

BECAUSE  
OF THEM  
WE CAN

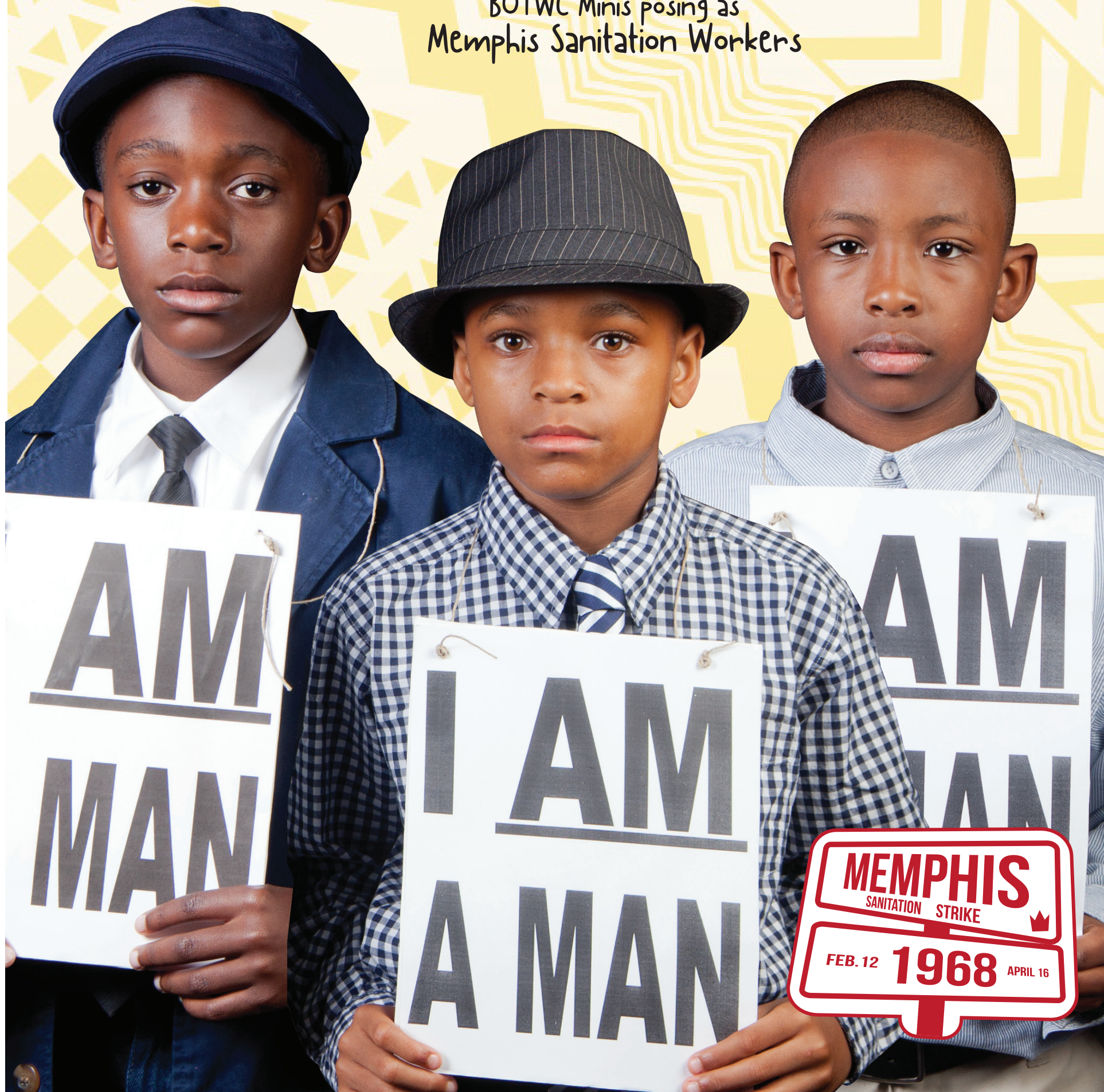
BOX

JUST FOR KIDS

# BECAUSE OF MEMPHIS SANITATION WORKERS

AGES 9-12

BOTWC Minis posing as  
Memphis Sanitation Workers



# THE STRIKE, THE LAST STRAW

Directions: Read the information below to learn about the Memphis Sanitation Workers' strike.



City Hall plaza April 8, 1968 after MLK Jr.'s was assassinated.



Memphis, like other cities in the South, had a long history of mistreating Black people. Despite Memphis being a city of many firsts for Black people, it also has an ugly history of negative events. One of those events was a key moment that led up to the Memphis Sanitation Workers' **strike**.



Echol Cole and Robert Walker were two Black male **sanitation workers**. The work was hard and often unsafe. They couldn't even find shelter during bad weather - they had to get in the back of garbage trucks. This is how Echol Cole and Robert Walker were killed. During a storm, they climbed in the back of a garbage truck and something caused it to come on, killing them. Before their deaths, that truck itself had issues but the cheap owners did not want to fix it. Their deaths were the last straw for many workers and on February 12th, 1968 thousands refused to go to work, in order to demand better working conditions and pay.

