On December 1, 1955, our Nation was forever transformed when an African-American seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white passenger. Just wanting to get home after a long day at work, Rosa Parks may not have been planning to make history, but her defiance spurred a movement that advanced our journey toward justice and equality for all.

Though Rosa Parks was not the first to confront the injustice of segregation laws, her courageous act of civil disobedience sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott -- 381 days of peaceful protest when ordinary men, women, and children sent the extraordinary message that second-class citizenship was unacceptable. Rather than ride in the back of buses, families and friends walked. Neighborhoods and churches formed carpools. Their actions stirred the conscience of Americans of every background, and their resilience in the face of fierce violence and intimidation ultimately led to the desegregation of public transportation systems across our country.
Rosa Parks's story did not end with the boycott she inspired. A lifelong champion of civil rights, she continued to give voice to the poor and the marginalized among us until her passing on October 24, 2005.

As we mark the 100th anniversary of Rosa Parks's birth, we celebrate the life of a genuine American hero and remind ourselves that although the principle of equality has always been self-evident, it has never been self-executing. It has taken acts of courage from generations of fearless and hopeful Americans to make our country more just. As heirs to the progress won by those who came before us, let us pledge not only to honor their legacy, but also to take up their cause of perfecting our Union.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 4, 2013, as the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Rosa Parks. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate service, community, and education programs to honor Rosa Parks's enduring legacy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

1. What did Rosa Parks refuse to do on December 1, 1955?
   A. give up her bus seat to a white person
   B. ride on the Montgomery city buses
   C. give up on the Montgomery Bus Boycott
   D. accept second-class citizenship

2. What was the direct effect of Rosa Park’s civil disobedience?
   A. Other African-Americans refused to give up their bus seats.
   B. African-Americans realized they were being treated unjustly.
   C. African-Americans boycotted the Montgomery buses.
   D. December 1st became a national holiday.

3. Through the Montgomery Bus Boycott, African-Americans showed they were tired of being treated as inferior to white Americans. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?
   A. “Though Rosa Parks was not the first to confront the injustice of segregation laws, her courageous act of civil disobedience sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott.”
   B. “Ordinary men, women, and children sent the extraordinary message that second-class citizenship was unacceptable.”
   C. “Their resilience in the face of fierce violence and intimidation ultimately led to the desegregation of public transportation systems across our country.”
   D. “Rather than ride in the back of buses, families and friends walked. Neighborhoods and churches formed carpools.”

4. What was the main reason why President Obama gave this speech?
   A. to remind Americans of the injustices faced by African-Americans
   B. to teach Americans about the life and work of Rosa Parks
   C. to encourage Americans to do acts of civil disobedience
   D. to honor Rosa Parks and ask Americans to observe her birthday

5. What is this passage mostly about?
   A. the legacy of Rosa Parks
   B. the Montgomery Bus Boycott
   C. desegregation of public transportation
   D. the merits of civil disobedience
6. Read the following sentences: “On December 1, 1955, our Nation was forever transformed when an African-American seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white passenger. Just wanting to get home after a long day at work, Rosa Parks may not have been planning to make history, but her **defiance** spurred a movement that advanced our journey toward justice and equality for all.”

What does “**defiance**” mean as used in this sentence?

- A act of stopping something from happening
- B permission to do something
- C refusal to obey someone or something
- D act of accepting the authority of someone

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

For 381 days, African-Americans boycotted the city buses in Montgomery; __________, this boycott led to the desegregation of public transportation across America.

- A however
- B ultimately
- C particularly
- D namely

8. What does President Obama call on Americans to do on February 4, 2013?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
9. What was the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and what message did it hope to send?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

10. “Although the principle of equality has always been self-evident, it has never been self-executing. It has taken acts of courage from generations of fearless and hopeful Americans to make our country more just.”

Explain what this quote means and how it relates to Rosa Parks.
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 1410

1. What did Rosa Parks refuse to do on December 1, 1955?

A give up her bus seat to a white person  
B ride on the Montgomery city buses  
C give up on the Montgomery Bus Boycott  
D accept second-class citizenship

2. What was the direct effect of Rosa Park’s civil disobedience?

A Other African-Americans refused to give up their bus seats.  
B African-Americans realized they were being treated unjustly.  
C African-Americans boycotted the Montgomery buses.  
D December 1st became a national holiday.

3. Through the Montgomery Bus Boycott, African-Americans showed they were tired of being treated as inferior to white Americans. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

A “Though Rosa Parks was not the first to confront the injustice of segregation laws, her courageous act of civil disobedience sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott.”  
B “Ordinary men, women, and children sent the extraordinary message that second-class citizenship was unacceptable.”  
C “Their resilience in the face of fierce violence and intimidation ultimately led to the desegregation of public transportation systems across our country.”  
D “Rather than ride in the back of buses, families and friends walked. Neighborhoods and churches formed carpools.”

4. What was the main reason why President Obama gave this speech?

A to remind Americans of the injustices faced by African-Americans  
B to teach Americans about the life and work of Rosa Parks  
C to encourage Americans to do acts of civil disobedience  
D to honor Rosa Parks and ask Americans to observe her birthday

5. What is this passage mostly about?

A the legacy of Rosa Parks  
B the Montgomery Bus Boycott  
C desegregation of public transportation  
D the merits of civil disobedience
6. Read the following sentences: “On December 1, 1955, our Nation was forever transformed when an African-American seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white passenger. Just wanting to get home after a long day at work, Rosa Parks may not have been planning to make history, but her **defiance** spurred a movement that advanced our journey toward justice and equality for all.”

What does “**defiance**” mean as used in this sentence?

- A  act of stopping something from happening
- B  permission to do something
- C  refusal to obey someone or something
- D  act of accepting the authority of someone

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

For 381 days, African-Americans boycotted the city buses in Montgomery; __________, this boycott led to the desegregation of public transportation across America.

- A  however
- B  ultimately
- C  particularly
- D  namely

8. What does President Obama call on Americans to do on February 4, 2013?

**Suggested answer:** President Obama calls on Americans to observe the day as the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Rosa Parks “with appropriate service, community, and education programs to honor Rosa Parks’s enduring legacy.”

9. What was the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and what message did it hope to send?

**Suggested answer:** The Montgomery Bus Boycott was “381 days of peaceful protest when ordinary men, women, and children sent the extraordinary message that second-class citizenship was unacceptable. Rather than ride in the back of buses, families and friends walked.”

10. “Although the principle of equality has always been self-evident, it has never been self-executing. It has taken acts of courage from generations of fearless and hopeful Americans to make our country more just.”

Explain what this quote means and how it relates to Rosa Parks.

**Suggested answer:** Answers may vary and should be supported by the passage. Students should indicate that the quote means that while equality among people is clearly true and requires no proof, equality will not take effect without action. America has become more just and equal through the acts of its people. The quote relates to Rosa Parks because she took action towards equality by refusing second-class citizenship and fighting for freedom throughout her life, most notably when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white person and caused a boycott of the Montgomery buses.