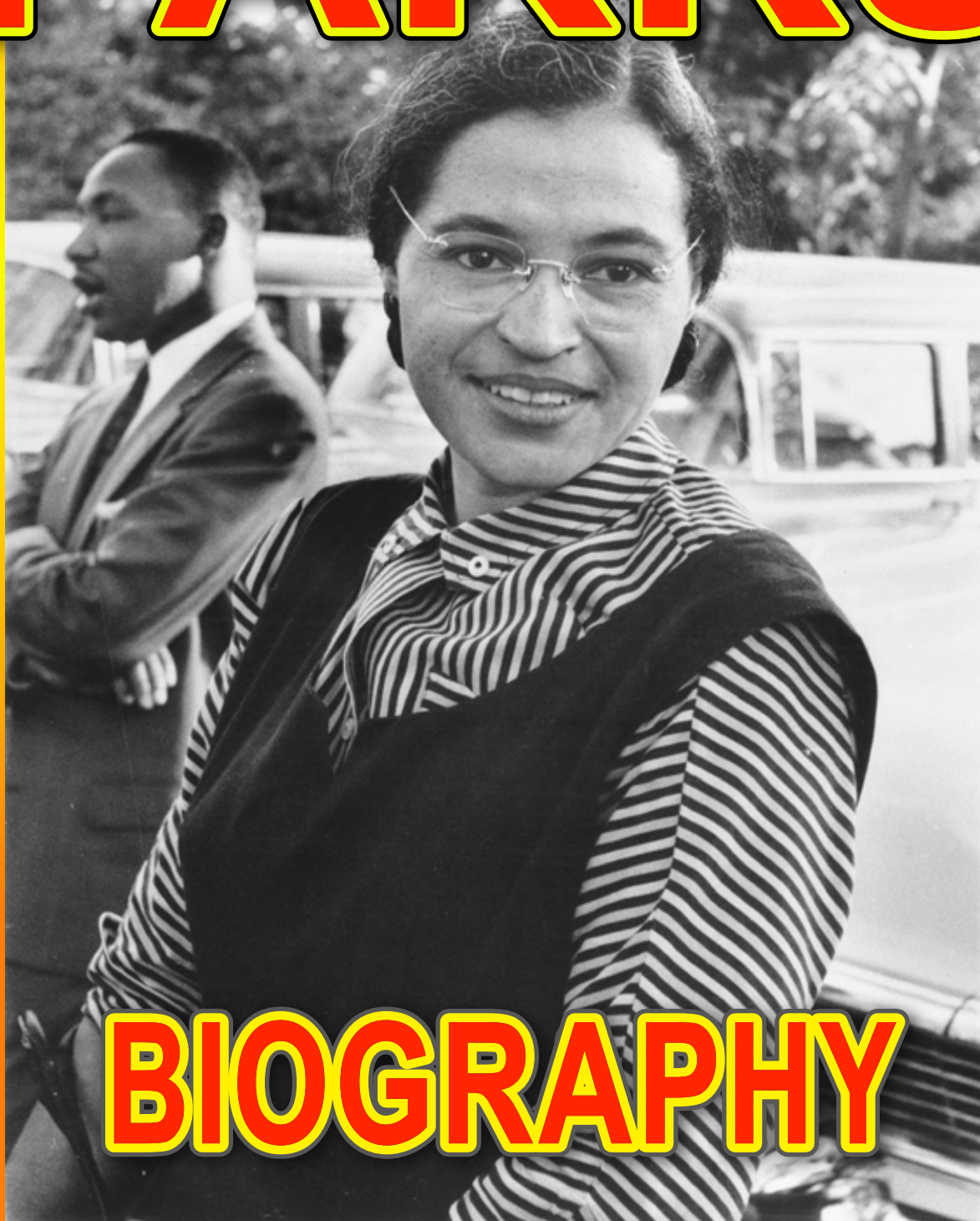


# ROSA PARKS



## BIOGRAPHY

# ROSA PARKS

Rosa Parks was born in Tuskegee, Alabama on February 4, 1913, and then moved to Pine Level. There Parks went to a segregated school, where black children were taught in a poorly-equipped classroom, while white children learned in newer classrooms. White people were also allowed on the school bus, whereas black people were not.

Parks encountered such racial division throughout her life. In 1932, she married Raymond Parks, who was involved in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). They then lived in Montgomery, Alabama, where Rosa became a youth leader for the local NAACP chapter.

During this time, the city of Montgomery had strict rules about who could sit where on buses. In general, there was racial segregation so that white people sat at the front of the bus and black people sat at the back. The bus driver decided where the two sets of seats should be separated. Usually the bus was split in half, but if the bus became busy, the driver could allocate more seats for white passengers. Black passengers were also obliged to give up their seats to white passengers.

But on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks defied the rules. She got the bus home from work and sat in a seat in the back half of the bus. But as more and more people got on the bus, it filled up and white passengers were left standing. The bus driver intervened by asking Parks and three other passengers to give up their seats. The three other passengers stood up, but Parks did not move. The bus driver eventually called the police and they arrested Parks.

But Park's defiance on the bus did not go unnoticed. The local NAACP leader, E.D. Nixon, organized a boycott of the buses in Montgomery. He widely advertised the boycott, which was planned for the day of Parks' trial.

As a result of the trial, Parks was fined. The day might well have been forgotten, but for the crowd of African-Americans who had turned up to support her. Overall, the bus boycott that day had been a success, with thousands of black people avoiding the buses and getting to work using other transport.

Civil rights leaders did not want this effort to go to waste, so they encouraged the boycott to continue. It went on for over a year, and became known as the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The drop in passenger numbers caused financial problems for the bus company, and people protested.

Parks and her husband lost their jobs because of the trial and the boycott, and they had to move out of Montgomery. They eventually settled in Detroit, Michigan. But Parks' actions on the Montgomery bus were never forgotten. The civil rights movement that she helped start had a huge impact on American history, and Parks was recognised through many awards and medals, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996. Since her death in 2005, Parks has been commemorated and honored in various memorial services.

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'division'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'division' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'division'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'division'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'division' means.

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: huge	big

# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Parks was arrested and fined, but her actions sparked a boycott of the buses.

Later on, Parks married Raymond Parks and got involved in the NAACP.

Rosa Parks was born in Alabama in 1913.

At the time, buses in Montgomery, Alabama were segregated.

The boycott went on for months, and helped the civil rights movement in America.

As a child Parks went to a segregated school.

One day Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger.

# Get to the facts

1 What did Rosa Parks do in 1955?

2 Who organized a bus boycott?

3 How long did the boycott go on for?

4 What was the boycott known as?

5 What was Parks awarded in 1996?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## On the bus

Imagine you were a passenger on the bus when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat... (now complete the story)

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

## **Understanding words:**

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- b From that sentence, suggest what 'division' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'division'.
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## **Finding key words:**

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – huge                      Synonym – big

## **Sequencing:**

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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## **Make a story...**

### **On the bus**

Imagine you were a passenger on the bus when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat... (now complete the story)

# Rosa Parks

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