

Read the “Courage and Heroism” passage set.

Courage and Heroism

Source 1: An Act of Courage

by Lauren Green

- 1 What does courage look like? Is it standing up for a friend or learning how to be a firefighter? For Rosa Parks on December 1, 1955, courage meant refusing to give up her seat on a public bus. Montgomery, Alabama, where Parks lived, was a segregated city. African Americans were not allowed to use the same restrooms or water fountains as white residents and were refused entry to many restaurants, stores, and schools. Parks had long been frustrated by the injustice of segregation. She was involved with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and had organized campaigns for social justice. Her work helped many people, but she was always aware of how much more needed to be done. After all, her everyday life was heavily affected by segregation.
- 2 When Rosa Parks boarded that bus in 1955, she sat down in the first row of seats designated for African Americans. Montgomery law reserved the front ten rows of seats on the bus for white passengers. Sometimes the buses became very crowded and all of the front row seats were taken. If a white passenger did not have a seat, some bus drivers opened the first row of African American seats to white passengers who wished to sit down. If an African American passenger was sitting in the row, he or she was expected to give up the seat and stand. This is what Rosa Parks was told to do—and she refused. She knew that the bus driver’s request was not right or fair and, even though she knew her resistance would not be well received, she defended her beliefs. She argued that she was not in a seat reserved for whites and could choose to remain seated. The bus driver called the police and Parks was arrested. She was found guilty of violating the city’s laws.
- 3 Rosa Parks challenged the established order in Alabama at a time when many people were arguing about the future of segregation. Her family was concerned for her safety, knowing there was great tension in Montgomery. Parks knew the risks when she defended her rights and was determined to do more for her community. Her actions inspired

other African Americans to rally for equality. They organized a peaceful boycott of Montgomery’s buses, led by a young and still mostly unknown minister named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The boycott lasted 381 days, causing a serious decline in bus revenues, and was very influential. The courts ruled that bus segregation was unconstitutional, a decision that was upheld by the United States Supreme Court. The boycott and court ruling drew national attention and inspired many other people. For her brave resistance, Parks is known as the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.”

“An Act of Courage” by Lauren Green. Written for educational purposes.

Source 2: Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art

by Rosanne Scott

The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Project was established in 1943 to protect cultural artifacts during and after World War II. The majority of service members involved in this project had backgrounds in art history and archaeology. They were called the “Monuments Men.” Many of these service members went on to play important roles in museums and other cultural institutions after the war.

- 4 Long before World War II began, Hitler had planned the systematic looting of Europe’s finest museums and private collections. Thanks, in large part, to the Monuments Men, he wasn’t entirely successful. This group of 345 men and women, who were mostly American but who hailed from thirteen countries, applied their civilian talents as museum directors, curators, art historians, archaeologists, architects and educators to save, quite literally, Western civilization’s treasures.
- 5 In advance of the Nazis, the Monuments Men evacuated 400,000 works from the Louvre,¹ including the *Mona Lisa*, which they shuttled to safety six times. Just ahead of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, they emptied and stashed more than two million works from the Hermitage.²

¹Louvre: an art museum in Paris, France

²Hermitage: an art museum in St. Petersburg, Russia

6 But it wasn't only Nazi plunder they had to guard against. It was left to the Monuments Men to figure a way to save da Vinci's *Last Supper*, painted on the refectory wall of the convent at Santa Maria delle Grazie, before the Allies bombed Milan. By [creating] a scaffold of steel bars and sandbags around the wall, they saved the masterpiece. After the raid, it was the only wall in the refectory still standing. By using aerial photos, Monuments Men diverted Allied airmen away from many important sites, including the Chartres Cathedral; when a cultural site ended up an unintended target, Monuments Men rushed in to make repairs.

7 In March 1945, Allied forces discovered the first of Hitler's many secret repositories of art, more than one thousand hiding places in all, stashed mostly in salt mines and castles. That's when the Monuments Men began the serious task of conservation, restoration, and restitution. In all, they restored and returned to their rightful owners more than five million works of art, including works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Botticelli, Manet, and many others, plus sculptures, tapestries, fine furnishings, books and manuscripts, scrolls, church bells, religious relics, and even the stained glass the Nazis had stolen from the windows of a cathedral. "This was the first time an army fought a war on the one hand and attempted to mitigate damage to cultural treasures at the same time," says Robert Edsel.

