



DO BOYCOTTS REALLY WORK?

Learning Objectives: The students will

1. Understand and identify the characteristics of a good citizen.
2. Recognize the impact of individuals on a community or a nation.
3. Analyze the effectiveness of several boycotts in our history.

TEKS: 5.5A, 5.5C

Materials Needed: Children's book about Rosa Parks (suggestions include: *Through My Eyes*, articles and interviews by Ruby Bridges compiled and edited by Margo Lundell; *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles; *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* by David Adler; *Rosa* (Caldecott Honor Book) by Nikki Giovanni; *Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue With Today's Youth* by Rosa Parks), copies of the Boycotts in America handout.

Vocabulary: integration, segregation, hero, boycott

Teaching Strategies:

1. Introduce the lesson by role-playing the scene on the bus, when Rosa Parks was asked to move to the back of the bus.
 - a. Set up eight chairs in two columns like a bus. Have eight students sit in the bus seats and tell them (and the class) that they have been working all day, and they are tired. They are riding the bus home on a half-hour trip. Tell them that you are a new passenger getting on the bus. Role-play that you are getting on the bus.
 - b. Pick one student and tell him or her that he or she must get up and give you his or her seat. If the student hesitates, say "You know the law, people with (red) shirts must give up their seats if someone with a (blue) shirt comes on the bus. So get up or I will have you arrested."
2. Lead a discussion about what happened and the feelings of the people involved. Guide the students to the conclusion that the law is not fair and that it leads people to want to change the law.
3. Share a children's book about Rosa Parks but do not reveal the results of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
4. Define "boycott." Ask students to speculate about the effectiveness of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Then read the remainder of the book, telling about the results of the boycott. What made this boycott successful?
5. Discuss the characteristics of someone who would be willing to provide that kind of leadership. Remind students of the courage it took to do what Rosa Parks did.
6. Recount instances of other boycotts in our history. Ask if anyone recalls a time when people got together for a cause when one person by himself or herself could not effect a change.
7. Divide students into four groups, each to investigate one boycott. Use the attached information or allow students to research on their own.
 - A. American Boycott of the Townshend Acts—1797
 - B. Olympic Boycotts—1980, 1984
 - C. United Farm Workers (Cesar Chavez)—1965-1970
 - D. Ruby Bridges (The boycott of the school was not successful)—1960

8. Each group will discover:
 - a. Who was involved
 - b. What they hoped to achieve by the boycott
 - c. What factors would hurt the boycott's chances of success
 - d. Final results of boycott
9. Students will record their findings on the Boycotts in America handout and create a slogan for their boycott to make people want to join.
10. Each group will report to the class the information obtained and the slogan.

Extension for Gifted/Talented:

Students will analyze the following quote by Eleanor Roosevelt. On December 20, 1956, the Montgomery Bus Boycott ended and Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, "I think December 5th is an important date for all of us in the U.S. to remember. The bus protest carried on by the colored people of Montgomery, Alabama, without violence, has been one of the most remarkable achievements of people fighting for their own rights, but doing so without bloodshed and with the most remarkable restraint and discipline, that we have ever witnessed in this country. It is something all of us should be extremely proud of for its achievement by Americans which has rarely before been seen." Because of her support of nonviolent protest, she gave workshops on non-violent civil disobedience into her 70s. Students will look up similar quotes by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. about the power of non-violent protests.