Martin Luther King Jr even supported the cause. He came to Memphis to support the strike and protest against the terrible working conditions. There was a march when people wore "I Am A Man" signs to show they were human. However, the march turned violent and a teenage boy was killed by the police. King wanted to come back to ensure a peaceful protest. He returned on April 3rd to speak and had his last public speech. He was **assassinated** the next day.

**Protest** was a way to try and get fair treatment. The strike of the Memphis Sanitation Workers started on February 12th, 1968, 11 days after the deaths of Cole and Walker. Workers were very upset by the deaths and the response to them. At first, the families did not get any money or help from the government or company. When they finally did, they only received a very small amount of money which did not even cover funeral costs. The workers were also tired of bad equipment, very low pay, and poor working conditions. The strike lasted until April 16th when the city agreed to raise the **wages**.

**H**istory was made during the Memphis Sanitation Workers' strike because this was the first successful strike. In 1966 the workers tried to strike but they did not have enough support from the community.

**I**ssues on the job: There was many problems with working as a sanitation worker. They were paid very little and had long and tiring hours. They could also be fired at any time. For years, sanitation workers complained but nothing was done. The strike was their way to get what they needed to survive.

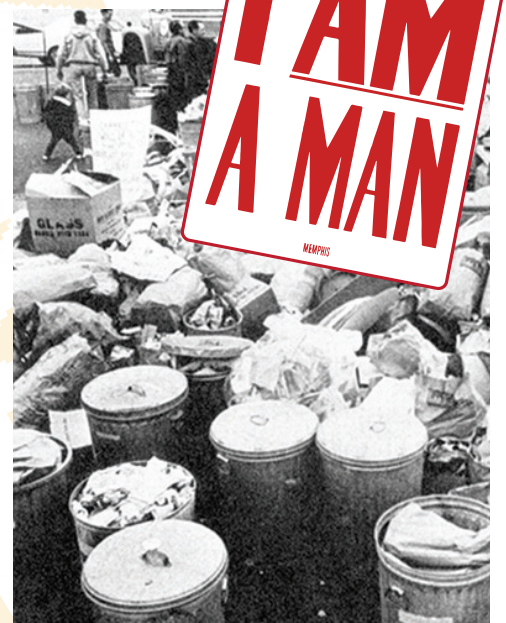
**S**anitation workers work in public health and help keep things clean and safe. Most sanitation workers at this time were Black men and they had jobs like getting the trash, taking it to the right place and keeping our neighborhoods clean.



# READ & RESPOND

Directions: You have just read and learned about the Memphis Sanitation Workers' strike. In the chart below, fill in the important details to answer what it was, why it happened, and how it started and ended.

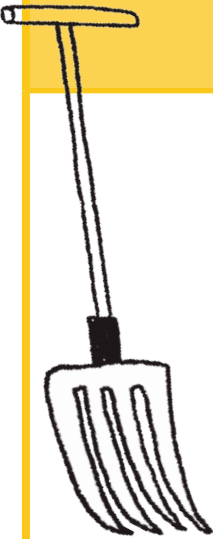
WHAT	
WHEN	
WHERE	
HOW	
WHY	



# COMPOST FOR A CLEANER WORLD

*Cleaning is a very important job and helps to make sure we are all safe! We can all help in different ways such as recycling and composting. Using your compost guide, fill in the chart below to make a list of items you can recycle or compost and a list of items you cannot.*



 <b>CAN RECYCLE</b>	<b>CANNOT RECYCLE</b>



**YOU CAN EVEN TRY TO RECYCLE WITH YOUR FAMILY THIS WEEK AND TEACH THEM HOW TO SEPARATE THE ITEMS!**

# FINDING THE AREA

Today we're going to find the area of some shapes! The area is the measurement of the space inside the shape.

There are two ways to find the area:

