Change Takes People

Leaders and foot soldiers in Alabama's civil rights movement

SS24.AS.16c "Identify civil rights leaders and foot soldiers in Alabama, and explain their contributions to fostering change in the state."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline people who organized a campaign, and circle people or groups whose actions kept it going. Number each marked person or group and the action in the passage that shows their contribution with the same number.

From Montgomery to Selma

1. In Montgomery in 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger and was arrested under segregation laws. Her action helped spark a boycott of the city's buses. Jo Ann Robinson, a leader of the Women's Political Council, worked with others to print and distribute thousands of leaflets calling for a one-day bus protest. Local Black residents then kept the boycott going for more than a year. Many walked miles to work instead of riding segregated buses. Their daily choices turned Parks's arrest into sustained pressure on Montgomery's bus system.

2. The boycott depended on people whose names rarely appeared in speeches. Georgia Gilmore, a Montgomery cook, organized women who sold food and used the money to support the boycott. Volunteer drivers gave neighbors rides when walking was too difficult. At the same time, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., chosen to lead the Montgomery Improvement Association, spoke at meetings and helped coordinate the campaign. Leaders organized public action, while foot soldiers made it possible to continue each day. In 1956, a federal court ruling against bus segregation took effect, and the boycott ended.

3. In Selma, many Black Alabamians faced barriers to registering to vote, including unfair tests and intimidation. Amelia Boynton Robinson helped organize voter registration efforts and opened her home to activists. In March 1965, she joined a voting-rights march toward Montgomery. State troopers attacked marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, an event seen on national television. Local residents who lined up to register, attended meetings, and marched were foot soldiers in the campaign. Their persistence, together with the work of organizers, drew national attention to Alabama's voting barriers. Congress passed the Voting Rights Act later that year, suspending literacy tests in covered areas and expanding federal protection for voting rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Jo Ann Robinson help turn Rosa Parks's arrest into a campaign for change?

2. Identify one Montgomery foot soldier or group of foot soldiers. How did their actions help sustain the boycott?

3. What did Amelia Boynton Robinson do to support the voting-rights campaign in Selma?

4. Identify a group of Selma foot soldiers. How did their actions help push for change?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label comparing the Montgomery and Selma campaigns. Name one leader and one group of foot soldiers from each campaign, explain how each contributed to change, and describe one difference between the campaigns' methods.

ANSWER KEY

Change Takes People

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.16c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline people who organized a campaign, and circle people or groups whose actions kept it going. Number each marked person or group and the action in the passage that shows their contribution with the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Jo Ann Robinson help turn Rosa Parks's arrest into a campaign for change?	**Robinson worked with others to print and distribute leaflets calling for a bus protest, helping launch the boycott.**
2	Identify one Montgomery foot soldier or group of foot soldiers. How did their actions help sustain the boycott?	**Volunteer drivers gave neighbors rides, helping them avoid segregated buses throughout the boycott.**
3	What did Amelia Boynton Robinson do to support the voting-rights campaign in Selma?	**She helped organize voter registration, opened her home to activists, and joined a march toward Montgomery.**
4	Identify a group of Selma foot soldiers. How did their actions help push for change?	**Local residents registered to vote, attended meetings, and marched. Their persistence drew national attention to voting barriers in Alabama.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In Montgomery, Jo Ann Robinson helped launch a bus boycott by arranging leaflets that called for a protest. Volunteer drivers kept the boycott going by taking neighbors where they needed to go. In Selma, Amelia Boynton Robinson organized voter registration and welcomed activists into her home. Residents who registered and marched kept pressure on officials despite intimidation. Montgomery's campaign challenged segregated buses through a long boycott, while Selma's campaign challenged voting barriers through registration and marches. Both show that organizers needed other participants to sustain their campaigns.

Accept other passage-supported examples, including Montgomery residents who walked and Selma residents who attended meetings. A person may have organized others while also doing the daily work of a campaign.