, the class divides between middle-class Black people and working-class Black people were beginning to surface. The Parks family, who were unable to find steady work throughout the course of the boycott, finally decided to move to Detroit, Michigan, for a new start. The Montgomery community were embarrassed that they did not take better care of Mrs. Parks and her family. It was a bittersweet goodbye.

Vocabulary

- Disgruntled

Key Concepts

- Fred Gray
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

Text-based Questions

1. What steps eventually led to a successful end to the bus boycott? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Was the Black community better off at the end of the boycott? Use evidence from the text to support your answer? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Why did the Parks family leave Alabama? How did the community respond when they learned about her decision? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 17: “THE NORTHERN PROMISED LAND

THAT WASN'T”

Summary

Just as she had in Montgomery, Mrs. Parks engaged in the struggle for racial justice in her new city, Detroit. Black people in Detroit faced racism in similar ways to what those in Alabama did. Two of those ways were through housing and school segregation. Although racism is portrayed as a Southern phenomenon, it is a national disease, and anti-racist movements bloomed across the country.

Vocabulary

- Stereotype

Key Concepts

- Redlining

Text-based Questions

1. Why should racism be considered a national problem and not just a Southern problem? What in the text supports your answer? (RI.6-8.1)
2. How did laws and institutions support segregation and inequality in the North? (RI.6-8.1)
3. How were the schools Mrs. Parks attended as a child in the 1920s in Alabama similar to the schools in Detroit in the 1960s? What inferences can you make based on your analysis? (RI.6-8.3)
4. The Parks family continued to struggle financially when they first moved to Detroit. What inferences can you make about Black people in Detroit and other Northern cities? (RI.6-8.1)
5. Was moving to Detroit better for the Parks family than living in Montgomery? Cite textual evidence to support your position. (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 18: ROSA PARKS JOINS THE FIGHT UP NORTH

Summary

The Parks family began settling in Detroit. Raymond was able to find work as a barber, and they joined a new church. To continue her activism, Mrs. Parks teamed up with Black union activists and the more radical NAACP members. During this time, the movement continued down South, and young people from Greensboro, North Carolina, began protesting segregated lunch counters. Their actions soon led to the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Mrs. Parks, always inspired by young people, was thrilled by the movement.

Vocabulary

- Self-deception

Key Concepts

- Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

Text-based Questions

1. Mrs. Parks joined various organizations when she moved to Detroit. What were some of their positions and what actions did they take? (RI.6-8.1)
2. How did the civil rights movement continue in the South after Mrs. Parks left? (RI.6-8.1)
3. What role did young people play in the civil rights movement? Why was Rosa Parks thrilled by their involvement? (RI.6-8.1)
4. The author writes, “Many white Southerners seemed surprised by the anger and disruption. They’d long preferred to think that Black people were content with their place in America, and they certainly didn’t like what they believed was unreasonable and unnecessary behavior. However, the sit-ins soon debunked this self-deception” (p. 184).
 - a. What does the term “self-deception” mean in this passage? (RI.6-8.4)
 - b. What evidence from the text can you find that challenges the idea that Black people were content? (RI.6-8.1)
 - c. What evidence from the text can you find that white Southerners actively tried to keep Black people “in their place”? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 19: THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM

Summary

Civil rights activists continued to push. One way to do so was to use the centennial anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation to draw attention to the disparities Black people continued to face, which led to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Although women were involved in the civil rights movement from the very beginning, they were repeatedly left out of the planning of the March on Washington. This upset many women in the movement, including Mrs. Parks. While the civil rights movement is celebrated as a great achievement now, in the 1960s, the vast majority of white people disapproved.

Vocabulary

- Marginalized

Key Concepts

- March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom
- John Lewis
- Bayard Rustin

Text-based Questions

1. Women played a key role in every aspect of the civil rights movement, but they were regulated to the sidelines when it came to time to speak at the March on Washington. How did the women involved respond to being excluded? (RI.6-8.1)
2. What was the March on Washington about? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Read the poll results on pg. 195. What is your analysis of the results? (RI.6-8.1)
 - a. Does your analysis surprise you? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 20: WORKING FOR JOHN CONYERS

Summary

After the March on Washington, Mrs. Parks continued her political work. She chose to support a radical young civil rights attorney named John Conyers for Congress. Conyers won the election and hired Mrs. Parks to work with constituents in his Detroit office. It was her first paid political position.