BOYCOTTS IN AMERICA

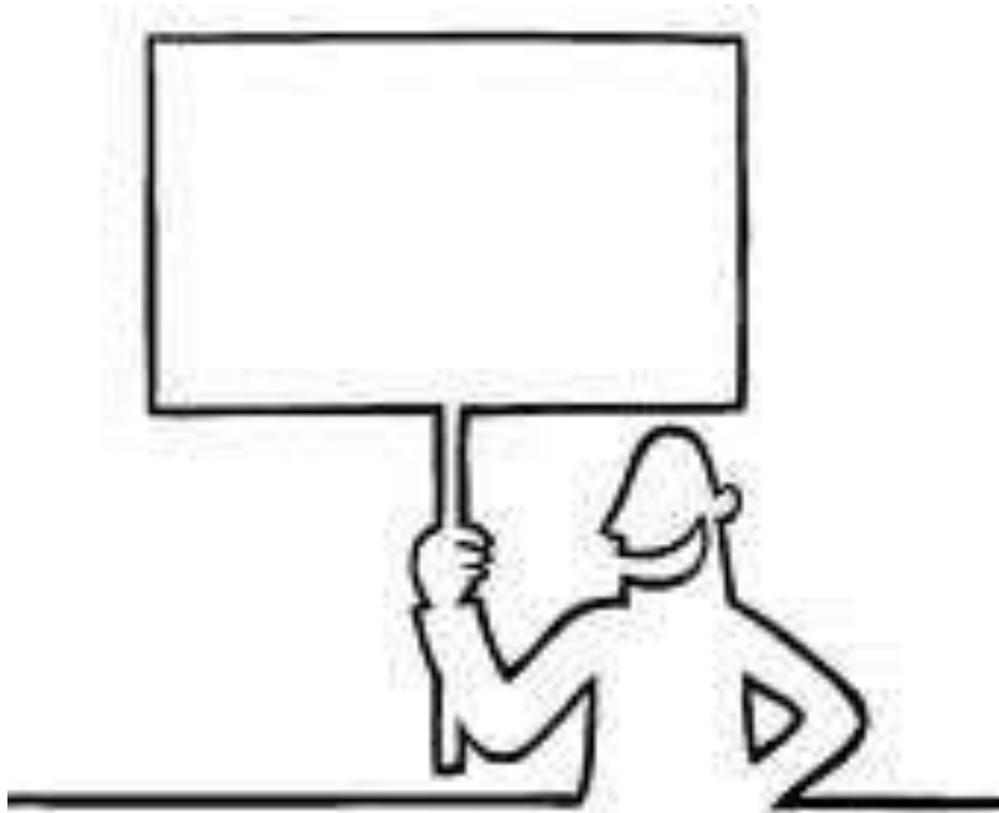
Name of Boycott

Goals of the Boycott

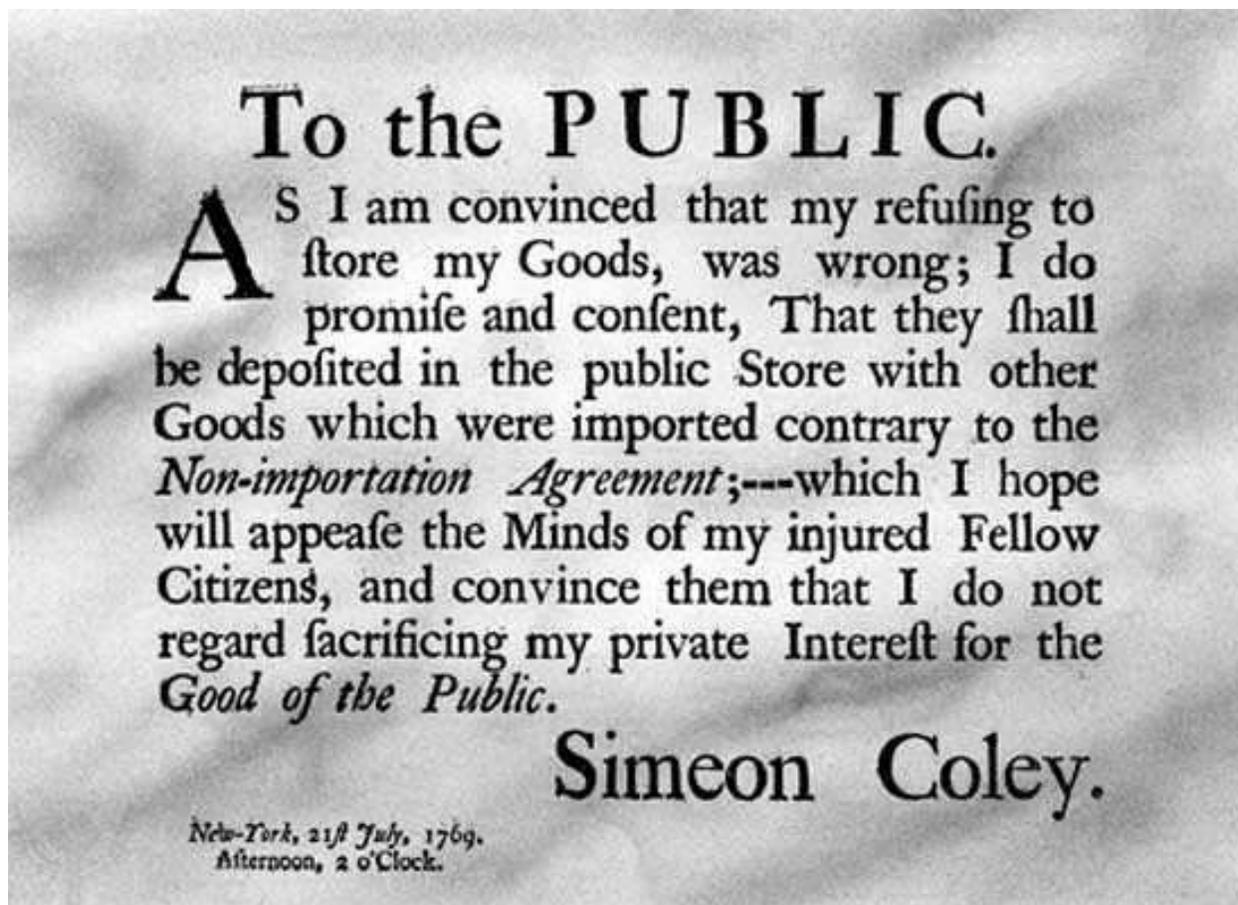
Problems Faced in Achieving Goals

Results of the Boycott

Use this graphic to make a slogan for your boycott. Remember, the purpose of the sign is to make people want to join the boycott.



American Boycott of the Townshend Acts—1767



In June 1767, Parliament cut British land taxes, and tried to finance its troops in the Colonies by overtaxing the colonists. So they passed the Townshend Acts, which taxed items like paper, lead, glass, paint and tea shipped from England. The Brits thought indirectly taxing imported goods would fare better than the repealed Stamp Act (a direct tax on printed materials). Sounds reasonable, right?

The Colonists were livid, and reacted in what passed for 'immediately' in Colonial times. New York and Boston boycotted all British goods in August 1768. Philadelphia joined in March 1769, and by that October the boycott spread to New Jersey, Rhode Island and North Carolina. Seeing the Colonists united in their opposition to the Townshend Acts, King George III sent more troops into the Colonies, insisting that you can put a fire out with gasoline, if you just throw it hard enough.

However, history shows the non-importation movement wasn't as effective as the Colonists hoped. British exports to the colonies did decline by 38% in 1769, but some merchants never participated in the ban. The boycott sputtered in 1770, and quietly died in 1771. However, an indirect result of the boycott was that American women gained a greater place in society because they still had to provide many of the refined goods normally imported from Britain.

The Townshend Acts were repealed in March of 1770, except for the taxes on tea (and we all know how well that turned out).

Montgomery Bus Boycott—1955-1956



In December 1955, Rosa Parks was riding a bus home from work and was ordered to give up her seat to a white passenger. This was Alabama law at the time, and some black men had already started toward the back to make room for her in the 'Colored' section. But Ms. Parks refused, and authorities arrested her.

