

Montgomery Bus Boycott

Describe how the Montgomery Bus Boycott started.

Explain why the Montgomery Bus Boycott was important to the civil rights movement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZhSNiTQuqo>

[\(26 mins-end\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n945ffvrixY)



How did the boycott begin?

- * **December 1955 Rosa Parks** refused to give up her seat to a white man on the bus. The driver of the bus had her arrested.
- * Rosa Parks was a member of the NAACP and the NAACP had been waiting for an opportunity to launch a high-profile campaign against segregation on city buses. Rosa Parks was seen as a reliable source who would help the cause in a court of law.
- * One year after the US Supreme Court had declared that segregation was wrong in schools the NAACP wanted to argue that segregation was also wrong on buses.
- * When news spread, 50 respected leaders of the black community met in a **Montgomery** church to discuss their plans. They agreed to **boycott the city bus system**. In the group was a young Baptist minister in his first job at that church: **Martin Luther King Jr.**

Why was a boycott started?

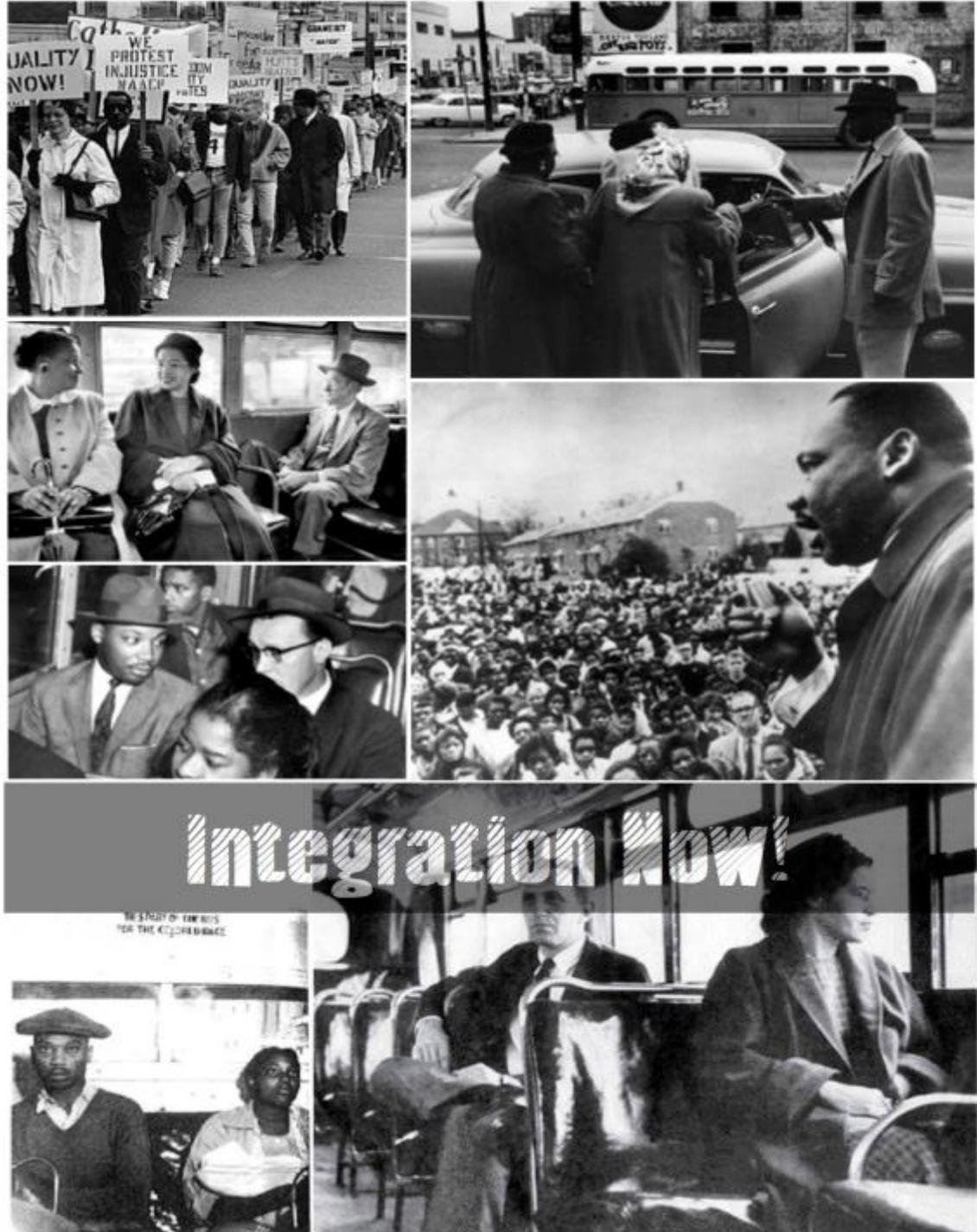
- * The Mayor of Montgomery received a letter a year before the arrest of Rosa Parks explaining why it was in the best interest of the bus company to end segregation.
- * The Mayor refused to stop segregation on buses. The black community argued that they were humiliated each time they got on a bus.
- * Eventually the Supreme Court decided that segregation on Montgomery's buses was against the US constitution.
- * The buses were officially desegregated in December 1956 after a boycott that lasted 381 days.
- * However, the bus company had started to desegregate anyway as they could not afford to lose black passengers. 70% of the riders on buses were black.