Vocabulary

- Equitable
- Bombarded

Key Concepts

- John Conyers
- Gerrymandering

Text-based Questions

1. How did Mrs. Parks support the work of John Conyers? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Mrs. Parks continued to receive hate mail after she began working for John Conyers. Read the primary source on pg. 204. What message was the letter trying to convey? What would the author like the reader to do as a result of reading the letter? (RI.6-8.1)
3. What inferences can you make about why Mrs. Parks's fighting Northern racism isn't a well-known part of her narrative? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 21: MEETING MALCOLM X

Summary

Many people continued to be inspired by Mrs. Parks, including well-known activist Malcolm X. During one of his trips to Detroit, Malcolm wanted to meet Mrs. Parks, and they did meet, in November 1963. Mrs. Parks saw him as “brilliant” and read all she could about his ministry and political program. He was one of many whom Mrs. Parks admired who were working for racial justice.

Vocabulary

- Disillusioned

Key Concepts

- Malcolm X
- Black Power

Text-based Questions

1. In what ways were Malcolm X and Mrs. Parks similar? (RI.6-8.3)
2. Which of the key tenets of Black Power do you believe was most important to Mrs. Parks? Use the text to support your answer. (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 22: GOING (BACK) DOWN SOUTH

Summary

In 1964, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, but it didn't remove the many barriers to voting, so activists kept pushing. During a peaceful protest for voting rights in Marion, Alabama, Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed by police. In response, John Lewis, a member of SNCC and a speaker at the March on Washington, organized the Selma march, later known as Bloody Sunday. Mrs. Parks traveled from Detroit to walk the final leg of the march. She was not recognized as an official participant initially, but when leaders realized she was in attendance, she was able to address the crowd from the podium. She received the most enthusiastic reception. Following the march, SNCC continued its work in Alabama to increase voter registration.

Vocabulary

- Propaganda
- Coaxed

Key Concepts

- Jimmie Lee Jackson
- Edmund Pettus Bridge
- Voting Acts of 1965
- Fannie Lou Hamer

Text-based Questions

1. Back in the South, activists continued to push for full voting rights. How was Alabama different from when Mrs. Parks first tried to organize people? (RI.6-8.1)
 - a. What inferences can you make about why Black people in Alabama may have changed? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 23: THE DETROIT UPRISING

Summary

Back in Detroit, although the residents challenged racist systems for years, there was little change in the lived experiences of Black people. Things reached a boiling point in 1967 that led to what is known as the Detroit riots. The over-militarized police department descended on the Black community and did their best to resist. At the end of five days, 43 people were dead—30 at the hands of the police—and property damage was estimated at \$45 million. Parks believed that “you had to look at the history of white resistance to Black equality to understand where the uprising had come from.” Mrs. Parks continued her activism but let the young and new voices lead. She wanted to be there to support them.

Vocabulary

- Subdue
- Tribunal

Key Concepts

- Detroit Riot
- Police brutality
- Judge George Crockett

Text-based Questions

1. How did law enforcement treat Black residents of Detroit? What role did it play in the Detroit uprising? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Judge George Crockett used his power to try to “right the scales” with his judicial power. Would you consider Judge Crockett’s actions justice? (RI.6-8.1)
3. Visit rosaparksbiography.org to read more about The People’s Tribunal on the Algiers Motel Killings. What details in the text elaborate on the events between the community and law enforcement? (RI.6-8.3)

CHAPTER 24: THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. KING

Summary

The last time Mrs. Parks was able to hear Dr. King speak it was in a white Michigan suburb, a week before his assassination. Mrs. Parks, along with millions of people everywhere, were devastated to hear of his murder. Mrs. Parks said she went numb. However, she continued to try to support his newest initiative, the Poor People's Campaign (PPC). PPC was a multiracial movement that linked the struggle for racial justice to economic justice. It challenged the idea that people caused their own poverty. PPC was also criticized by the government for being too radical.

Vocabulary

- Relentlessly
- Incontestable
- Deplorable
- Derivative

Key Concepts

- Sam Cooke
- Poor People's Campaign (PPC)

Text-based Questions

1. How did the white majority audience treat Dr. King when he came to speak in Grosse Pointe? What inferences can you make about how he was received by white audiences around the country? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Dr. King's assassination settled over Mrs. Parks like a "heavy blanket." How does that analogy add to the text? (RI.6-8.4)
3. How was the Poor People's Campaign different from the other movements Mrs. Parks participated in? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 25: BLACK POWER!

Summary

Mrs. Parks continued to be frustrated by white resistance to Black equality. Although she was often described as shy and meek, she was passionate about Black equality. A Black Power activist noted she was “quiet and sweet but strong as acid.” Mrs. Parks also supported a variety of Black Power ideas and initiatives. She equated her political approach to her quilting skills. She believed it would take many tactics and approaches to win justice and freedom.