News spread fast, and a community organizer passed out a pamphlet stressing that blacks were $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Montgomery bus riders. Blacks had more power than they thought, if they had the courage to wield it.

Blacks were asked to not ride any buses the following Monday. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. noted the success of that Monday Boycott, and used his Montgomery Improvement Association to encourage all blacks to keep the boycott going. It lasted over a year.

Carpools sprang up overnight, black taxi drivers charged only a dime for black passengers, and many blacks just walked to work. The Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted until December 20, 1956, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Montgomery laws requiring segregated buses were unconstitutional.

Olympic Boycotts—1980, 1984



Following a series of foreign policy setbacks, US President Jimmy Carter said that the United States would boycott (not attend) the Moscow Olympics if Soviet troops did not withdraw from Afghanistan. When the Soviet Union refused, Carter led over 60 nations to boycott the 1980 summer games.

Japan, West Germany, China, the Philippines, Argentina and Canada quickly joined in. England and France supported the boycott, but left the decision to the individual athlete. So Spain, Italy, Sweden, Iceland and Finland represented Western Europe.

NOTE: Besides the athletes, do you know who the real loser of the 1980 boycott was? Broadcaster NBC, which paid \$85 million for the TV rights. That price tag included \$61 million to the Russians, who saw no need to give it back.

The Soviets did the same thing in 1984, and refused to attend the summer Olympics held in Los Angeles. They issued a statement saying that the Soviet Union would boycott the 1984 summer games due to 'chauvinistic sentiments and anti-Soviet hysteria being whipped up in the United States.' Thirteen Soviet allies joined the boycott.