8 Edsel has spent eleven years and more than three million dollars researching, piecing together, and championing the little-known story of the group referred to officially as the U.S. Army's Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section or, more commonly, the Monuments Men. . . .

9 Once their wartime duties were behind them, many of the Monuments Men went on to distinguish themselves in the arts, including Lincoln Kirstein, who founded the New York City Ballet; James Rorimer, who served as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Charles Parkhurst, chief curator of the National Gallery of Art. But, as the years passed, their wartime contributions sadly slipped from notice. As Edsel himself discovered, there was hardly a mention of the Monuments Men in all the vast literature of World War II. His unrelenting curiosity, energy, and deep admiration have brought honor to those heroes who saved Europe's treasures. "Their search," says Edsel, "was the greatest treasure hunt in history."

"Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art" by Rosanne Scott, from <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/national-humanities-medals/monuments-men-foundation-the-preservation-art>

Source 3: 2014 International Women of Courage Awards

Remarks from Michelle Obama

The International Women of Courage Awards are held each year in honor of women who show leadership, bravery, and a willingness to sacrifice for others. These women range from activists to human rights lawyers to medical doctors. The award is given by the U.S. Department of State.

- 10 This is the sixth time that I've had the pleasure of attending this event, and it is one of the highlights of my year because I always walk away feeling inspired by these women, determined to reflect their courage in my own life. And I know I'm not alone in that feeling because every day, with every life they touch and every spirit they raise, these women are creating ripples that stretch across the globe. . . .
- 11 That is what this day is about. It's about understanding that while our circumstances may be different in so many ways, the solutions to our struggles are the same. So when we see these women raise their voices and move their feet and empower others to create change, we need to realize that each of us has that same power and that same obligation. And as I learned about this year's honorees and I thought about how we could support their work, I realized that for most of these women, there is a common foundation for their efforts. It's a foundation of education.
- 12 On stage today, we have doctors and lawyers, we have a bishop, even a classically trained musician. These women have spent years in schools and universities equipping themselves with the knowledge and skills they now use to tackle the challenges before them. And that's a story I can relate to because it's the story of my life. And that is the message I'm sharing with young people across America, urging them to commit to their education so that they too can write their own destiny. . . .
- 13 And as I travel the world, whether I'm in Mexico City or Johannesburg, Mumbai, or later this month when I travel to China, I make it a priority to talk to young people about the power of education to help them achieve their aspirations. I always tell them that getting a good education isn't just about knowing what's going on in your own community or even in your own country, because no

matter where we live, we all face so many of the same struggles—fighting poverty, hunger and disease; ensuring our most basic rights and freedoms; confronting threats like terrorism and climate change. . . .

- 14 So none of us can afford to just go about our business as usual. We cannot just sit back and think this is someone else’s problem. As one of our honorees, Zimbabwe’s Beatrice Mtetwa, as she once said about the fight for progress in her home country, “This has to be done. Somebody’s got to do it, and why shouldn’t it be you?” That is the courage we celebrate today; that willingness to not only ask that question but to devote your soul, your entire soul, toward finding an answer; that fearlessness to step forward even though you don’t know what lies ahead; that audacity to believe that principles like justice and equality can become a reality, but only if we’re willing to sacrifice for it. That is the courage that we all must challenge ourselves to summon every single day in our own families, in our own communities. And if we can do that, then we won’t just be making a difference for those closest to us, we’ll be creating a ripple effect of our own.

Remarks from Michelle Obama at the International Women of Courage Awards, from <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/rem/2014/222920.htm>. In the public domain.

Writing Prompt

Your social studies class is researching both traditional and unexpected heroes. Using the information and examples found in the “Courage and Heroism” passage set, write an informative essay on what it means to be courageous.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to

- use evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid overly relying on one source.

Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.

Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.

