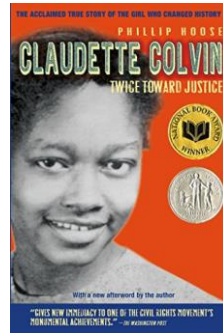


Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice

Writing Prompts



ISBN-10 312661053
ISBN-13 978-0312661052
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Publisher Square Fish
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Lexile 1000L

Genre Children's Literature

Synopsis On March 2, 1955, an impassioned teenager, fed up with the daily injustices of Jim Crow segregation, refused to give her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Though shunned by her classmates and dismissed by community leaders, a year later, Claudette Colvin dared to challenge segregation again as a key plaintiff in Browder v. Gayle, the landmark case that struck down the segregation laws of Montgomery.

Themes Civil Rights

Protagonist African-American Female

Note Over the years, these books have been published in multiple editions. The page numbers in your book may be different than the ones on the lesson plan.

More Information www.scu.edu/character



Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 9

“The few passengers who defied the drivers usually cooled off at the police station, paid their fines, and tried to put their humiliating experiences behind them. Why fight? The white judges, the intimidating police, the insulting drivers, and the crushing weight of all the years of custom and law were simply overwhelming” (p. 9).

Writing Prompt

Instances of African Americans standing up to discrimination on these buses usually ended with their arrest and brief imprisonment, followed by a payment of fines and a desire to put the matter behind them. Review today’s background information on *Structural Violence*. **In two informative paragraphs explain what structural violence is in your own words and describe how social laws and the legal system supported structural violence against African Americans.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 17

“You couldn’t try on a hat either, unless you put a stocking on your head. They said our hair was “greasy.” They said it in such a degrading way; they never said “please” or asked if we minded” (p. 17).

Writing Prompt

While living in Montgomery, Claudette was held back by many social restrictions, in the shops, at the park, and even at the optometrist. **In an explanatory paragraph, describe the discrimination Claudette and the African American community faced. Provide three examples to support your response.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 24

“Jeremiah Reeves’s arrest was the turning point of my life. That was when I and a lot of other students really started thinking about prejudice and racism. I was furious when I found out what had happened” (p. 24).

Writing Prompt

Jeremiah Reeves, was arrested and charged with raping six Caucasian women, though innocent, Reeves admitted to guilt, and was sentenced, in a short trial, to death. As Claudette, write a journal entry about Jeremiah’s arrest. **In an explanatory paragraph, describe why his arrest is a turning point in your life. Provide three reasons of why this incident affected you so profoundly.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 36

“When he went away, I looked around me: three bare walls, a toilet, and a cot. Then I fell down on my knees in the middle of the cell and started crying again. I didn’t know if anyone knew where I was or what had happened to me. I had no idea how long I would be there. I cried and I put my hands together and prayed like I had never prayed before” (p. 36).

Writing Prompt

At the time of Claudette’s arrest, she didn’t know the implications of her actions and decision to stand up against injustice. She didn’t know the impact her story would have on her community and the civil rights movement. If you were able to send a motivational and encouraging letter to Claudette while she was in prison, what would you say? Write an encouraging letter to Claudette. Explain how she is an example of a strong leader for the common good. **In an explanatory paragraph, inform Claudette that her courageous decision will help end discrimination and racism in the United States.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 42

“Robinson’s letter led only to more polite meetings. The whites offered coffee, nodded, and smiled, but refused to budge an inch when it came to Jim Crow. Still Claudette Colvin’s arrest had stripped the veneer of politeness from the talks. She had been wrenched from her seat and dragged off a bus by police in front of shocked witnesses. People were angry” (p. 42).

