

Rosa Makes a Choice

featuring

Rosa

By Nikki Giovanni

Story Synopsis: The story of Rosa Parks making the choice to say "no" on a Montgomery, Alabama bus on December 1, 1955. (In making this decision she changed the history of our nation.) On this day Rosa, a well-respected seamstress, left work early. As always, she paid her bus fare in the front of the bus, got off, and re- entered from the rear. The back section was reserved for blacks and it was full. However, the "neutral" section for both whites and blacks had some empty seats and the tired Mrs. Parks sat in one. The bus was getting full and the driver demanded she give up this seat. She did not move and was arrested. Members of the Women's Political Council came to her support. They prayed and worked hard creating posters that encouraged blacks to Rosa by walking instead of taking the bus. Martin Luther King, Jr. made a speech in her favor and Montgomery Bus Boycott began. Almost a year after Rosa's arrest the Supreme Court ruled segregation on the buses was illegal.

Economic Concepts

- **Scarcity** – the condition of limited resources. Because resources are limited, people must make choices.
- **Opportunity cost** – that which is given up when a choice is made. When deciding how to spend a resource it is one's second best alternative; the alternative given up.
- **Choice** - takes place whenever someone makes a personal decision to use limited resources.

Virginia Standards of Learning – History & Social Sciences

1.1h	The student will demonstrate skills for historical thinking, geographical analysis, economic decision making, and responsible citizenship by h) using a decision-making model to make informed decisions;
3.10	The student will identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).
3.11b	The student will explain the importance of the basic principles that form the foundation of a republican form of government by b) identifying the contributions of George Washington; Thomas Jefferson; Abraham Lincoln; Rosa Parks ; Thurgood Marshall; Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Cesar Chavez;

Materials:

- Copy of book, *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni, Illustrated by Bryan Collier
- Visual – Rosa Makes a Choice
- Projection device (document camera)

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by explaining that people make choices all the time. When a decision is made people choose the alternative that seems to be in their best interest because it involves the least cost and the greatest benefit.

2. Read *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni to the class. A YouTube reading can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2dYS8aLNNNA>
3. Explain to the students that Rosa Parks made a choice that changed history. **Ask them what this choice was.** (She chose not to give up her seat on the bus.) **Ask the students why Mrs. Parks was asked to give up her seat.** (The bus was crowded and seats were scarce. In the past white people had more rights than black people.) **Ask the students what Rosa gave up when she refused to give up her seat.** (Rosa was arrested and gave up her freedom.) **What was Rosa's opportunity cost for the choice she made?** (Rosa gave up a nice dinner with her husband when she chose to remain in her seat.)
4. Display the visual and review the components of the grid with the students. Fill in the grid using suggestions from the students. Encourage discussion there can be different interpretations as to if an action is negative or positive.
5. Possible solution of Visual:

	Easy	Safe	Fun	Legal	Total
Stay in the Seat and be calm and polite	-	-	0	+	2 - 1 +
Stay in the Seat and yell at the bus driver demanding her rights	-	-	+	-	3 -
Get up from the seat and <u>get off</u> the bus	+	+	-	+	1 - 3 +
Get up from the seat but <u>stay on</u> the bus	-	+	-	+	2 - 2 +

Visual-

Rosa Makes a Choice Stay in the Bus Seat or Move?

- Steps in Making a Decision**
1. What is the **PROBLEM**?
 2. What **ALTERNATIVE** actions can be taken to solve the problem?
 3. What are the **IMPORTANT** things to consider in making this decision?
 4. **EVALUATE** what is important.
 5. Make a **DECISION**.

Decision-Making Grid

In the top row are the important things Rosa had to consider when the bus driver demanded she give up her seat on the crowded bus.

→

	Easy	Safe	Fun	Legal	Total
Stay in the bus seat and be calm and polite					
Stay in the Seat and yell at the bus driver demanding her rights					
Get up from the seat and <u>get off</u> the bus					
Get up from the seat but <u>stay on</u> the bus					

↑

In the column are the possible actions Rosa can take.

Directions: Fill in each square with a Plus (+), Minus (-), or Zero (0). For example, if you think it would be easy for Rosa to stay in her seat and be calm and polite, put a plus sign in the first space on the grid. If you think it would be difficult put a minus sign and if it does not matter one way or another, put in a zero.