Boycott in Motion

Track how a local protest becomes a larger civil rights campaign.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 "Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show the boycott's goal or methods. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside three events that show how the action grew or changed over time.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

1 On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a Black seamstress and NAACP volunteer, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus. Police arrested her for violating the city's segregation rules. Local activists had discussed challenging bus segregation before Parks's arrest, and they saw a chance to act. Jo Ann Robinson and other members of the Women's Political Council quickly prepared leaflets calling for Black residents to avoid city buses on December 5, the day of Parks's trial. The protest aimed to show that the bus system depended heavily on Black riders.

2 On December 5, thousands of Black residents stayed off the buses, while Parks was convicted and fined. That evening, community leaders formed the Montgomery Improvement Association and chose Martin Luther King Jr. as its president. What began as a one-day protest became a continuing boycott. Participants walked long distances, shared rides in organized carpools, and raised money to support transportation. The association first asked for respectful treatment, first-come seating, and Black drivers on routes serving Black neighborhoods. As the boycott continued, city officials tried to weaken it through arrests, lawsuits, and pressure on carpool drivers. The conflict became a test of whether sustained local cooperation could challenge segregation.

3 The boycott lasted 381 days and drew national attention. Meanwhile, a separate federal case, Browder v. Gayle, challenged Alabama's bus segregation laws. In June 1956, a federal district court ruled that those laws were unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that decision in November, and its final order reached Montgomery in December. On December 21, 1956, the city began operating desegregated buses. The result did not end racial discrimination in Montgomery, and many participants still faced danger. However, the boycott showed how a local protest could expand through careful organization and legal action, creating a major victory in the wider civil rights movement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the central idea of the passage? State it in one sentence.

2. How does paragraph 1 establish the boycott's purpose and starting point? Use two details from the paragraph.

3. What changed after the December 5 protest? Explain how two actions in paragraph 2 show that the boycott became a longer campaign.

4. How does the final paragraph develop the passage's central idea? Explain the role of Browder v. Gayle and its result.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 100 word objective summary of the passage. State the central idea and explain at least three key events or ideas in chronological order, without adding opinions or outside information.

ANSWER KEY

Boycott in Motion

HIGH SCHOOL · RH.9-10.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that show the boycott's goal or methods. Number 1, 2, and 3 beside three events that show how the action grew or changed over time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the central idea of the passage? State it in one sentence.	**The passage explains how the Montgomery bus boycott grew from a one-day protest into a sustained campaign that used community organization and legal action to end bus segregation.**
2	How does paragraph 1 establish the boycott's purpose and starting point? Use two details from the paragraph.	**Parks's arrest gave activists a chance to act, and the leaflets called for Black residents to avoid buses on December 5 to show the system's dependence on Black riders.**
3	What changed after the December 5 protest? Explain how two actions in paragraph 2 show that the boycott became a longer campaign.	**The protest became an ongoing boycott. The Montgomery Improvement Association formed, and participants organized carpools, walked, and raised money to continue transportation.**
4	How does the final paragraph develop the passage's central idea? Explain the role of Browder v. Gayle and its result.	**It shows that legal action joined the local boycott. Court rulings found bus segregation unconstitutional, and Montgomery began operating desegregated buses after the final order arrived.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Montgomery bus boycott grew from an organized response to Rosa Parks's arrest into a sustained challenge to segregation. Activists first called for Black residents to stay off buses on the day of her trial. After the successful protest, the Montgomery Improvement Association organized carpools and continued the boycott despite official resistance. Later, the court case Browder v. Gayle led to rulings against bus segregation. When the final order arrived, Montgomery began using desegregated buses, demonstrating the impact of organized local action and legal strategy.

Accept central ideas that connect the boycott's growth with organized community action and legal action. For the summary, accept equivalent accurate events in chronological order, as long as the response remains objective and stays within 80 to 100 words.