

Boycott

Important characters:

Martin Luther King Jr.
Coretta Scott King
Rosa Parks
E.D. Nixon
Jo Ann Robinson
Claudette Colvin
Ralph Abernathy
Bayard Rustin
Gandhi

Important organizations:

NAACP
CORE
FOR
Women's Political Council (of Montgomery)
Alabama State University
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
Fiske University
White Citizen's Council
Klu Klux Klan
Alabama Democratic Party

1. Why is the boycott planned for Monday?
2. Why is King chosen to head up the Montgomery Improvement Association?
3. What are King's leadership qualities?
4. What role does Abernathy play?
5. What role does Rustin play?
6. What role does Jo Ann Robinson play?
7. What are the reasons for the Montgomery boycott lasting longer than the one in Baton Rouge?
8. Why did the organizers of the boycott agree to file a federal lawsuit?
9. Why was the success of the federal lawsuit dependent on the boycott? On the status of the plaintiffs?
10. Why would none of the ministers volunteer to be a plaintiff in the federal lawsuit? What explains their lack of enthusiasm for direct action?
11. What role did the women play in the Montgomery movement? What role did women play in the movie? Does the movie do justice to the role women played in the success of the boycott and lawsuit?
12. What were all the tactics that the white power structure used to attempt to break the boycott? How did the MIA counter each one?

13. Does the movie show how King transformed from an adherent of tactical nonviolent resistance to someone who believed in nonviolence as an ideology (i.e, was philosophically nonviolent)?
14. What is the ideology of nonviolence? Why might someone who is not philosophically nonviolent accept nonviolent direct action as a tactic?
15. Why is Rustin sent away? Was that a good decision?
16. Why were faith, meetings and singing so important to the success of the boycott?

Extension Activities

1. Take a character from the movie and look he or she up in a history book, encyclopedia and on the internet. Do these other sources of information support the movie's portrayal of them? If there is a discrepancy in sources, how can you explain the discrepancy?
2. At the end of the movie, King is walking down a modern street and stops to talk to some black youths. Write out the possible dialogue they could be having.
3. Have black ministers become as conservative today as they were in Montgomery before the boycott?