

Unit 1, Lesson 11: Why and where was Rosa Parks?

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will analyze accounts of the day that Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus then draw conclusions and create accounts explaining why she chose to do so and where she was sitting.

**Note to Teachers: You will notice that the historical context used in this lesson (Rosa Parks) falls outside of the 4th grade course chronology. This was purposeful. Ms. Parks was selected as a historical figure who is familiar to most students so that background knowledge would be less of a barrier for students to enter into a discussion of History Standard 3. The goal of this lesson is for students to gain an understanding of why historical accounts of the same event may differ and the extent to which the points of view of the authors contributed to those differences, not to learn details about Rosa Parks. In other words, this lesson uses Parks to introduce students to History Standard 3.*

Delaware Standard(s)

- **History Standard 2a, 4-5 [Analysis]:** Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials
- **History Standard 2b, 4-5 [Analysis]:** Students will examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; chronologically arrange them; and analyze change over time.
- **History Standard 3, 4-5 [Interpretation]:** Students will explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and relate this explanation to the evidence presented or the point-of-view of the author.

Big Ideas

- different accounts, evidence

Essential Questions

- Why might there be different accounts of the same event?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that there can be different accounts of the same event because those drawing conclusions used different evidence or had different points of view.

Academic Vocabulary

- Account - an intentional report or description of an event or experience.
- Source - something that provides information
- Evidence – facts or information that can be used to support a claim...make a claim believable

Resources

- [Lesson 11 Google Slides](#)

- [Resource 1: Life Long Ago](#)
- [Resource 2: Diagram of “the” 1955 bus](#)
- [Resource 3: Create a Timeline](#)
- [Resource 4 & 4.2: Rosa Parks Acts Against Unfair Law](#)
- [Resource 5: My Conclusion and Account](#)

Procedures

1. **Warm-up:** Think-Pair-Share - Imagine that you had to obey a rule that you and many other people believed was unfair. What do you think would be a good way to respond to that law?
2. **Introduce the lesson:** Explain the following to students: In this lesson you are going to analyze an account of the day that a very famous woman named Rosa Parks did something that was historic and that brought about an important change in American history.
 - a. Ask students - does anyone know who Rosa Parks was and what made her famous?
3. **Contextualize Through Reading:** disciplinary literacy in history includes attention to context. What was going on at the time an event occurred that helps explain why it occurred and when it occurred.
 - a. Distribute copies of [Resource 1](#).
 - b. Tell students that they are going to read some background information that will help explain what was going on in the city of Montgomery, Alabama back in 1955.
 - c. Ask students to focus on what the laws said and how they changed over time.
 - d. Have them pause and discuss the questions at the end of each paragraph then review responses with the whole class.
 - e. Debrief the Reading: As you can imagine, Black people thought the bus system was extremely unfair. And the Supreme Court ruled that “separate is not equal.” Other good people also thought the law was unfair.
4. **Visualize the Scene:** Project a copy of [Resource 2](#) so students can see it. This is a diagram of the bus that Rosa Park rode on December 1, 1955. See below on Resource 5 for a photo of the actual bus which is now housed in the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan.
 - a. Draw students’ attention to the
 - i. different seats on the diagram
 - ii. different rows
 - iii. different sections of the bus (front, middle, back)
 - b. Tell students that they are going to read an account of that famous day in 1955 when Rosa Parks boarded that bus. Their main task will be to identify the seat where Ms. Parks was sitting and why she decided to do what she did.
5. **Create a Timeline:** Distribute copies of [Resource 3](#). Ask students to fill in the rows and columns on Resource 3 using the dates and events provided on the page so that they create a timeline with the events arranged in chronological order.
6. **Reading 2:** Distribute copies of [Resource 4](#) to half of the class and [Resource 4+](#) to the other half. **Resource 4 and 4+ contain two different accounts of what happened on 1 December 1955 but do not tell students that they have different sources.** Simply state that the page you handed them contains a document entitled “Rosa Parks Acts Against Unfair Law” that offers an account of what Rosa Parks did on December 1, 1955.

- a. Ask students to read the account with three purposes in mind:
 - i. where was Rosa Parks sitting?
 - ii. what did she do in response to the bus law?
 - iii. what did the author mean when they stated that Ms. Parks was tired?
 - b. Then tell them to answer the questions quietly and independently at the bottom of the page after they read the information provided in the source that they read.
7. **Draw Final Conclusions and Create an Account:** Distribute copies of [Resource 5](#). Again, without discussion, tell students that it is now time for them to draw their final conclusions and create an account of what happened on 1 December 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a White person. Explain that they should do this by filling in the blanks found in the text on Resource 4. Give students time to complete the task.
 - a. Then, ask students to shade in the seat on Resource 2 to show where the document that they just read suggests Ms. Parks was sitting.
8. **Present Conclusions:** invite volunteers to read their accounts on Resource and where they concluded Rosa Parks was sitting on **Resource 2**. Be strategic. After the first student has read his or her account, ask if anyone else has a different account that they are willing to share.
 - a. Ask students if and why there might be differences in their accounts?
 - b. Pair-up students with Resource 4 and Resource 4+ and have them swap the resources and read the source that the other students read. Have them discuss how the two sources are similar and different.
 - c. Then have them swap the accounts that they wrote and read each other's, noting the differences.
 - d. Then ask, why might there be differences in your account and the account that your partner wrote? [[they based their accounts on different sources or evidence](#)]
9. **Integrate Sources:** The Common Core standards for ELA establish the expectation that students will be able to “Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.” Distribute another copy of [Resource 5](#) and have students create a new account that takes into consideration the information provided on Resources 4 and 4+.
10. **Debrief the Lesson:** Explain that there might be different accounts of the same event in history, and it does not necessarily mean that, **while someone might have lied, this is not always the case**. It may simply be because the person writing the account used different sources or evidence.
 - a. **Content Debrief:** tell students that the Black people in Montgomery, Alabama started boycotting the buses. When Rosa Parks was asked about the boycott, she said, “Rather than ride in shame, we decided to walk with dignity.” Nine months after the boycott started, the bus company had lost so much revenue due to the boycott that they ended their discriminatory bus rules.