

# Equality

We all know that people **should** be treated equally, regardless of where you come from, the colour of your skin, what religion you follow, where you work, what language you speak or whether you're a boy or a girl.

Sadly, this isn't always the case.



You may have seen a lot in the news recently about Black Lives Matter and protests and riots taking place in this country and other countries around the world.



This is because black people are trying to highlight to the world how racism still affects so many people. They want people to reject racism and fight for equality.

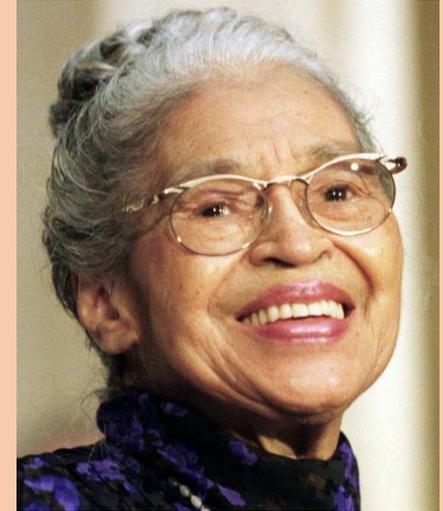
Racism is having a bad opinion of people and not treating them fairly because of the colour of their skin, their culture or their ethnic origin.

Click this link to watch 2 videos from Blue Peter which explain racism and what you can do to help stop it.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/bp-advice-for-helping-to-stop-racism>

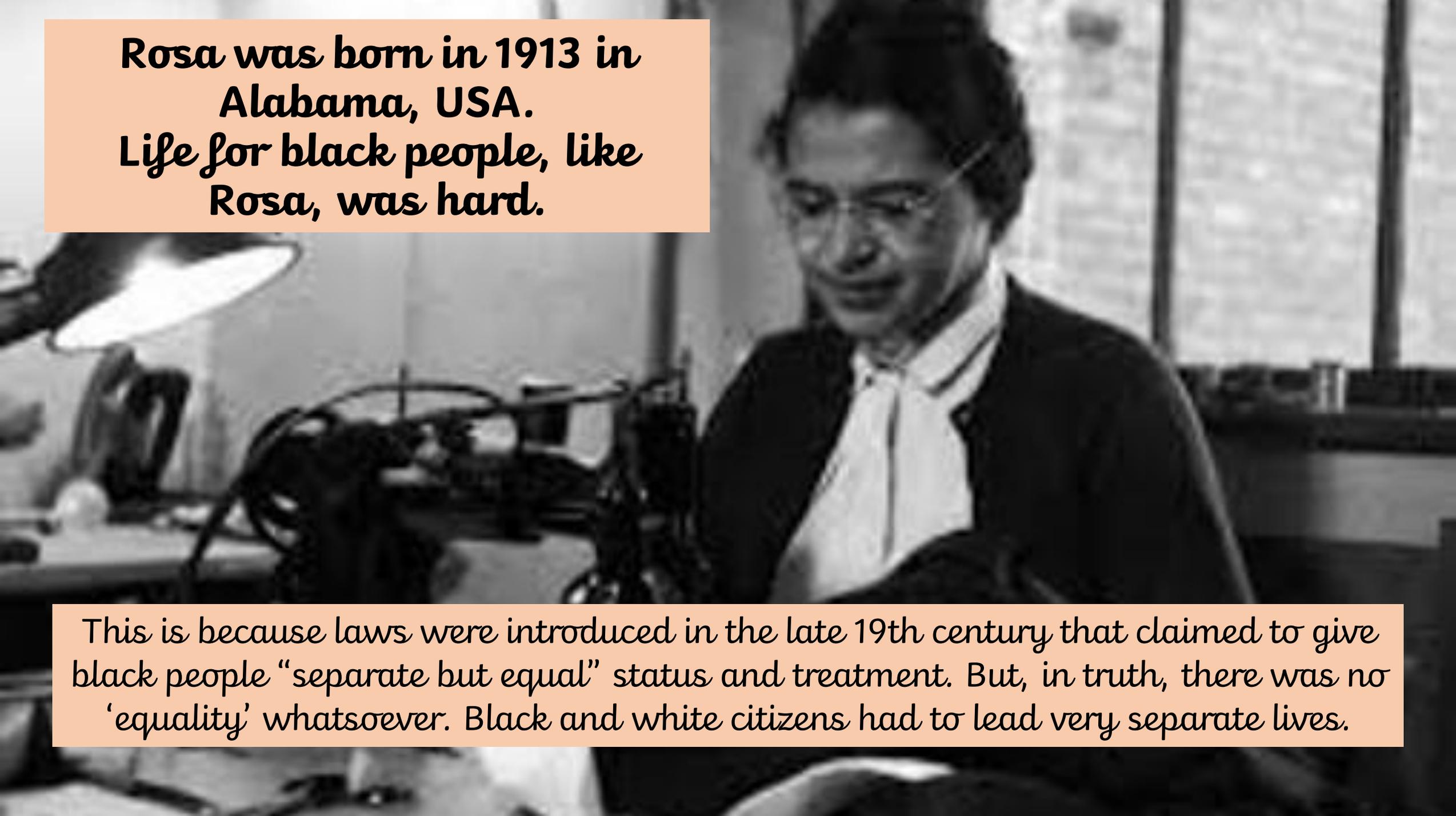
Thankfully there are, and there have been, some amazing people who have done incredible things to fight for equality.

One such person is Rosa Parks, a civil rights activist.



Civil rights activist means fighting for political (for example, being able to vote) and social freedom and equality.