Why was the Montgomery Bus Boycott Important?

- * The protest showed what could be achieved by people if they stayed united and determined to achieve their target. For months, black Americans refused to use the buses in Montgomery.



The boycott also showed how effective peaceful, non-violent protests could be. The police found it difficult to cope with a civil rights protest that was organised, broke no law and was peaceful. The could not arrest people for not getting on buses.



The boycott showed the economic power of the black community. Since black Americans made up to 60-70% of all bus passengers, the bus company was faced with a choice: desegregate its buses or go out of business. For the first time the black population had shown its economic power.



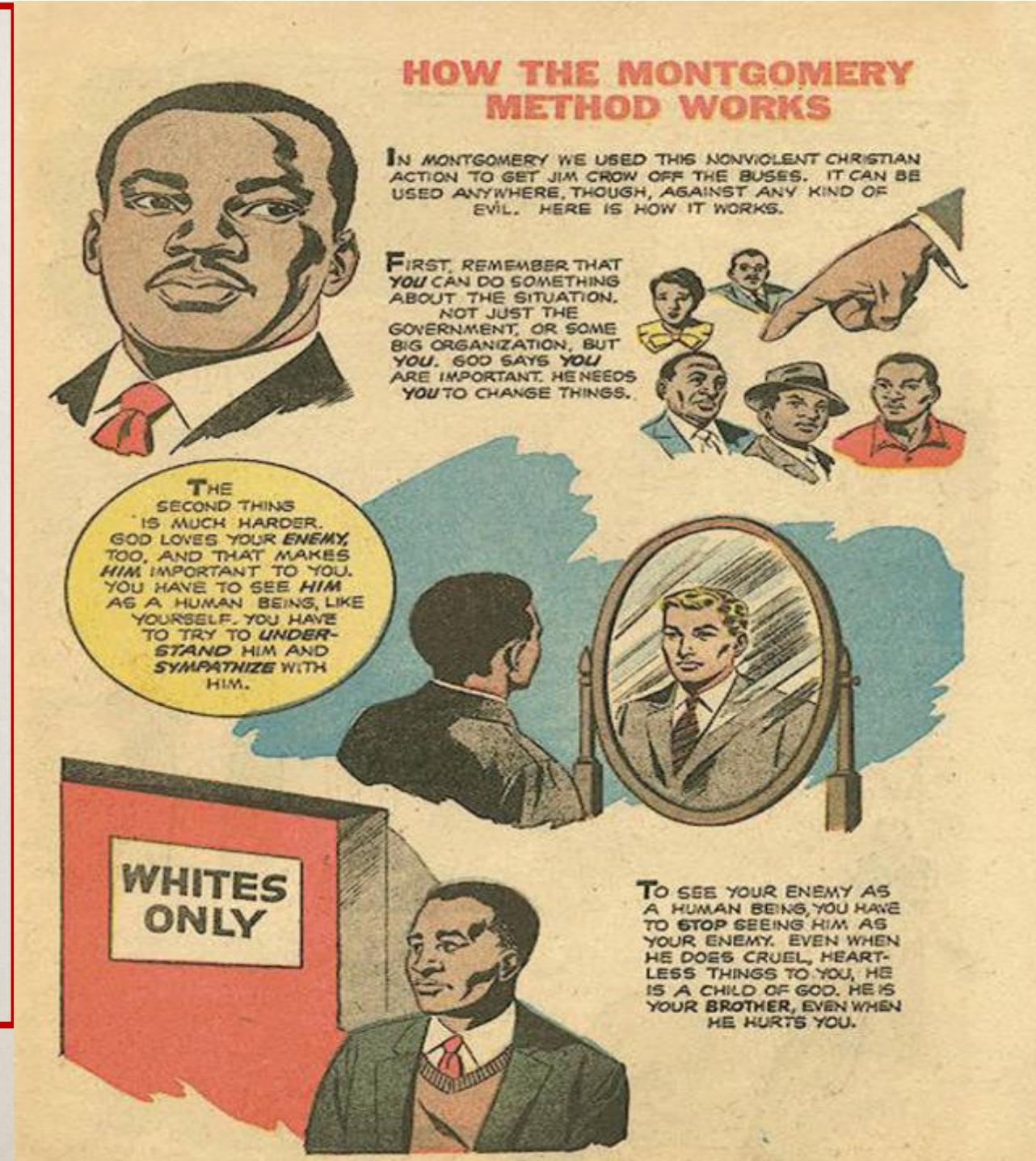
Bus boycott

1. Who was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white person in 1955?
2. What famous group was she a part of?
3. What did the leaders of the Black community do in response?
4. What per cent of passengers who rode Montgomery buses were black?
5. List 2 effects that the Montgomery bus boycott had on the civil rights movement



Write any facts you already know
about Martin Luther King or any
words you think about when you think
of him

Finally, the bus boycott introduced Martin Luther King Jr to the civil rights protest. He was to become one of the most famous black leaders of the 20th century.



Who was Martin Luther King Jr?

- * Born 1929 in Atlanta Georgia. When he was a boy growing up he experienced segregation and discrimination.
- * In 1953 King married Coretta Scott and in 1954, was given his first job as pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. He had been in Montgomery less than a year when the boycott began.



King tried to help people understand why Rosa Parks and others felt they had to make a stand against segregation.

King was a good looking man and he presented a non-threatening image of black protest to US television audience.



