Steps Toward Change

How Alabamians worked together to change Montgomery's buses

SS24.5.12c "Describe the contributions of Alabama leaders and foot soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement as well as other Alabamian supporters who aided their efforts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what Rosa Parks and E. D. Nixon did, circle what everyday protesters did, and number the two ways Fred Gray helped. These marks will help you see how different people contributed to the same goal.

Changing Montgomery's Buses

1. In 1955, Montgomery's buses had rules that treated Black riders unfairly. Rosa Parks, an Alabama civil rights leader, refused to give up her seat to a white rider and was arrested. E. D. Nixon, a longtime Montgomery organizer, helped bring community leaders together to plan a bus boycott. They asked Black residents to stop riding the buses to push for fair treatment.

2. A boycott needs more than leaders. Thousands of Montgomery residents walked long distances or shared rides instead of taking the bus. Their daily choices kept the protest going for more than a year. Claudette Colvin, a Black teenager from Montgomery, had refused to give up her bus seat months before Parks. She later joined a court case that challenged the city's bus rules.

3. Legal help also mattered. Fred Gray, a Black lawyer born in Montgomery, represented Parks and Colvin. He filed a case for Colvin and three other women who had faced unfair treatment on buses. In 1956, a federal court ruled that bus segregation was unconstitutional. The court case and the long boycott worked in different ways, but both helped end segregation on Montgomery's buses.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did E. D. Nixon help turn Parks's arrest into a larger protest?

2. What did Montgomery residents do to keep the boycott going, and why did it matter?

3. How did Claudette Colvin contribute before and during the court fight?

4. How did Fred Gray support the effort to change Montgomery's bus rules?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum sign explaining how an Alabama leader, everyday protesters, and an Alabama supporter worked toward the same goal. End with your own idea about why all three kinds of work mattered.

ANSWER KEY

Steps Toward Change

GRADE 5 · SS24.5.12c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what Rosa Parks and E. D. Nixon did, circle what everyday protesters did, and number the two ways Fred Gray helped. These marks will help you see how different people contributed to the same goal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did E. D. Nixon help turn Parks's arrest into a larger protest?	**He brought community leaders together to plan a bus boycott.**
2	What did Montgomery residents do to keep the boycott going, and why did it matter?	**They walked or shared rides instead of taking the bus. Their daily choices kept the protest going for more than a year.**
3	How did Claudette Colvin contribute before and during the court fight?	**She refused to give up her bus seat, then joined a court case challenging the bus rules.**
4	How did Fred Gray support the effort to change Montgomery's bus rules?	**He represented Parks and Colvin and filed a case for Colvin and three other women.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

E. D. Nixon helped organize a boycott after Rosa Parks was arrested. Montgomery residents walked or shared rides, so the protest kept going. Fred Gray filed a court case for women treated unfairly on buses. All three kinds of work mattered because planning, daily action, and legal help put pressure on the unfair rules in different ways.

Accept other passage-supported examples, including Parks as a leader or Colvin as a participant. The museum sign should connect each person's or group's contribution to the shared goal of ending bus segregation.