

Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Birth of a Movement

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Subject /Grade Level: History/ Grade 11

Overview: This lesson will focus on the racial climate in Montgomery before, during, and after the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The lesson will also explore how the Boycott helped lay the foundation for the early Civil Rights Movement. Students will be able to analyze individual profiles, various court documents, and court cases related to the Boycott using the digital exhibit, *Browder v. Gayle*, available on the Montgomery County Archives website.

Background: The teacher should review and gain familiarity with the *Browder v. Gayle* digital exhibit before the lesson.

Objective: Students will be able to:

- Analyze profiles of people and cases that relate to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and *Browder v. Gayle*.
- Evaluate the outcome of the Bus Boycott on Montgomery and the nation.

Alabama dept. of Education Curriculum Standard:

SS2010 (11) United States History II: The Industrial Revolution to the Present	14. Trace events of the modern Civil Rights Movement from post-World War II to 1970 that resulted in social and economic changes, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School, the March on Washington, Freedom Rides, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, and the Selma-to-Montgomery March. (Alabama) [A.1.c., A.1.d., A.1.f., A.1.i., A.1.j., A.1.k.]
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National Standards for History, 1996 Standards in History for Grades 5-12 (p. 121) Era 9, Standard 4 – The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties 4A – The student understands the “Second Reconstruction” and its advancement of civil rights.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, (Bulletin 111, 2010) Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (p. 139) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

National Standards for Civics and Government, (1994) Standard II – What are the foundations of the American political system? (p. 99) Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about issues concerning the disparities between American ideals and realities.

Time Needed: Three hours

Day 1: The teacher should introduce the lesson and discuss with the class what the Montgomery Bus Boycott was and why it took place. The teacher should then introduce the digital exhibit to the class and show them how to view it at home or at a public library.

Day 2: The class reviews the digital exhibit discussing the Browder v. Gayle case and the people involved as referenced in step 3.

Day 3: A class discussion about the aftermath of the Boycott. The teacher will ask the class the final questions listed in step 3.

Materials Needed:

- Computer with Internet access
- LCD projector
- [Browder v. Gayle Digital Exhibit](#)

Additional Resources

- [December, 1955 Article](#)
- [Montgomery City Code, 1955](#)
- [January 1955 NYT Article](#)
- [Negroes' most urgent needs](#)
- [March 1956 NYT Article](#)
- [December 1956 NYT Article \(After the Boycott\)](#)
- [Excerpt from Jo Ann Robinson's book The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women who Started It.](#)
- [Excerpt From Dr. Martin Luther King's Book Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story](#)

Procedures:

Step 1: Introduce students to the lesson by briefly lecturing about Rosa Park's arrest and the Montgomery Bus boycott.

Step 2: Introduce students to the digital exhibit and have them view it at home before fully discussing it in class. Talk to students about each page, starting with "the people" tab. Discuss who Claudette Colvin, Aurelia Browder, and Mary Louise Smith are. Ask students if they have ever heard these names. Then ask them why do they think that these women were not as publicized during the movement.

Step 3: The class should also discuss the roles that white activists such as Clifford and Virginia Durr, Juliette Hampton Morgan, and Robert Graetz played within the Movement. Ask students the following questions:

- The following quote is featured in the exhibit. "I want to stress to you the meaning of freedom, for as we struggle for freedom in America there is a danger that we will misinterpret freedom." What do you think Dr. King meant by this quote? How do you think one could misinterpret freedom?
- How do you think the boycott affected race relations in Montgomery after it had ended?
- For what reasons do you think that main figures in the boycott such as Rosa Parks and Claudette Colvin left Montgomery after the boycott?

Accommodations/Modifications: Allow students to view the digital exhibit and other resources at home for additional study and to streamline the lesson.

Assessment: Grade students on their participation in the classroom discussion. The teacher can also test students on the information covered during the lesson.