

Threads & Themes — Grade 8, Unit 1, Mid-Unit Summative Assessment (Student Version)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PASSAGE 1

Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked

(1) In December 1955, African Americans in Montgomery, Alabama, began a boycott of the city’s bus system after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. Parks’s arrest started the protest, but the boycott’s success came from careful organization, shared goals, and sustained effort—not from a single act of resistance.

(2) The bus boycott did not happen by accident. Local activists and community leaders had talked about a boycott long before Parks’s arrest. Many African Americans in Montgomery were already angry about how they were treated on buses. They were often forced to enter through the back door or give up their seats when white passengers boarded. These shared experiences helped unite people around a common cause. When the boycott began, organizers spread the message through churches, flyers, and word of mouth. Thousands of people learned both why the protest was happening and how to take part.

(3) One key reason the boycott worked was that it offered a clear alternative to riding the buses. Since many African Americans relied on buses to get to work, simply refusing to ride them would not have been possible without planning. Community members organized carpools, while others walked long distances each day. Churches helped coordinate transportation schedules, and volunteers donated time, cars, and gas. These efforts required discipline and cooperation, but they allowed the boycott to continue far longer than city officials expected.

(4) The boycott was also guided by the principle of nonviolent protest. Organizers believed that staying peaceful, even when facing harassment or arrest, would reveal how unfair segregation laws were. This meant participants had to control their reactions and follow agreed-upon rules of behavior. By sitting, walking, and

organizing without using violence, protesters focused attention on the injustice of the bus system rather than on their own actions.

(5) City leaders and bus officials responded in different ways. Some tried to pressure African Americans to return to the buses by issuing fines or threatening arrests. Others dismissed the boycott as temporary, thinking people would eventually give in. Instead, thousands of residents kept participating, showing the power of collective action. Over time, the economic impact on the bus system grew, and the boycott became impossible to ignore.

(6) The Montgomery bus boycott showed that ordinary people acting together over time could bring about meaningful change. Its success did not come from a single protest or leader, but from organization, persistence, and shared commitment. These elements turned individual frustration into coordinated action and set the stage for future challenges to segregation.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 1

Item 1

Which detail BEST supports the idea that the boycott was organized, not accidental?

- A) African Americans began a boycott after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat.
- B) Leaders had discussed a boycott before Rosa Parks’s arrest.
- C) Many African Americans were already frustrated by mistreatment before the boycott.
- D) The economic impact of the boycott made it impossible to ignore.

Item 2

How does the detail about churches, flyers, and word of mouth support a main point of “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked”?

- A) It shows the boycott depended on secret communication to avoid attention.
- B) It shows how participants learned about the boycott after city officials made arrests.
- C) It shows the boycott succeeded because many people clearly understood how to participate.
- D) It shows how the bus company’s workers were recruited into the boycott.

Item 3

What is the central idea of “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked”?

- A) The boycott succeeded mainly because bus officials quickly changed the law.
- B) The boycott was unsuccessful until outside groups took control.
- C) The boycott succeeded because of planning and persistence.
- D) The boycott was unsuccessful because the protesters remained peaceful.

Item 4

What cause-and-effect relationship is emphasized in “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked”?

- A) Arrests caused the boycott to become increasingly violent over time.
- B) The boycott caused fewer people to need transportation to work.
- C) Carpools and walking caused the boycott to continue longer than officials expected.
- D) Flyers caused city leaders to unexpectedly repeal any and all laws enforcing segregation.

Item 5

Select TWO ideas that MOST strongly develop the central idea of “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

- A) Organizers created carpools and coordinated transportation.
- B) Rosa Parks’s arrest was widely reported.
- C) The boycott was guided by nonviolent protest rules.
- D) Some officials assumed the boycott would be temporary.
- E) The boycott received national news coverage over several months.

Item 6

Match each action to its MOST likely result, based on “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

Actions:

1. Community groups organize carpools and other travel support.
2. Demonstrators remain disciplined even when confronted or insulted.
3. Large numbers of people stop using city buses over an extended period.

Results:

- A. Many people are still able to get where they need to go without relying on the buses.
- B. City leaders and the transit system experience increasing financial strain.

C. Public attention stays on the unfair system instead of on the protesters' response.

Item 7

How does paragraph 3 about carpools function in the structure of “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked”?

- A) It shows the role of churches in planning for the boycott.
- B) It explains a key strategy that made the boycott sustainable.
- C) It describes how long the boycott lasted.
- D) It explains how city officials responded to the boycott.

Item 8

Read this sentence from “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

By sitting, walking, and organizing without using violence, protesters focused attention on the injustice of the bus system rather than on their own actions.

In paragraph 4 on nonviolence, what role does this sentence play?