1. Count each square and add them all together.

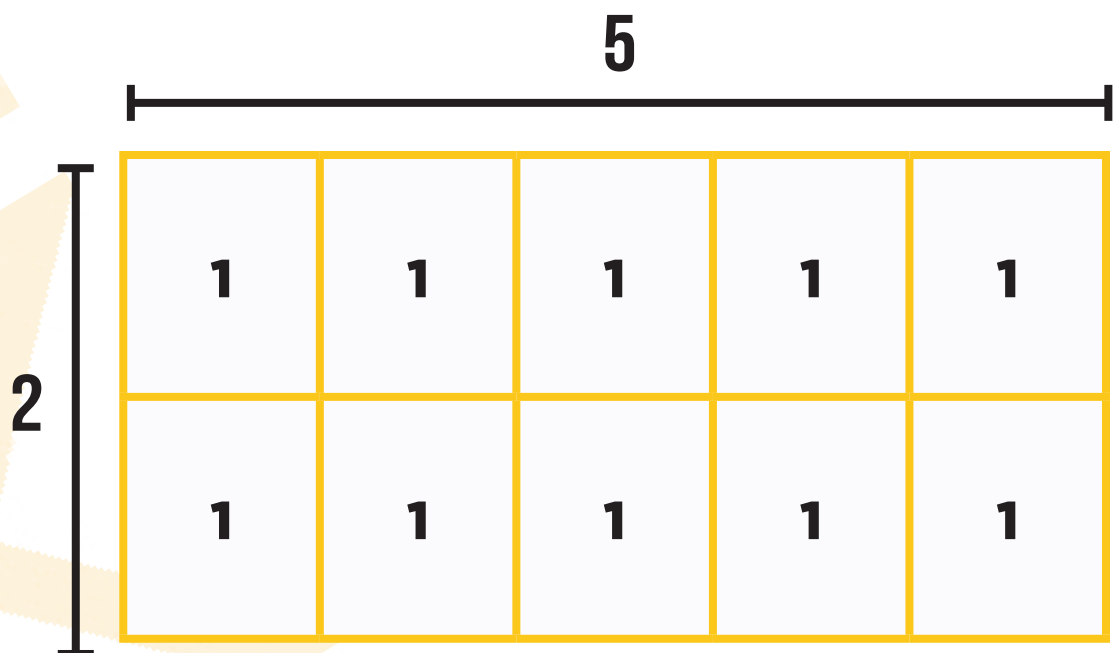
Example:

$$1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 = 10$$

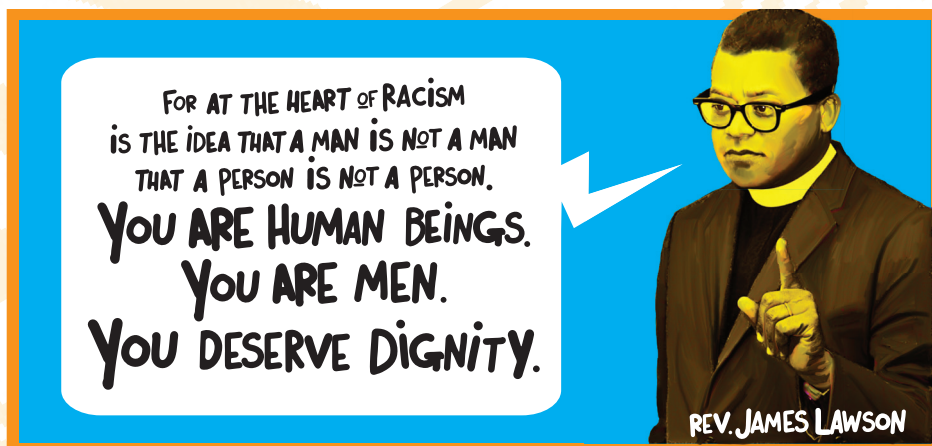
2. Count one row across and one down, and then multiply those numbers together.

Example:

$$2 \times 5 = 10$$



Let's find the area of some other shapes on the next page!



## GLOSSARY

**Sanitation Worker** - a person who works to keep places clean and free from dirt, infection, disease, etc., by removing garbage and recycling

**Strike** - to stop work in order to force an employer to agree to demands; to refuse to work until your employer does what you want

**Protest** - an event at which people gather together to show strong disapproval about something

**Assassinate** - to kill (someone, such as a famous or important person) usually for political reasons

**Wages** - money paid to workers for their labor

# COMPOSTING NUMBERS

Directions: Find the area by multiplying or by counting the squares.

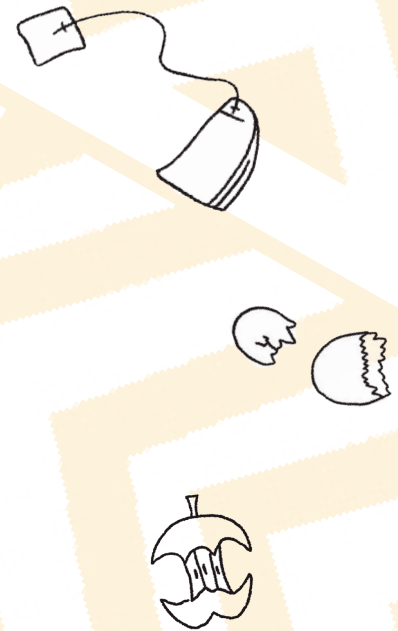
1)


2)

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3)


4)

ANSWER KEY: (1)  $3 \times 2 = 6$  (2)  $4 \times 1 = 4$  (3)  $3 \times 4 = 12$  (4)  $2 \times 4 = 8$

## TAKE THE PLEDGE

**I WILL HONOR**  
THE SACRIFICES OF  
MY ANCESTORS.

**I WILL BELIEVE**  
IN ME.

**I WILL PURSUE**  
MY DREAMS.

**I WILL HELP**  
OTHERS ALONG  
THE WAY.