

## A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio poet Nikki Giovanni and Maryland native Bryan Collier as they celebrate the quiet strength of Rosa Parks and the patient victory of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the reading experience.

Discover nonfiction websites and real history to explore topics and themes in depth.

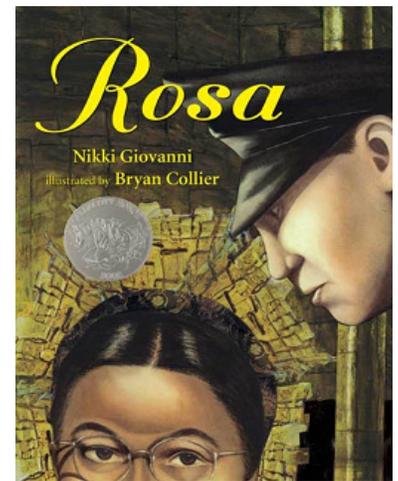
# Rosa

By Nikki Giovanni (author)  
and Bryan Collier (illustrator)



## About the Book

Fifty years after her refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama city bus, Mrs. Rosa Parks is still one of the most important figures in the American civil rights movement. This tribute to Mrs. Parks is a celebration of her courageous action and the events that followed. Award-winning poet, writer, and activist Nikki Giovanni's evocative text combines with Bryan Collier's striking cut-paper images to retell the story of this historic event from a wholly unique and original perspective. **Rosa** is a Caldecott Honor book and winner of the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award.



Square Fish, 2007. ISBN 9780312376024. Ages 8 to 12.  
900 Lexile. <http://us.macmillan.com/rosa/bryancollier>

Book jacket image and book description courtesy of Macmillan. Used with permission.

Available through the State Library of Ohio Talking Book Program: <http://www.klas.com/talkingbooks/ohio>

## Talk about it!

Topics to share when discussing **Rosa** with young readers.

*Educators:* Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's New Learning Standards (Common Core) English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Examples are listed below; other standards also apply. **Rosa** may also support Social Studies standards for grades 4-6.

*Librarians, parents, and others:* These discussion questions are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. They are included for teachers who want to use this book in school. For more information, see the Ohio Dept. of Education website, <http://education.ohio.gov>. Click on "Ohio's New Learning Standards" in the Teacher Resources section.

In his illustrator's note, Bryan Collier says that he painted with a yellow hue in **Rosa**, to reflect the heat of Montgomery and the "uneasy quiet before the storm". Do you notice this throughout the book? Where do you see it, or feel it, the most? Are there other symbols in the art? What do you think they mean? (RL.4-5.7; RI.4.7, RI.6.7)

On the end papers of the book, a bus rider is reading a newspaper article on Emmett Till. On the first spread after the title page, Raymond Parks is reading a paper with an article that mentions King. Perhaps this is Dr. Martin Luther King. Where else do you see reference to the men and women who were part of the struggle for Civil Rights in this country? How do these people relate to each other? (RL.4-6.4; RI.5-6.3; RH.6-8.5)

More discussion questions inside!



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## About the Author

Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and grew up in Lincoln Heights, an all-black suburb of Cincinnati. She studied at Fisk University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. She published her first book of poetry, ***Black Feeling Black Talk***, in 1968, and since then has become one of America's most widely read poets. Oprah Winfrey named her as one of her twenty-five "Living Legends." Her autobiography ***Gemini*** was a finalist for the National Book Award, and several of her books have received NAACP Image Awards. She has received some twenty-five honorary degrees; been named Woman of the Year by *Mademoiselle Magazine*, *The Ladies Home Journal* and *Ebony*; was the first recipient of the Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award; and has been awarded the Langston Hughes Medal for poetry.

Nikki Giovanni lives in Christiansburg, Virginia, where she is a professor of English at Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

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## Author Resources

### Nikki Giovanni's official website

<http://nikki-giovanni.com/>

### Author page on Macmillan website

<http://us.macmillan.com/author/nikkigiovanni>

### NPR Interview with Nikki Giovanni about Rosa

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5039035>

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## About the Illustrator

Bryan Collier is the author and illustrator of ***Uptown***, winner of the Coretta Scott King Award and the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award. He is also the illustrator of ***Martin's Big Words*** by Doreen Rappaport and ***Rosa*** by Nikki Giovanni, both of which are Caldecott Honor books. The *Chicago Sun-Times* has called Collier's art "breathtakingly beautiful." Mr. Collier lives with his family in Harlem in New York City.