Writing Prompt

Jo Ann Robinson led campaigns for different rights in the area as a member of the Women's Political Council. Pretend you are a reporter; write an article about Jo Ann Robinson’s leadership. **In an explanatory paragraph, describe Jo Ann Robinson’s work to end discrimination in Montgomery. Provide at least two examples of how she used her time and talent to promote the common good. Finish the article that praises Jo Ann for her leadership in the civil rights movement.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 52-53

“About the only person not involved in these discussions was Claudette. ‘Nobody ever came to interview me about being the boycott spokesperson’, she later said. ‘I had no idea adults were talking about me and looking into my life. The only one of those people I talked to was my lawyer, Fred Gray’” (p. 52 -53).

Writing Prompt

Without involving Claudette in this decision-making process, the NAACP decided not to use the boycott on behalf of Claudette. However, they did decide to raise funds for her impending appeal. **Write an informative letter to Claudette to explain why the NAACP decided not to use her story to initiate an official boycott. Provide at least two reasons for the NAACP’s decision. Conclude the letter by explaining how the NAACP plans to support Claudette’s impending appeal.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 69

“Toward the end of his address, Dr. King delivered lines for which he would be remembered. ‘And we are determined here in Montgomery,’ he said, his voice rising in intensity, ‘to work and fight until justice runs down like water and righteousness like a might stream’” (p. 69).

Writing Prompt

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. highlighted the success of the bus boycott in Montgomery through his speeches. In order to create change, it is important to spread awareness and welcome new comers to your cause. Pretend you are Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s speechwriter. **Write an informative speech about the bus boycott in Montgomery. Explain how the boycott began and why its important for everyone of every race should be involved. Ensure the speech is motivating and asks listeners to take peaceful action!**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 81

“Since judges representing the state of Alabama and the city of Montgomery court system were all but certain to be hostile, the lawyers knew that their only chance was to argue their case in a federal court where judges might listen with an open mind to an anti-segregation suit offered by black lawyers” (p. 81).

Writing Prompt

Fred Gray wanted to take the fight off the streets and into the courthouse. He decided to file a lawsuit against the city of Montgomery’s segregation laws, and challenge them as being unconstitutional. However, he needed to argue this case in a federal court to have a fighting chance of winning. **In an informative memo to a federal judge, explain why it is critical that this lawsuit must be heard in a federal court. Include at least two stories that prove the Montgomery mayor and law enforcement officials have responded unjustly to the bus boycott. End your memo requesting his or her support.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 91

“Segregationists singled out Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., branding him a “troublemaker”, and “outsider” who came from Atlanta to stir up local blacks. They bombed his house and threatened his life by mail and telephone. He remained outwardly unflappable. According to one magazine account, when someone called in the middle of the night to threaten “that N----- who’s running the bus boycott,” his wife calmly answered, ‘My husband is asleep...He told me to write the name and number of anyone who called to threaten his life so that he could return the call and receive the threat in the morning when he wakes up and is fresh’” (p. 91).

Writing Prompt

In an explanatory paragraph, describe how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. responded to criticism and threats on his life? Consider the following questions for your response:

- How is this an example of a peaceful leader?
- How do you think his response to violence help deter violence during the Civil Rights Movement?
- Can you predict the outcome of the Civil Rights Movement if Dr. MLK Jr. would have responded with violence?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 108

“Five weeks later, on December 20 – 381 days after the boycott had started – two federal marshals arrived at the federal courthouse and served written notices on city officials that Montgomery’s buses had to be integrated. ‘I guess we’ll have to abide by it,’ Mayor Gayle sighed, ‘because it’s the law.’” (p. 108).

Writing Prompt

The mayor of Montgomery said that he would not enforce the desegregation ruling until explicitly told to do so. Five weeks later, two federal marshals showed up to present the mayor with written direction to end segregation on busses. Pretend you are Claudette. Write a journal entry describing the day the desegregation ruling was finally enforced. **In an explanatory paragraph, describe what it was like to ride the bus again. How did it feel? How did other people feel riding the bus? What changes still needed to be made to end discrimination and racism? How was the bus integration a positive first start?**