

READ THE TEXT AND WRITE *TRUE OR FALSE*

My hero: Rosa Parks

By Tim Clarkson

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was an ordinary middle-aged woman on her way home from work. She made the same journey every day, but this time her bus ride changed the course of history, and made a difference to countless lives. This is what happened.

Rosa Parks was an African American and she lived in the southern state of Alabama, in a town called Montgomery. At that time, there were 'laws of segregation' in that part of America. These laws said that black people were not allowed to mix with white people. Black children and white children did not attend the same schools; there were separate entrances to public buildings, and separate areas in cafes and restaurants. On the buses, white people sat in the front, in special seats.

That afternoon, Rosa took a seat just behind the 'white seats'. More passengers got on, and a white man had to stand. The bus driver told Rosa to go to the back of the bus – but she refused. She said that she wasn't doing anything wrong, and that she wouldn't move. Then the bus driver told her he would call the police. She wasn't frightened, and she said that he could do what he wanted. The police came, and she was arrested. She had her fingerprints taken, then she was put in prison overnight. Later, she was fined, she also lost her job.

Rosa and her husband were well-known and respected by lots of people, and the black community decided to take action. The leader of their campaign was a young man called Martin Luther King. They told the bus company that they would stop travelling by bus until segregation ended. This was a big problem for the bus companies, because they lost a lot of money. It was also a problem for the protesters; they had to share cars, or walk long distances every day.

The bus 'boycott' took a long time, but after 381 difficult days, the courts made an announcement – they said that segregation on buses was illegal. It was a great victory. A few days later, Rosa Parks took a bus again, and she sat right in the front.

TRUE OR FALSE

- 1. Rosa Parks didn't usually travel by bus.**
- 2. There were separate buses for black and white people.**
- 3. Rosa was sitting in a 'white' seat.**
- 4. There weren't enough seats for all the white people.**

- 5. Rosa said 'No' to the bus driver.**
- 6. Her actions caused her some serious problems.**
- 7. Black people didn't use the buses for more than a year.**
- 8. Martin Luther King was part of the campaign.**
- 9. The campaigners lost their battle.**