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## Illustrator Resources

### Bryan Collier's official website

<http://www.bryancollier.com/>

### Illustrator Page on Macmillan website

<http://us.macmillan.com/author/bryancollier>

### Reading Rockets Interview with Bryan Collier about Rosa

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/collier>



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## Talk about it! (continued)

In discussion of this book, Nikki Giovanni has said that the bus driver, James Blake, was a man of time, while Rosa Parks was a woman outside of her time. What does this mean? (SL.4-6.1; L.4-6.5)

Rosa Parks did not plan to stage a protest on the bus that day: "She had not sought this moment, but she was ready for it." How do you think that Rosa Parks became ready for that moment? (RL.4-6.3; SL.4-6.1)

The struggle for civil and human rights continues in the U.S. and around the world today. What examples can you think of? What issues are involved? Are there any recent examples of a person, like Rosa Parks, whose "no becomes a YES for change"? (SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4; Social Studies: 4th Grade—Government: Civic Participation)

Rosa Parks didn't seek out "trouble", but she didn't run when it came to her. Do you think this made a difference in how people looked at the situation? (SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4)

Rosa Parks was arrested for her disobedience. Why did she disobey the authorities? What would you do if you were in a similar situation? Does being arrested mean someone is a bad person? Why or why not? (SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4; Social Studies: 4th Grade—Government: Civic Participation)

After Rosa Parks' arrest, twenty-five women stayed up through the night, making thousands of fliers calling for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Describe a time when you decided to change your plans on short notice to help someone in need. Was it a rewarding experience? (SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4)

December 1, 1955 was an ordinary day. Rosa went to work, did a good job, and was thinking about dinner plans when she was ordered to give up her seat. Have you ever had a "Rosa Parks" moment, where doing the right thing turned an ordinary day upside-down? Describe your experience, or describe a "Rosa Parks" situation that might happen to you. How would or did you feel? (SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4)

Mrs. Parks was a seamstress by trade: adjusting, altering, improving on the existing material with patience and deliberateness. It might be said that her stance on the bus was the work of a social seamstress, improving the social patterns she had been given by insisting on an adjustment. What are some other ways Rosa Parks' actions can be described? (SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4; L.4-6.5)

The award-winning artwork featured in **Rosa** was made using a combination of watercolor and a collage of clippings from magazines. Why might the illustrator have chosen this method? (RL.4-5.7; RI.4.6.7)

Select discussion questions courtesy Macmillan, from the study guide for **Rosa** available at <http://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/discusion-guides/9780805071061DG.pdf>. Used with permission.

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## Go Further!

Ideas for extending the experience of reading **Rosa**.

Imagine you've joined the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Write a personal journal entry describing specific details of your day, your challenges, your hopes, and your dreams. Remember that the Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted for over a year, so you may include references to any historically accurate annual holiday or seasonal event you like. (W.4-6.3; W.4-6.4)

Formal racial segregation was a daily reality in much of the United States for many years, ending within living memory. Ask an older friend or family member (born before 1960) if they would be willing to share their memories of the Civil Rights Movement and the surrounding era. Possible questions to ask include:

- What is your clearest memory of the Civil Rights Movement or racial segregation?
- Did the Civil Rights Movement impact you personally? If so, in what way?
- What do you think was the most important event in the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and 60s?
- When did you become aware of racial segregation?

(W.4.7; SL.4-6.3; Social Studies: 4th Grade—History: Historical Thinking and Skills)

## Go Further! (continued)

Imagine you are a defense lawyer for James Blake (the bus driver). Your job is to explain why James Blake told Rosa Parks to give up her seat for white passengers. What might have made him think what he was doing was right? How might he have been influenced by his culture? By the rules of his job? *(RL.4-6.3; SL.4-6.4; W.4-6.9; L.4-6.1)*

**Rosa** shows that making the posters calling for the bus boycott was a difficult process. If any errors were made on the stencil-making machine, the whole page had to be thrown out! Imagine Rosa Parks' arrest took place today, and you are in charge of publicizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Describe your message and methods. What text would you write to convince people to participate? Would you distribute posters, or use other communication tools (like social media) to draw attention to the boycott? *(W.4-6.1; W.4-6.5; Social Studies: 4th Grade—Government: Civic Participation and Skills)*

Rosa Parks' arrest and the Montgomery Bus Boycott were two of many key events in the Civil Rights Movement. Using online resources available to students through INFOhio (<http://www.infohio.org/>) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (<http://www.ohioweblibrary.org>), research one of these topics. Write a page describing the event and explaining its significance to the Civil Rights Movement. Be sure to cite any sources:

- The Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling
- The lynching of Emmitt Till
- The Little Rock Nine
- Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have A Dream" Speech
- The March on Washington
- Selma to Montgomery marches

*(RI.4-6.3; W.4-6.7; W.4-6.8; Social Studies: 4th Grade—Government: Civic Participation)*

For Rosa Parks, riding the bus was a normal part of her travel plans. With the bus boycott, Rosa and thousands of others decided to change their routines to protest injustice. Imagine you decided to change your travel plans as a protest. How would you get around? Ride a bike? Walk? Would it be difficult to adjust? *(SL.4-6.1; SL.4-6.4)*

## Explore more!

Additional ideas and resources to use with **Rosa**.

### Visit the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati

<http://www.freedomcenter.org/>

The Ohio River was referred to in the code of the Underground Railroad as the "River Jordan", because crossing into Ohio meant crossing into the "Promised Land" of the Free States. When it came to picking a spot for the Freedom Center, Ohio stood out.

### American RadioWorks: Remembering Jim Crow

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/remembering/>

Listen to American RadioWorks' treasury of resources for further investigation into the Jim Crow system that Rosa Parks quietly and courageously challenged.

### The Civil Rights Movement: 1919-1960s (National Humanities Center: TeacherServe)

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1917beyond/essays/crm.htm>

Read a detailed overview of the deep history of the Civil Rights Movement.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>.

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