- A) It introduces the principle of nonviolent protest for the first time in the paragraph.
- B) It provides a contrast to violent methods used by other protesters.
- C) It explains how protesters were harassed and arrested as a result of the boycott.
- D) It summarizes how peaceful actions kept attention on injustice rather than on the protesters' behavior.

Item 9

Read this sentence from “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

In December 1955, African Americans in Montgomery, Alabama, began a boycott of the city's bus system after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger.

How does the word refusing function in the sentence?

- A) infinitive

- B) proper noun
- C) participle
- D) gerund

Item 10

Read this sentence from “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

Since many African Americans relied on buses to get to work, simply refusing to ride them would not have been possible without planning.

What is the function of the gerund phrase “simply refusing to ride them” in the sentence?

- A) It acts as a noun, naming the action that serves as the subject of the sentence.
- B) It acts as an adjective, describing how African Americans felt about bus travel.
- C) It acts as an adverb, explaining the reason African Americans relied on buses.
- D) It acts as an appositive, renaming “buses” earlier in the sentence.

Item 11

Which sentence about the Montgomery bus boycott uses all commas correctly?

- A) Community leaders helped spread the word quickly, and protesters sacrificed comfort, money, and time.
- B) Community leaders helped spread the word quickly, and protesters sacrificed comfort money and time.
- C) Community leaders helped spread the word quickly and protesters sacrificed comfort, money, and time.
- D) Community leaders, helped spread the word quickly and protesters, sacrificed comfort money and time.

Item 12

Read these sentences from “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

Churches helped coordinate transportation schedules, and volunteers donated time, cars, and gas. These efforts required discipline and cooperation, but they allowed the boycott to continue far longer than city officials expected.

Based on these sentences, what does the prefix “co-” mean in the words coordinate and cooperation?

- A) together
- B) collecting
- C) repeatedly
- D) not

Item 13

Read this sentence from “Why the Montgomery Bus Boycott Worked.”

These shared experiences helped unite people around a common cause.

In this sentence, what is the function of the word shared?

- A) participle modifying “helped”
- B) participle modifying “experiences”
- C) gerund acting as a noun
- D) gerund acting as an adverb

PASSAGE 2

City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott — Lexile:
approx. 1180L | Informational

(1) In early 1956, Montgomery city officials and local newspapers closely watched the ongoing bus boycott that had been going on for several weeks. Reports often focused on the disruption caused by the protest rather than on the complaints of African American riders. City leaders were concerned about public order, economic stability, and respect for the law.

(2) Newspaper articles at the time frequently described the boycott as an inconvenience to the city. Headlines emphasized reduced bus revenue, changes to traffic patterns, and the strain placed on city services. Some reports called the protest a “refusal to cooperate” with established rules, suggesting that it threatened normal daily life in Montgomery. In these accounts, the reasons African Americans chose not to ride the buses were often mentioned briefly or not at all.

(3) Statements from city officials reflected a similar focus. The mayor and other leaders argued that segregation laws were legal and had been upheld for years. According to this view, changes to the bus system should come through the courts rather than through public protest. Officials warned that boycotts could encourage disorder and weaken respect for local authority. In some cases, they suggested that outside groups were influencing local residents. This downplayed the role of Montgomery’s African American community in organizing the protest.

(4) Coverage of the boycott also highlighted enforcement efforts. Articles reported on arrests, fines, and new regulations aimed at limiting carpools. These measures were presented as necessary steps to keep order and protect public safety. Little attention was given to how these actions affected the daily lives of those participating in the boycott, such as workers who relied on shared rides or long walks to reach their jobs.

(5) Newspapers noted that large numbers of people were involved, but they often avoided describing the boycott as a moral or political movement. Instead, the protest was framed as a logistical problem for the city to manage. By focusing on laws, revenue, and control, these reports offered a different interpretation of the same events described by activists and participants.

(6) The way city officials and newspapers portrayed the Montgomery Bus Boycott shaped how many readers understood the protest. Their accounts show how the same event can be described in contrasting ways, depending on which details are emphasized and which voices are included.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 2

Item 14

Which phrase **BEST** reveals that the newspapers emphasized problems in the city instead of the concerns of the riders?

- A) “large numbers of people”
- B) “the same event can be described”
- C) “the ongoing bus boycott”
- D) “the disruption caused by the protest”

Item 15

Which statement **BEST** expresses the central idea of “City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott”?

- A) Newspapers and city officials highlighted the boycott’s effects on order, law, and revenue more than protesters’ reasons for participating.
- B) Newspapers mostly described the long walks and shared rides used by participants during the boycott.
- C) Officials argued that outside groups were influencing local residents to join the protest.
- D) Articles reported on arrests, fines, and efforts to limit carpools during the boycott.