King was also an inspirational speaker and leader who was prepared to be arrested, criticised and even put his own life at risk for the civil rights cause.

King worked with another church minister called Ralph Abernathy to organise the year long Montgomery Bus Boycott. The success of the bus boycott made King into a well known national leader of the civil rights movement.



What were the ideas of Martin Luther King Jr?

- * Inspired by Mahatma Ghandi, who had used non-violent protest successfully against British rulers of India in the 1940s.
- * King believed that non-violent civil disobedience was the best weapon in the fight for civil rights. His theory was the black population would be able to wear down the resistance of white racists by using endless protests.



What was the SCLC?

- * In 1957, King, Abernathy and others formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to campaign for civil rights.
- * When King was made SCLC president in 1960, he became more involved in the use of civil disobedience as a way for campaigning for civil rights.



In the 1960s King led many demonstrations in the South aimed at ending segregation and allowing black Americans to vote freely.

In 1964, King became famous around the world when he made his 'I Have a Dream Speech' and Time magazine chose King as their 'Man of the Year'. The first time a black American had ever been given the title.

King also won the Nobel Peace Prize. He was the youngest man ever to win it at 35 years old.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch
?v=lOig2v7ZfcA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOig2v7ZfcA)

Activities

- * Read the information about the Montgomery Bus Boycott on pages 54- 57.
- * Complete activity 1 on page 57.
- * Copy out any glossary words
- * Extension: Explain the reasons why the Montgomery bus boycott had an impact on the civil rights movement – 4 marks