# Questions That Investigate

Build focused questions from claims about the Montgomery bus boycott.

**6.P.4.2.A** "Refine and formulate viable research questions related to social studies investigations, using well-developed theses or claims."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two statements about how the boycott worked or ended, then circle a date, group, or action that could narrow a research question about each statement.

### How Did the Boycott Continue?

1. In December 1955, Black residents of Montgomery, Alabama, began a boycott of the city's segregated buses after police arrested Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. Many people stopped riding the buses. Some walked long distances to work, while others shared rides in carpools. Volunteers drove passengers and helped arrange pickups. The protest lasted more than a year, so getting to work and school without city buses was a daily problem, not just a one-day decision.

2. Local churches hosted meetings where boycott leaders shared plans and people gathered to hear updates. Residents also raised money to pay for gas and other costs of the carpools. These actions give historians clues about how the protest continued. A donation record could show money raised for gas, while a driver's account could describe the work of a carpool. One source may show what organizers planned; another may reveal what riders experienced. A useful inquiry asks about a specific connection that such sources could help explain.

3. In November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a ruling that bus segregation in Montgomery was unconstitutional. The boycott ended the next month, after the ruling took effect and city buses were integrated. These events suggest a claim worth examining: the court decision shaped when the boycott ended. To investigate a claim, start with a question narrow enough to guide a search for evidence. It should name a place, people, event, or action, and ask how or why things connect. A question should not assume that one source tells the whole story.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Claim: Organized rides helped people continue the protest. Write a focused research question that could test this claim.

2. Revise “Were churches important?” into a research question about a specific church action and its possible effect on the boycott.

3. Revise “Did the court end the boycott?” into a question that examines the link between the November ruling and the boycott's end in December.

4. Claim: Money raised for gas helped keep the carpools running. Write a question that could test this claim, and name two kinds of sources mentioned in the passage that could help.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write your own claim about Rosa Parks's arrest, walking, or bus ridership during the boycott. Then write a focused research question that could test your claim and name one kind of source you would seek.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 6 · 6.P.4.2.A

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two statements about how the boycott worked or ended, then circle a date, group, or action that could narrow a research question about each statement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Claim: Organized rides helped people continue the protest. Write a focused research question that could test this claim. | **How did Montgomery's carpools help residents avoid city buses during the boycott?** |
| 2 | Revise "Were churches important?" into a research question about a specific church action and its possible effect on the boycott. | **How did meetings at Montgomery churches help leaders share boycott plans with residents?** |
| 3 | Revise "Did the court end the boycott?" into a question that examines the link between the November ruling and the boycott's end in December. | **How did the November 1956 court ruling affect the decision to end the Montgomery bus boycott in December?** |
| 4 | Claim: Money raised for gas helped keep the carpools running. Write a question that could test this claim, and name two kinds of sources mentioned in the passage that could help. | **How did money raised for gas support Montgomery's carpools? Donation records and drivers' accounts could help answer this question.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Claim: Rosa Parks's arrest helped spark the boycott. Question: How did news of her arrest affect Black residents' decisions to stop riding Montgomery buses in December 1955? I would seek interviews with residents who took part.

Accept other focused questions that investigate the stated claim and name relevant people, actions, or dates. For Part 3, accept a source the student could reasonably seek, even if it is not mentioned in the passage.