Item 16

How does “City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott” present the viewpoints of both city officials and activists?

- A) It explains that both groups mainly agreed about the causes of the boycott.
- B) It shows that both officials and activists were mostly concerned with traffic patterns and city services.
- C) It contrasts officials’ focus on law, revenue, and public order with activists’ focus on unfair treatment and justice.

D) It suggests that officials cared more about following city rules than about changing the bus system.

Item 17

Which explanation BEST describes how officials' actions impacted the boycott's continuation?

- A) By changing bus rules to address complaints, officials reduced support for the protest, and it ended quickly.
- B) By encouraging carpools and shared rides, officials made it easier for participants to stay involved over time.
- C) By refusing to respond to the protest, officials allowed the boycott to lose momentum within a few days.
- D) By warning that the boycott could cause disorder, officials tried to discourage participation, but many people continued anyway.

Item 18

How does the structure of "City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott" help readers understand its message about different perspectives?

- A) It presents protesters' daily experiences and then explains how those experiences changed newspaper coverage of the boycott.
- B) It presents officials' concerns and then describes enforcement efforts, showing how the boycott was framed as a problem to control.
- C) It contrasts statements from city officials about upholding segregation laws with newspaper articles about the reasons African Americans chose not to ride the buses.
- D) It focuses on newspaper headlines about reduced bus revenue and traffic changes to show how the boycott affected daily life in Montgomery.

Item 19

What is the author's point of view in "City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott"?

- A) The author believes officials were justified in emphasizing order and protecting the city's laws.
- B) The author believes the boycott was described differently depending on which voices were emphasized.
- C) The author believes protesters should have ended the boycott before tensions increased.
- D) The author believes the conflict was mainly about traffic, revenue, and city services.

Item 20

How does the purpose of “City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott” shape the way events are described?

- A) It includes details about arrests, fines, and new regulations to suggest the boycott created disorder that needed control.
- B) It includes details about shared rides and long walks to emphasize the daily sacrifices made by participants.
- C) It includes details about revenue, laws, and enforcement to show how institutions shaped public understanding of the boycott.
- D) It includes details about outside influence to suggest local residents played only a minor role in the protest.

Item 21

A photo shows African American residents walking to work instead of riding the bus during the boycott.

Select TWO ways this visual adds to “City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.”

- A) It supports the idea that many participants continued the boycott through daily effort and sacrifice.
- B) It supports the idea that officials and newspapers focused more on disruption than on the protesters' reasons.
- C) It supports the idea that city officials welcomed the boycott as a peaceful way to request change.

D) It supports the idea that the boycott was visible in everyday city life and affected normal routines.

E) It supports the idea that the boycott eventually caused city officials to change the bus seating rules.

Item 22

Read the sentence from “City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.”

Instead, the protest was framed as a logistical problem for the city to manage.

Why is a comma needed in the sentence?

A) It separates an introductory transition from the main clause.

B) It separates two independent clauses joined in one sentence.

C) It sets off extra information that is not needed to identify the protest.

D) It shows where the reader should pause before the verb phrase.

Item 23

Match each word part to its meaning as used in “City Officials Respond to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.”

Word Parts:

1. –ment (as in enforcement)
2. inter– (as in interpretation)
3. –tion (as in interpretation)
4. en– (as in enforcement)

Meanings:

- A. the act or process of
- B. to cause to / to put into
- C. between / among
- D. a result or state (a “thing” formed)

Item 24

Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A) Articles reported, on arrests, fines, and new regulations aimed at limiting carpools.
- B) Articles reported on arrests, fines, and new regulations aimed at limiting carpools.
- C) Articles reported on arrests fines, and new regulations aimed at limiting carpools.
- D) Articles reported on arrests, fines and new, regulations aimed at limiting carpools.

ITEMS — BOTH PASSAGES

Item 25

Match each emphasis to the passage in which it is more strongly emphasized. You will use the answer choices more than once.

Emphases:

1. Participants' commitment to nonviolence
2. Concerns about law, order, and authority
3. Reduced revenue and economic strain
4. Organizing carpools and other alternatives

Passages:

- A. Passage 1
- B. Passage 2

Item 26

Which difference in interpretation between the passages is MOST accurate?

- A) Passage 1 presents the boycott as mostly ineffective, while Passage 2 presents it as mostly successful.
- B) Passage 1 emphasizes legal arguments about segregation, while Passage 2 emphasizes changes in bus routes and schedules.
- C) Passage 1 focuses on the experiences of city officials, while Passage 2 focuses on the experiences of bus riders.
- D) Passage 1 emphasizes the actions and choices that sustained the boycott, while Passage 2 emphasizes how officials and newspapers portrayed it.

SPELLING

Item 27

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 28

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 29

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 30

Write the spelling word you heard:
