

Views on the Bus

Trace how historical context shaped perspectives during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

7.20.D "identify bias and points of view from the historical context surrounding an event that influenced the participants;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show historical conditions, circle words that reveal bias, and write 1 and 2 beside statements that show two different viewpoints. These marks will help you connect each participant's experiences and interests to that person's point of view.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

- ① In 1955, Montgomery, Alabama, required Black passengers to sit behind white passengers on city buses. Black riders paid the same fare, yet drivers could force them to give up seats. After Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to surrender her seat to a white man, local activists called for Black residents to avoid the buses. Many Black workers depended on buses, but they also faced daily humiliation under segregation. This context shaped why the boycott began for many of its participants.
- ② Black community leaders, including ministers and members of the Montgomery Improvement Association, organized carpools, walking routes, and meetings. Their point of view focused on dignity, equal treatment, and the power of united action. A Black domestic worker who walked miles to work might see the boycott as a difficult sacrifice worth making. Her experience with bus rules and limited job choices could make her support especially strong. This viewpoint does not mean every Black resident had identical needs or opinions.
- ③ White city officials and bus company leaders often saw the boycott differently. They worried that fewer riders would reduce bus income and weaken city control over segregated public spaces. A newspaper editor who supported segregation might describe boycotters as causing disorder, revealing bias through that word choice. In contrast, a boycott organizer might call the same action peaceful protest. After more than a year, a federal court decision ended bus segregation in Montgomery. The event shows how a participant's role, interests, and experiences can shape a point of view.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which historical conditions in Montgomery help explain why activists called for a bus boycott?

2 How might the domestic worker's experience lead her to support the boycott, while city officials might oppose it?

3 What bias is suggested when the editor calls the boycotters "causing disorder"?

4 Why might an organizer call the boycott "peaceful protest" instead of "causing disorder"?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine you are a Montgomery bus driver during the boycott. Write exactly four sentences that explain your point of view, include one historical detail from the passage, and identify one interest that could create bias.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show historical conditions, circle words that reveal bias, and write 1 and 2 beside statements that show two different viewpoints. These marks will help you connect each participant's experiences and interests to that person's point of view. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which historical conditions in Montgomery help explain why activists called for a bus boycott?	Segregation forced Black passengers to sit behind white passengers and allowed drivers to make them give up seats. Black riders paid the same fare while facing unfair treatment.
2	How might the domestic worker's experience lead her to support the boycott, while city officials might oppose it?	The worker faced unfair bus rules and limited job choices, so she might see walking as a sacrifice worth making for equal treatment. City officials worried about lost bus income and losing control over segregated public spaces.
3	What bias is suggested when the editor calls the boycotters "causing disorder"?	The word "disorder" suggests that the editor supports segregation and sees the boycott as a problem rather than as a challenge to unfair laws.
4	Why might an organizer call the boycott "peaceful protest" instead of "causing disorder"?	An organizer supported equal treatment and united action. That point of view would describe refusing to ride the buses as a peaceful way to challenge segregation.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a Montgomery bus driver, I am worried because many passengers are no longer riding. Fewer fares could hurt the bus company's income and threaten my job. I may think the boycott is causing disorder because I want the buses to run as before. My concern about my job can bias me against the boycott.

Accept answers that accurately connect a person's role, experiences, or interests to a perspective on the boycott. For the open response, check for exactly four sentences, a passage-based historical detail, and a clearly stated possible bias.