Vocabulary

- Extremist
- Surveillance

Key Concepts

- Black Panther Party
- Shirley Chisholm
- COINTELPRO

Text-based Questions

1. The author writes this about Mrs. Parks’s political approach: “Any good woman my age from Alabama definitely knows how to quilt,’ she said. Her respect for ancestry and appreciation for conserving Black past—sewing many pieces together and bringing together several different materials—resonated with strands of Black Power in this period. Black Power did not ruin the quilt of Black protest for Rosa Parks—it enriched it. And Black Power drew on the pieces already there” (p. 244). How does the use of the quilt metaphor deepen the reader’s understanding of Mrs. Parks’s philosophy?
 - a. Write your own metaphor that demonstrates your understanding of Mrs. Parks’s life. (RI.6-8.4)
2. How did Mrs. Parks’s activism change in the ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s? Use the text to support your answer. (RI.6-8.1)
3. How did the federal government choose to use its power in connection with Black Power activists? Do you support their choices? Use evidence to support your position. (RI.6-8.3)

CHAPTER 26: “FREEDOM FIGHTERS NEVER RETIRE”

Summary

In the late 1970s, Mrs. Parks experienced the deaths of her husband and her brother. Two years later her mother also died. Losing those family members were tremendous personal losses, but she continued fighting. She continued to be actively involved in local, national, and international freedom movements.

Vocabulary

- Implemented

Key Concepts

- Apartheid
- Sojourner Truth
- Harriet Tubman
- Underground Railroad

Text-based Questions

1. What does the statement “Freedom fighters never retire” (p. 258) mean? (RI.6-8.4)
 - a. Does this statement apply to Mrs. Parks? Explain your reasoning. (RI.6-8.1)
2. Mrs. Parks continued to receive honors and recognition into her seventies. According to the text, how did Mrs. Parks feel about being honored for her work in the past? (RI.6-8.1)

CHAPTER 27: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Summary

The author concludes the text reminding readers that the distorted narrative about Mrs. Parks strips her of her “substance and her boldness and the civil rights movement of its variety of organizers.” Mrs. Parks spent her life fighting the injustices faced by Black people. She believed in direct action and the need to disrupt systems. Until the very end, Mrs. Parks made it clear that the struggle continued.

Vocabulary

- Tenacity

Key Concepts

- Black Lives Matter

Text-based Questions

1. On pg. 270, the author poses the question: “So why do we get the ‘tired bus lady’ version when that story isn’t true?” After reading the text, how would you answer the question? (RI.6-8.1)
2. Visit rosaparksbiography.org to read about Mrs. Parks’s activism later in life. What message is the author trying to convey about Mrs. Parks by including that information? (RI.6-8.2)

ADDITIONAL DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

- Rosa Parks Biography
 - <https://rosaparksbiography.org/>
- Rosa Parks Papers Collection, Library of Congress
 - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/rosa-parks-papers/about-this-collection/>
- Academy of Achievement: Rosa Parks
 - <https://achievement.org/achiever/rosa-parks/#profile>
- The Rosa Parks Institute for Self-Development
 - <http://www.rosaparks.org/>
- Recy Taylor, Rosa Parks, and the Struggle for Racial Justice
 - <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/recy-taylor-rosa-parks-and-struggle-racial-justice>
- Eyes on the Prize Interviews: The Complete Series
 - http://digital.wustl.edu/e/eop/eopweb/eyes_index.html
- Digital SNCC Gateway
 - <https://snccdigital.org/>
- A Playlist for the Movement
 - <https://www.tolerance.org/podcasts/teaching-hard-history/civil-rights-movement/a-playlist-for-the-movement>
- Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow
 - <https://www.nyhistory.org/sites/default/files/newfiles/Black%20Citizenship%20in%20the%20Age%20of%20Jim%20Crow%20Curriculum.pdf>
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute
 - <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/>

About the Authors of *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* Young Readers' Edition



Jeanne Theoharis is Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College of City University of New York and the author or co-author of numerous books and articles on the civil rights and Black Power movements and the contemporary politics of race in the US. Her books include *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (winner of a 2014 NAACP Image Award) and *A More Beautiful and Terrible History* (winner of the 2018 Brooklyn Public Library Literary Prize for Nonfiction). Connect with her on Twitter (@JeanneTheoharis).



Brandy Colbert is the award-winning author of several books for children and teens, including *The Only Black Girls in Town*, *The Voting Booth*, and the Stonewall Book Award winner *Little & Lion*. She is the cowriter of *Misty Copeland's Life in Motion* young readers' edition. Her books have been chosen as Junior Library Guild selections and have appeared on many best-of lists, including the American Library Association's Best Fiction for Young Adults. She is on faculty at Hamline University's MFA program in writing for children and lives in Los Angeles.

About the Author of This Guide



Val Brown is the principal academic officer for a national nonprofit focused on advancing anti-racist curriculum and equipping anti-racist educators. Val previously worked in public K-12 education and higher education as a teacher, an instructional coach, a district administrator, and a professional learning specialist. In December 2016, she founded #ClearTheAir, a body of educators who believe that community, learning, and dialogue are essential to personal and professional growth.