



ROSA PARKS TEXTBOOK

Author and educator Herbert Kohl surveyed how more than 20 history textbooks told the story of Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on December 1, 1955. Here, he writes the standard story told by these textbooks.

"Rosa was tired: The story of the Montgomery bus boycott"

Rosa Parks was a poor seamstress. She lived in Montgomery, Alabama, during the 1950s. [In] those days there was still segregation in parts of the United States. That meant that African Americans and European Americans were not allowed to use the same public facilities such as restaurants or swimming pools. It also meant that whenever it was crowded on the city buses African Americans had to give up seats in front to European Americans and move to the back of the bus.

One day on her way home from work Rosa was tired and sat down in the front of the bus. As the bus got crowded she was asked to give up her seat to a European American man, and she refused. The bus driver told her she had to go to the back of the bus, and she still refused to move. It was a hot day, and she was tired and angry, and became very stubborn.

The driver called a policeman, who arrested Rosa.

When other African Americans in Montgomery heard this they became angry too. So they decided to refuse to ride the buses until everyone was allowed to ride together. They boycotted the buses.

The boycott, which was led by Martin Luther King Jr., succeeded. Now African Americans and European Americans can ride the buses together in Montgomery.

Rosa Parks was a very brave person.

Source: Herbert Kohl (2005). *She Would Not Be Moved*. New York: The New Press. pp. 7-8.