This remarkable woman helped millions of black people in America.

A black and white photograph of Rosa Parks. She is seated at a sewing machine, looking down at her work. She is wearing a dark, long-sleeved dress with a white collar and a white necktie. Her hair is pulled back. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with a view of a city street.

**Rosa was born in 1913 in  
Alabama, USA.  
Life for black people, like  
Rosa, was hard.**

*This is because laws were introduced in the late 19th century that claimed to give black people “separate but equal” status and treatment. But, in truth, there was no ‘equality’ whatsoever. Black and white citizens had to lead very separate lives.*

Among other things, they had separate schools, churches, libraries, restaurants, toilets, drinking fountains and waiting rooms.

In some areas, there were laws banning black people from sports events and even forbidding them to work in the same office as a white person.

Black people were experiencing segregation.



Segregation is the action of separating someone or something apart from others.

Black people had far fewer rights, too. They were often only able to get low-paying jobs and it was incredibly difficult for them to vote. These laws also meant black people could be arrested for small things.

*How do you think this made people like Rosa feel?*

One day, Rosa decided to make a stand.

After a long day at work, Rosa boarded a bus and sat down in a seat for black people. As the bus got fuller, the driver asked her to move so a white man could take her seat so he didn't have to stand.

Rosa refused.



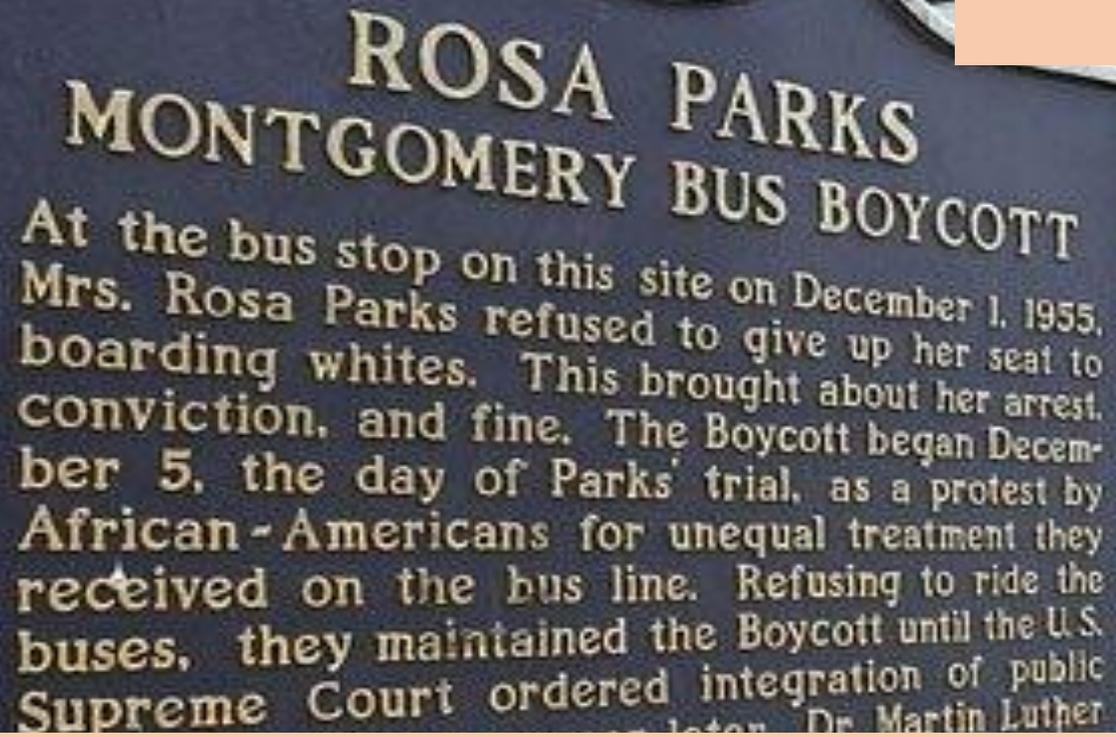
The result?

Rosa was arrested by the police  
and fined for breaking segregation  
laws!

However...



To support her, black people decided to boycott the city buses. This meant that they decided they would no longer ride the buses.



**ROSA PARKS  
MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT**

At the bus stop on this site on December 1, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to boarding whites. This brought about her arrest, conviction, and fine. The Boycott began December 5, the day of Parks' trial, as a protest by African-Americans for unequal treatment they received on the bus line. Refusing to ride the buses, they maintained the Boycott until the U.S. Supreme Court ordered integration of public transportation. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led the boycott.

They either stayed away from the city and work, or walked rather than travel by bus. Empty buses clogged the streets because they had lost most of their passengers.

The Bus Boycott lasted for 381 days, more than a year, before the law was changed and buses were desegregated.

We want to make the world a fairer and better place to live in. After all, we are all people so we should all be treated the same. We all have a responsibility to stand up and speak out when we see something we know is wrong.

### *Prayer*

Dear Lord,

Thank you for our sense of right and wrong, justice and injustice. Remind us of the opportunity each one of us has to be the one who takes a stand.

May we have the courage, like Rosa Parks, to begin change for the better.

**Amen.**

Rosa Parks made an important discovery when she took that stand. She discovered that, far from being alone, she was one of thousands, even millions, who were tired of the injustice.

The Bus Boycott led to marches and other forms of peaceful protest. Eventually the laws of the country were changed, giving equal rights to all people, regardless of race, religion or colour.

This is one example of fighting against racism and for equality. However, there is still more to be done. This is where the Black Lives Matter movement is working to remind people that there is still more to be done.

