

The Civil Rights Movement

Homework #2
American Nation Pages 852-854
American Journey pages: 840-842

Directions: Read the textbook pages and use the information to answer the following questions. You must read and understand all of the pages to answer the questions. **You must write in complete sentences. Explain your answers completely.**

The Montgomery Bus Boycott officially started on December 1, 1955. That was the day when the blacks of Montgomery, Alabama, decided that they would boycott the city buses until they could sit anywhere they wanted, instead of being relegated to the back when a white boarded. It was not, however, the day that the movement to desegregate the buses started. Perhaps the movement started on the day in 1943 when a black seamstress named **Rosa Parks** paid her bus fare and then watched the bus drive off as she tried to re-enter through the rear door, as the driver had told her to do. Perhaps the movement started on the day in 1949 when a black professor Jo Ann Robinson absentmindedly sat at the front of a nearly empty bus, then ran off in tears when the bus driver screamed at her for doing so. Perhaps the movement started on the day in the early 1950s when a black pastor named Vernon Johns tried to get other blacks to leave a bus in protest after he was forced to give up his seat to a white man, only to have them tell him, "You ought to know better."



1. Using the information from the reading above explain why you believe African Americans would protest and complain about having to sit in the back of the bus.

In 1953, at the age of twenty-four, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to comply with the **Jim Crow laws** that required her to give up her seat to a white man. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, led by King, soon followed. The boycott lasted for 382 days, the situation becoming so tense that King's house was bombed. King was arrested during this campaign, which ended with a United States Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation on all public transport.



Quote #1 "You Know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression....We are determined here in Montgomery...to work and fight until justice runs down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream!"

Quote #2 "We're here because, first and foremost, we are American citizens, and we are determined to acquire our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning. We are tired—tired of being segregated and humiliated, tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression."

2. Read the two quotes by Martin Luther King Jr. and explain his message to his followers. Beyond where they sat on the bus, what was the purpose of the protests on which King was leading them?

Quote #1

Quote #2

I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law.

—Martin Luther King, Jr. Speech

Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary.

Mohandas Gandhi

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.

Mohandas Gandhi

3. Martin Luther King Jr. preached the protest strategies of **non-violent protest** and **civil disobedience**. Read the quotations above from King and Gandhi and explain what each man meant in the quotation.

King:

Gandhi

Gandhi

NY State just passed a law stating that all students in the state must wear uniforms to school everyday. The punishment for not wearing the uniform is as follows:

- 1st time you are sent home for the day.
- 2nd time your parents must come to school and pay a \$100 fine
- 3rd time you and your parents go to jail for the evening
- After the 3rd offense you and your parents are arrested and must go to trial with the possibility that you will be removed from your home and placed in foster care and or spend up to a year in prison.

4a. Assume that the law and punishments above were true and your parents were as upset and outraged by them as you were. Create a plan to try and lead your fellow students in protesting this new law. Devise a plan of action which uses non-violent protest and civil disobedience (the ideas of King and Gandhi) to protest and hopefully get the law overturned. Be realistic in what you would do, remember the more people you get to join your protest the more likely you will succeed.

4b. Your protest has created a stir in Albany and the governor has decided to send in the national guard to help the local police enforce the new law. Would you be willing to pay the penalty for breaking the law? Do you feel it would be worth it if the law were overturned allowing future students (even though you will be in jail for a while) the chance to celebrate the freedom you helped to secure for them with your sacrifice?