

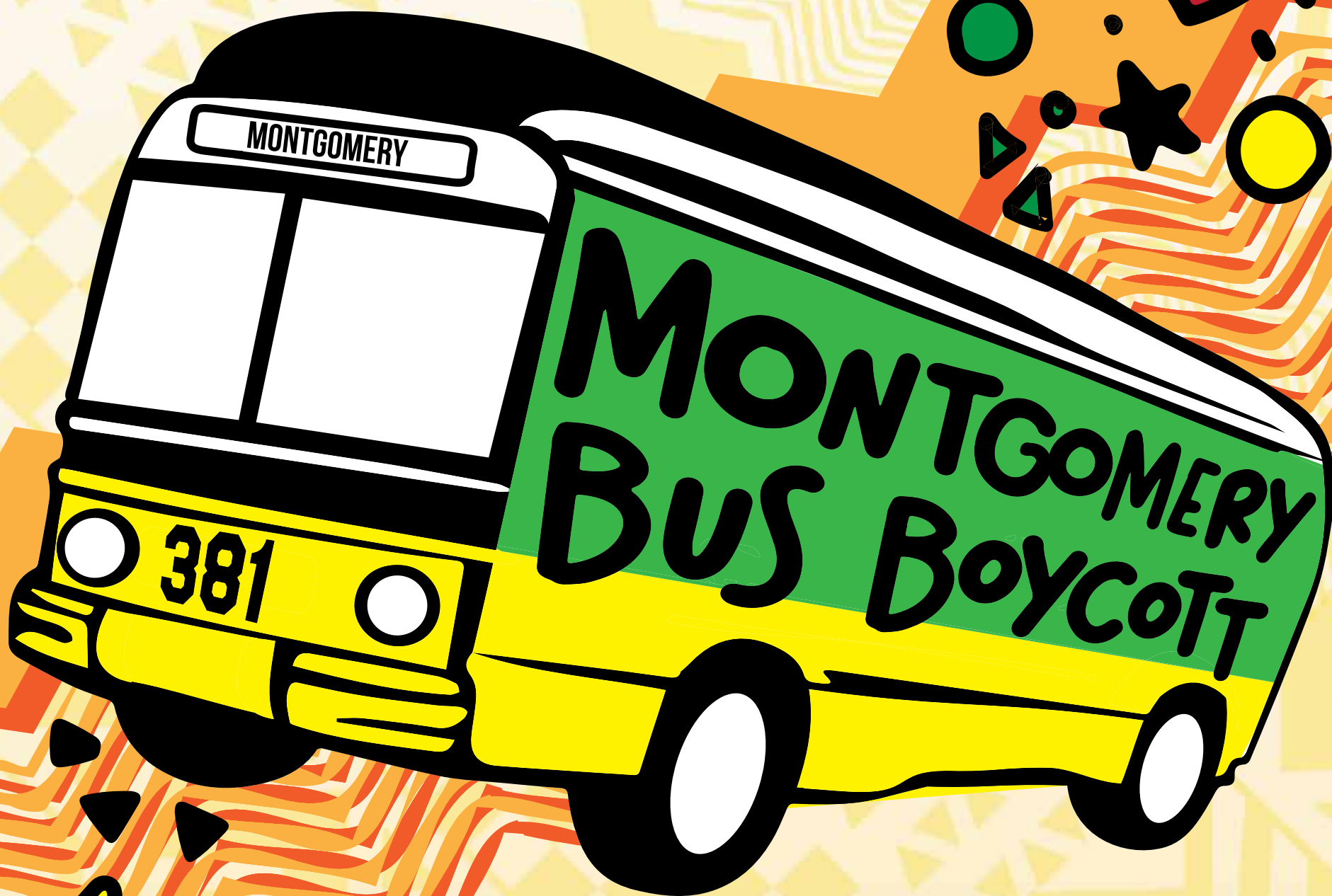
BECAUSE  
OF THEM  
WE CAN

BOX

JUST FOR KIDS

# BECAUSE OF THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

AGES 5-8



MEMORIES OF OUR LIVES, OF OUR WORKS AND  
OUR DEEDS WILL CONTINUE IN OTHERS.

- ROSA PARKS

# CLAUDETTE BEFORE ROSA



When people hear “**Montgomery Bus Boycott**,” they think of Rosa Parks. While Rosa Parks is important to The Civil Rights Movement, her choice to stay seated on a **segregated** bus was **inspired** by 15-year-old Claudette Colvin.

In March 1955, nine months before Rosa Parks’ **historical** moment, Claudette Colvin and her friends took the bus home from school. Back then, in Montgomery, Alabama, Black people were told that they had to sit on the back of the bus, and white people sat in the front. The bus driver could tell people where to sit and ask people to move. That day, all of the seats were taken and Claudette and her friends were seated in the middle of the bus.

A white passenger got on the bus, and the driver asked Claudette and her friends to move. Claudette’s friends moved, but Claudette did not. After the event,

Claudette said, “He wanted me to give up my seat for a white person, and I would have done it for an elderly person, but this was a young white woman. Three of the students had got up reluctantly, and I remained sitting next to the window.”

The driver, furious about Claudette’s actions, kept driving until he spotted a police car. The driver allowed the policemen to board the bus and question Claudette. Claudette still refused to give up her seat. The policemen grabbed Claudette and took her off of the bus. They put her in handcuffs and into the police car. They took Claudette to **jail**. Claudette was put in a small cell with nothing in it but a broken sink and a cot without a mattress. After three hours, Claudette’s mother and pastor came and took her home.

After Claudette was released, there were fears that her home would be attacked. Her community acted as lookouts, while Claudette’s father sat up all night with a shotgun in case the **Ku Klux Klan** turned up.

Claudette was the first person to be arrested for saying “no” to Montgomery’s bus **segregation** policies, so her story made a few local papers - but nine months later, the same act of defiance by Rosa Parks was reported all over the world.

The **NAACP**, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, received many letters of support about Claudette’s protest, and it sparked the idea for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. After Claudette’s arrest, she was **befriended** by a seasoned NAACP official named Rosa Parks. Claudette remembers Rosa as a reserved but kind woman who fixed her snacks of peanut butter on Ritz crackers.

The NAACP chose Rosa Parks to serve as the face of the Montgomery Bus Boycott because they felt an adult was more appropriate for the boycott. They set their plan into action. Nine months after Claudette’s original **protest**, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, as planned by the NAACP.

After this, many people stopped using Montgomery’s buses to end the policy that would not allow **hiring** of Black bus drivers and bus segregation. To continue the boycott, communities organized **carpools** and Montgomery’s Black taxi drivers charged only 10 cents - the same price as bus fare - for fellow African Americans.

A year later, on December 20, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation on the buses must end. The legal case used the **testimony** of Claudette Colvin.



# READ & WRITE

1. HOW DID CLAUDETTE COLVIN'S ACTIONS SPARK THE IDEA FOR MONTGOMERY'S BUS BOYCOTT?

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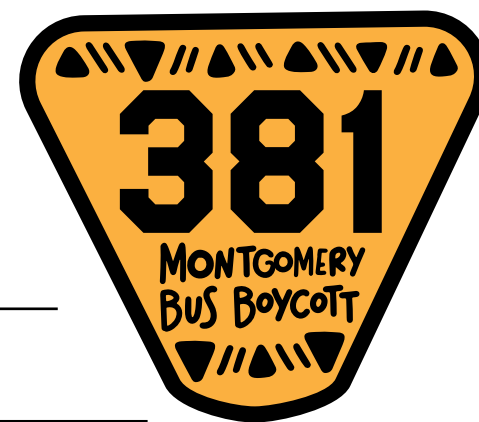
2. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CLAUDETTE'S FAMILY, BASED ON THE ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER HER PROTEST?

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## ▲ // ▲ // ▼ ▲ // ▲ // ▼ GLOSSARY ▲ // ▼ // ▼ ▲ // ▲ // ▼

**Montgomery Bus Boycott:** The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a civil-rights protest during which African Americans refused to ride city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating.

**Jail:** a place where people are kept when they have been arrested and are being punished for a crime.

**NAACP:** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

**Segregation:** the action or state of setting someone or something apart from other people or things or being set apart.

**Ku Klux Klan:** a secret organization in the U.S. that is made up of white people who are opposed to people of other races.

**Befriended:** to become a friend to (someone.)

**Protest:** to show or express strong disagreement with or disapproval of something

**Hiring:** to give work or a job to (someone) in exchange for wages or a salary

**Carpools:** a group of people who regularly share a car when they are going to and from their jobs or who take turns driving each other's children to school, activities, etc.

**Testimony:** a formal written or spoken statement, especially one given in a court of law.

**Inspired:** of extraordinary quality, as if arising from some external creative impulse.

# REWRITING HISTORY



Claudette Colvin credits her schooling in an all-Black school rooted in Black History for her protest. She says the month that she didn't give up her seat was a month after Negro History Month (now Black History Month). If it weren't for stories of Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and more, she wouldn't have channeled the defiance that led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Claudette also says that at the time, the NAACP didn't feel like a teenager was the right choice for the face of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. They chose to use Rosa Parks instead. We know that children, teenagers, and young people all over the world have changed the course of history for years. We must tell accurate history to inspire future generations. You are the next generation.

**DIRECTIONS:** Below, you'll find a short text about Rosa Parks. Read it closely. The paragraph is a summary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott that you will find in most history classrooms across the world. After reading about Claudette Colvin, YOU know that there's more to the story. We want you to rewrite history for the generations to come. Below the paragraph about Rosa Parks, we challenge you to rewrite the passage and include both Claudette Colvin and Rosa Parks' story. We can't wait to read your work!



## ROSA PARKS

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a civil-rights protest during which African Americans refused to ride city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating. The boycott took place from December 5, 1955, to December 20, 1956, and is one of the first large protests against segregation. Four days before the boycott began, Rosa Parks, an African American woman, was arrested and fined for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man. Her bravery led to nationwide efforts to end racial segregation.

Rosa Parks' childhood brought her early experiences with racism and a fight for racial equality. In one experience, Parks' grandfather stood in front of their house watching Ku Klux Klan members march down the street.

Rosa Parks became 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 job she held until 1957.

# BECAUSE OF CLAUDETTE & ROSA

**Directions:** On the profiles below, we challenge you to write three facts about Rosa Parks and Claudette Colvin underneath their picture. Don't forget to color them in! We can't wait to read your work!



1.

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1.

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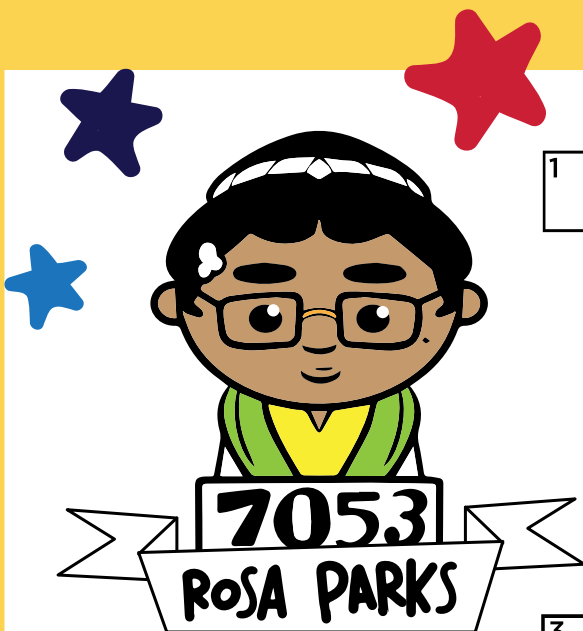
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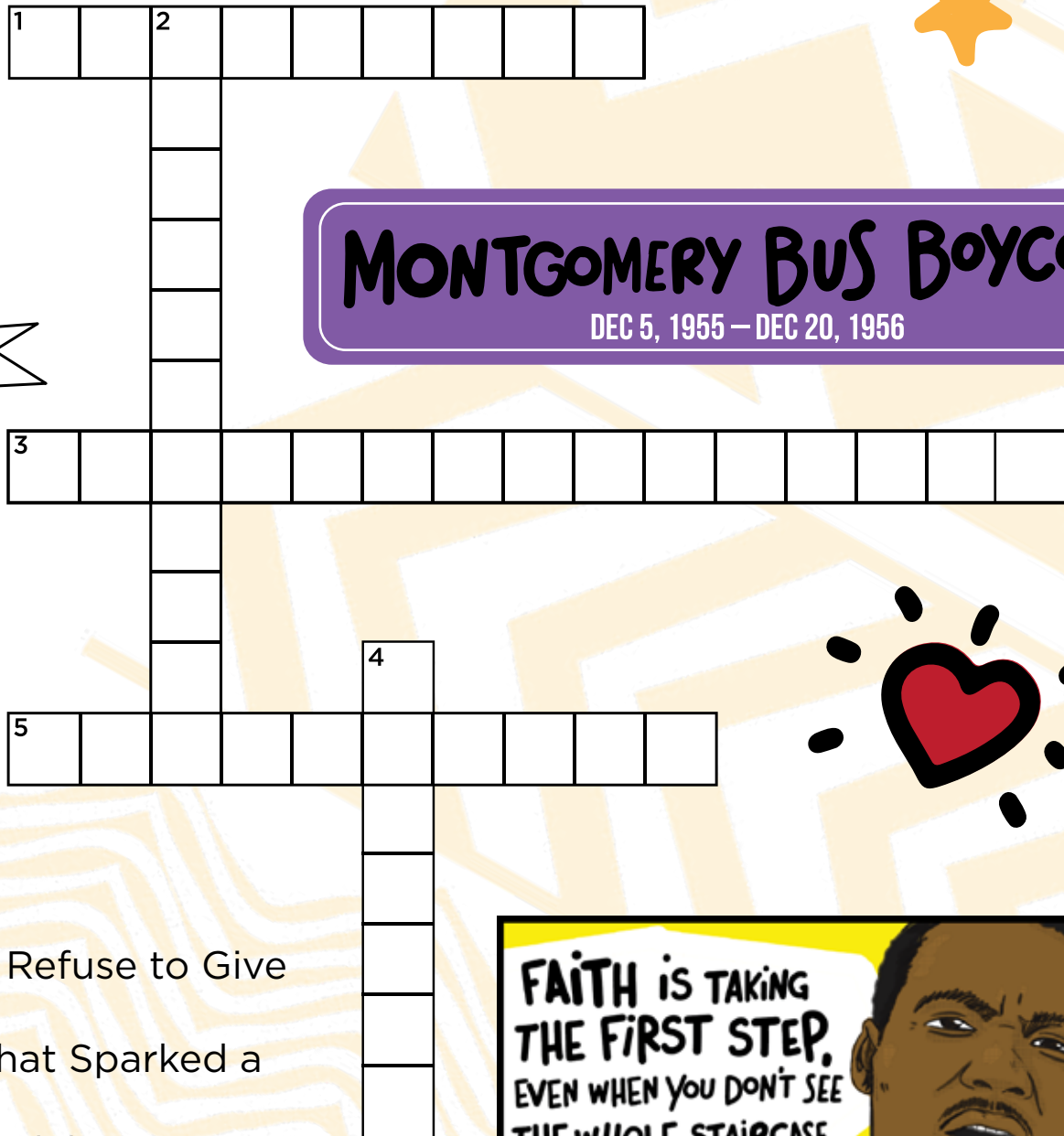
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# CROSSWORD



**MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT**  
DEC 5, 1955 – DEC 20, 1956



**ACROSS:**

- 1. The 2nd Woman to Refuse to Give Up Her Bus Seat.
- 3. A 15 Year Old Girl that Sparked a Movement.
- 5. The Capital City of Alabama.

**DOWN:**

- 2. The Action or State of Setting Someone or Something Apart from Other People or Things Being Set Apart.
- 4. To refuse to Buy, Use, or Participate in (something) as a way of protesting.



ANSWERS: (1) Rosa Parks (2) Segregation (3) Claudette Colvin (4) Boycott (5) Montgomery

## 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.