Rosa Parks: An American Hero

**Connections**

**Literature Connection—If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks by Faith Ringgold**
This book provides readers with a fun way to learn about Rosa Parks. The narrator is a bus that talks to a young passenger named Marcie about Parks and her accomplishments.

**Content Connections—Social Studies, Famous Americans, Black History**
Read *Rosa Parks: An American Hero* while studying biographies or famous Americans. For example, introduce the script during Black History month. Rosa Parks’ life story provides students with a true example of courage, so the script might also be used to teach a unit on life skills or personal attributes.

**Objective**
Students will relate new information from the text to prior knowledge and personal experience.

**Vocabulary**
1. Introduce the key vocabulary words from the script. Write each word on the board. Read each word aloud.
2. Describe the meaning of each word and point out its use in the script. Show pictures that represent the meaning of each word if you have them.
3. Tell each student to fold a piece of paper into four squares. Brainstorm a list of possible symbols that could represent each vocabulary word. Then ask them to draw these or other symbols in each square. Students should label each picture with the appropriate vocabulary word.
   - **courage**—braveness; when someone acts without fear
   - **protest**—to object to something you think is wrong
   - **proud**—feeling pleased or satisfied about oneself for an accomplishment
   - **rights**—moral and legal principles a person should be granted or be allowed to do

**Before the Reader’s Theater**
1. Read the title of the script and review what students know about Rosa Parks. List the information they share on chart paper and display it in the classroom while students read the script. If necessary, share a short summary of Rosa Parks’s life with students.
2. After discussing Rosa Parks, ask students to think of words that they might use to describe her. List these words on a different piece of chart paper. Tell students that as they read the script, you want them to think of how any experiences in their lives remind them of Rosa Parks and her life.
Rosa Parks: An American Hero (cont.)

Before the Reader’s Theater (cont.)
3. Read the script aloud, modeling appropriate reading strategies while you read. To help build fluency and comprehension, it is important for students to hear the script read aloud before practicing on their own.

During the Reader’s Theater
1. Divide the class into groups of four to read and practice the script. As students read, encourage them to consider how Rosa Parks’s experiences remind them of their own lives.
2. Have students work as a group to choose and highlight their parts in the script (Readers 1–3 or Rosa).
3. Give students a few minutes to practice reading with expression in their voices. Additionally, students may decide on a few props or materials to use during their reading. They need to use materials that can be easily acquired or assembled in the classroom.
4. After practicing, each group performs the reader’s theater for the class. They may also perform for another class.

After the Reader’s Theater
1. Ask students to talk in their reading groups about experiences in their own lives that remind them of the life of Rosa Parks. Talk about this as a class as well.
2. As a class, complete the Life Experiences graphic organizer (page 88 or lifeexperiences.pdf) by writing words or by drawing pictures. Students can also complete the graphic organizer independently or with a partner.

Response Questions

Group Discussion Questions
• How would you describe Rosa Parks?
• Why is she famous for being arrested on the bus?
• What can we do today to keep Rosa Parks’s message alive?

Written Response Question
• How is Rosa Parks a hero?
Rosa Parks: An American Hero
By Christine Dugan

A reader’s theater with four parts

Reader 1:
Rosa Parks is a hero in our country.

Reader 2:
The year was 1955. Rosa lived in Alabama.

Rosa:
The day started out like any other day.

Reader 3:
There were many problems between whites and African Americans.

Reader 1:
The law said only whites could sit in the front of any bus. African Americans had to sit in the back.

Rosa:
I got off work. I was so tired. I wanted to sit and rest.

Reader 2:
Rosa sat down in the middle of the bus.

Reader 3:
The law said that African Americans had to move if a white person wanted to sit in the seat.

Reader 1:
The bus picked up a few white passengers.

Reader 2:
Soon all the seats were taken.

Life Experiences

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Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Rosa Parks: An American Hero

By Christine Dugan

A reader’s theater with four parts

Reader 1: Rosa Parks is a hero in our country.

Reader 3: Rosa was not afraid to stand up for what was right.

Reader 2: The year was 1955. Rosa lived in Alabama.

Rosa: The day started out like any other day.

Reader 3: There were many problems between whites and African Americans.

Reader 1: The law said only whites could sit in the front of any bus. African Americans had to sit in the back.

Rosa: I got off work. I was so tired. I wanted to sit and rest.

Reader 2: Rosa sat down in the middle of the bus.

Reader 3: The law said that African Americans had to move if a white person wanted to sit in the seat.

Reader 1: The bus picked up a few white passengers.

Reader 2: Soon all the seats were taken.
Rosa Parks: An American Hero (cont.)

Reader 1:  A white person who wanted a seat asked Rosa to move.

Reader 2:  Rosa had been asked to give up her seat before.

Reader 3:  That day Rosa decided she was not going to move.

Reader 1:  She thought people should be allowed to sit anywhere on a bus no matter what color their skin.

Reader 2:  The bus driver called the police.

Reader 1:  The police took Rosa Parks to jail.

Rosa:  I was not afraid to go to jail. I was angry. I knew that it was time for the laws to change.

Reader 1:  People heard about what Rosa had done.

Reader 2:  African Americans decided to not ride the buses.

All:  They wanted to make other people see that the bus laws were wrong.

Reader 1:  Soon, everyone in the nation was talking about this news.

Reader 2:  People began to think about the laws that treated African Americans unfairly.
Reader 2: Many people stopped riding the buses. It was a protest. The bus company lost money because it had fewer passengers.

Reader 1: Some people were angry with the protesters.

Reader 2: Others decided that the protesters were right. The bus laws were wrong.

Reader 3: The protest went on for many months.

All: Finally, it ended.

Reader 1: The law was changed. African Americans could ride in the front of the bus. Everyone now had the same rights.

Reader 2: Rosa rode the bus the very next day after the law was changed.

Reader 3: She rode with a special friend.

Rosa: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. rode the bus with me. This was a great day. We had changed the laws of our nation to treat all people equally!

Reader 1: Many people worked for change. But Rosa Parks was the leader.

All: Rosa Parks had courage.
Rosa Parks: An American Hero (cont.)

**Reader 2:** She changed the bus laws. She also changed the world.

**Reader 3:** Rosa continued to fight for people’s rights.

**Reader 1:** She worked hard to make things better for other people.

**Reader 3:** Today, people still know the name of Rosa Parks.

**All:** She is one of the greatest heroes in our country.

**Reader 2:** Laws were passed so that everyone is equal.

**Reader 3:** This was important to Rosa.

**Rosa:** I feel proud that I was part of history. I think that the new laws make our country better. We got rid of old laws that were wrong.

**All:** We can learn an important lesson from Rosa Parks.

**Rosa:** We must always fight for what we believe. When something is wrong, stand up and say something.