United Farm Workers—1965-1970 (Adapted from Claire Peterson and Susana Diaz)



"The consumer boycott is the only open door in the dark corridor of nothingness down which farm workers have had to walk for many years. It is a gate of hope through which they expect to find the sunlight of a better life for themselves and their families." (Cesar Chavez)

The disastrous great depression left many people unemployed. As a result, a large number of Anglo people took over many migrant workers' jobs in California. This left many Mexicans and Filipinos desperate and willing to do anything for money. Working conditions were poor for the huge population of migrant workers and illegal immigrants. There were unsanitary conditions and horrible wages. These conditions created anger between workers and employers and were the basis for large-scale wage strikes for the next fifty years.

In the 1930's drought struck the southwest, which forced more needy workers to move to California farms. Because of a greater demand for labor from these workers, farmers lowered wages and hired more people. In 1951 Public Law 78 was passed which connected workers in Mexico to farms in the U.S. This allowed U.S. farmers to hire "braceros" when there was a shortage of American farmhands. Farmers took advantage of this law by hiring mostly braceros because they would work longer days for less pay, and would tolerate the working conditions.



Figure 1: Cesar Chavez participating in a march (left), workers marching in protest (right).

Sometimes, whole families of "braceros" would only get paid twenty cents for three hours of work. Working families lived in small run down shacks or tents in crowded camps. If there wasn't enough room, some family members would sleep under bridges near by. In order to survive, families were forced to move to where work was available.



Figure 2: Workers in an organizing meeting.

By 1964 a movement arose and the union United Farm Workers Association (UFWA) was formed with 1,000 members. The farm workers wanted better pay and better working and living conditions.

In August 1965, an independent walkout of Mexican and Filipino grape workers in Delano, California caught the leader and organizer of the UFW, Cesar Chavez's attention. An even larger strike led by the Filipinos against all the grape companies in the Delano area was supported by UFWA. When the strike was not successful in completely halting fieldwork, Chavez organized a march to California's state capitol to inspire farm workers to join the Union. The march was effective in getting national attention; however, Chavez knew that neither the march nor the strike would be effective in getting the grape producers to discuss any changes.

UFWA then decided to call a boycott of the Schenley Liquor Company, who owned the most of the vineyards in the San Joaquin Valley. This was a success, and soon other grape producers were forced to sign contracts. Chavez sent representatives throughout the country to coordinate boycott meetings and fundraising efforts. For the next four years the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee decided to boycott all table grapes; this received wide public support.

This boycott was the most successful in American history. In 1970 the pressure of the ongoing boycott resulted in the signing of contracts that provided workers with significant benefits.

Ruby Bridges—Franz Elementary School—1960

A Failed Boycott

When Ruby Bridges arrived for her first day at William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in 1960, she thought it was Mardi Gras. People lined the streets, shouting and throwing things -- just like a Carnival parade. But these people weren't celebrating.

At 6 years old, Bridges had become a player in American history. Her parents had volunteered her to be the first black child to attend an all-white school in the South. Local law enforcement refused to protect her from the unruly mobs that surrounded her school, so every day she was escorted the five blocks to school by four federal marshals.



U.S. deputy marshals escort 6-year-old Ruby Bridges from William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in November 1960. The first-grader was the only black child in the school; parents of white students boycotted the court-ordered integration.

That first day, all the parents had rushed into the building and took their kids out -- effectively boycotting the school. The school didn't quite know what to do; Ruby was told to just sit in the principal's office until it was time to go home.

"I remember thinking, 'This school is easy,'" Bridges told AOL News.

Ruby recalled, "Later on I learned there had been protestors in front of the two integrated schools the whole day. They wanted to be sure white parents would boycott the school and not let their children attend. Groups of high school boys, joining the protestors, paraded up and down the street and sang new verses to old hymns. Their favorite was "Battle Hymn of the Republic," in which they changed the chorus to "Glory, glory, segregation, the South will rise again." Many of the boys carried signs and said awful things, but most of all I remember seeing a black doll in a coffin, which frightened me more than anything else."

Many teachers refused to teach while a black child was enrolled. That was considered a boycott too. But the boycott didn't work. The school hired Barbara Henry, from Boston, Massachusetts, to teach Bridges, and for over a year Mrs. Henry taught her alone, "as if she were teaching a whole class." Before the end of the year the protests died down. Ruby stayed at the school, and she even made friends with some of her white fellow students when they started returning to school.



See: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/history/spotlight_september.html