



Claudette Colvin: Youth In Action

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Know how segregation was carried out in the U.S.
2. Understand the contributions and impact of young people during the Civil Rights Movement.
3. Recognize there were historical circumstances where people broke the law because the laws were considered unfair.

Material Prior to Lesson

1. Your personal story or someone else who was willing to break the rules to help someone or change a bad situation.
2. Familiar with Disney's movie Mulan.
3. For older students, have them research someone who broke the law to change a bad situation. Students should share their research during the lesson.

Materials

1. How Does A Bill Become a Law worksheet (provided)

Vocabulary

- Black Codes
- Jim Crow Laws
- School Segregation
- Civil Rights Movement
- Separate but Equal Doctrine

Bloom Taxonomy	Affective Domain	Gardner's Multiple Intelligences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge • Understanding • Application • Analyzing/ Evaluating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving • Responding • Valuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic • Interpersonal

Background of Segregation

- Segregation first originated in the form of Black Codes in 1865. These Black Codes controlled where African Americans could work and live. Thus, it allowed African Americans to earn very little and work only certain types of jobs.
- Once segregation became official policy, legislators separated African American and white from all public spaces like public parks, theaters, pool areas, cemeteries, and jails.
- Public transportation such as buses, trains and taxis were segregated. These prohibitions were called Jim Crow Laws approved by the separated but equal doctrine.

Background on Claudette Colvin

- Claudette Colvin was born on September 5, 1939 in Montgomery, Alabama. Claudette grew up the poorer area of Montgomery, Alabama.
- Claudette studied hard and early mostly As in school and had a strong desire to become the U.S. President.
- On March 22, 1955, 15-year-old Claudette rode the bus on her way home from school. The bus driver asked Claudette to give up her seat to a white passenger.
- Claudette refused to give up her seat and, saying, "It's my constitutional right to sit here as much as that lady. I paid my fare, it's my constitutional right." (Biography)
- According to Newsweek, Claudette felt like, "Sojourner Truth was pushing down on one shoulder and Harriet Tubman was pushing down on the other saying, "Sit down girl!". Claudette said, "She was glued to her seat." (Newsweek)
- After Claudette refused to give up her seat, she was arrested. For numerous hours she sat in a jail cell frightened. A minister came and paid her bail and Claudette was released. Claudette and her family stayed up all night because they were terrified of a retaliation.

Introduction/Motivation

- Ask students if they got in trouble for doing the right thing?
- Have students share their stories and share **your** story.
- Introduce students to **Disney's Mulan**. Emphasize how Mulan was **willing to break the rules** to save her family.
- Tell students that today we are going to learn about a young girl name **Claudette Colvin who broke the segregation bus law in 1955 because she thought the law was not fair.**

Introduction/Motivation for Older Students

- Students, causally, present research of someone who broke the law to change a bad situation.
- Students should present:
 - The person (people) involved
 - The setting
 - The problem
 - Actions of the person (people) involved
 - Consequences
 - Lesson learned
- Teacher should also share an example.
- Ask students, **"Where do laws come from?"**
- Review the **How Does a Bill Become a Law?** (Page 6)
- Emphasize the origins of a law come from an idea. If the idea is considered bad for someone, they may break the law.
- Remind students of segregation and Jim Crow laws.
- Explain to students that today, we are going to learn about a young girl name **Claudette Colvin who broke the bus segregation law in 1955 because she thought the law was unfair.**

Body

- Share background on Claudette Colvin.
- Emphasize how 15-year-old Claudette felt:
 - It was her constitutional right to sit where she wanted on the bus.
 - "Sojourner Truth was pushing down on one shoulder and Harriet Tubman was pushing down on the other saying, "Sit down girl!"
- Highlight that Claudette was willing to break the law because she believed the law was unfair.
- Call attention to the **consequences** of breaking the bus segregation law:
 - 15-year-old Claudette was arrested, put in jail and was terrified.
- Point out that Claudette and her family were scared that people would retaliate against them.

Activity 1# What would you do?

- Share with students there have been many incidences when people were willing to break the law because they believed the law was wrong.
- Introduce students to the **Fugitive Slave Acts**, a law established in 1793 and 1850 that stated runaway slaves who escape from one state into another will be captured and returned to their original place (Britannica).
 - Introduce students to **The Underground Railroad** as a network of African Americans and white people that would provide shelter and aid to escape slaves from the South. It operated from the late 18th century to the Civil War.
 - Harriet Tubman was responsible for escorting hundreds of slaves through the **Underground railroad**.
- Students should answer:
 - Imagine being Harriet Tubman or one of the slaves she wants to rescue. Would you break the law, escape from slavery, or obey the law and stay a slave? What would you do and discuss the consequences, if any? Explain why?
 - Students should respond through a visual aid, PowerPoint/Prezi, poster, or a storyboard
 - Students may also respond through a written report, story, or other literary work.

Activity 2# Project Resistance

- Share with students there have been many incidences when people were willing to break the law because they believed the law was wrong.

Option 1#: Resisting the Nazis:

- Introduce or lead students to **Nuremberg Laws** during 1935 and resistance.
- Students research the resistance to the **Nuremberg Laws**.
 - Example-**Oskar Schindler**, the German industrialist who, aided by his wife and staff, **sheltered approximately 1,100 Jews** from the **Nazis** by employing them in his factories, which supplied the German army during World War II (**Schindler's List**).
 - **Ann Frank**- The Franks went into hiding on July 6, 1942, in the backroom office and warehouse of Otto Frank's food-products business. With the aid of a few non-Jewish friends, among them Miep Gies, who smuggled in food and other supplies, the Frank family and four other Jews—Hermann and Auguste van Pels and their son, Peter, and Fritz Pfeffer—lived confined to the "secret annex."
- Students will present the research through:
 - PowerPoint/Prezi or other Visual Aid
 - Written Report

Option 2#: Mary Peak:

- Students research the resistance of the Nat Turner Rebellion and Mary Peak.
 - Introduce students to Mary Peak, a free African American woman who starting a school for the children of former slaves in the summer of 1861 in Virginia.

- Mary taught during the time when a law had been passed after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831 **that closed all schools for free blacks, and forbade the education of slaves, free blacks, and mulattos.**
- Students will present the research through:
 - PowerPoint/Prezi or other Visual Aid
 - Written Report

Option 3#: You Decided!

- Students research and pick a topic of resistance on their own.
- Students will present the research through:
 - PowerPoint/Prezi or other Visual Aid
 - Written Report

HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?

1 EVERY LAW STARTS WITH AN IDEA



That idea can come from anyone, even you! Contact your elected officials to share your idea. If they want to try to make it a law, they will write a bill.

2 THE BILL IS INTRODUCED

A bill can start in either house of Congress when it's introduced by its primary sponsor, a Senator or a Representative. In the House of Representatives, bills are placed in a wooden box called "the hopper."



Here, the bill is assigned a legislative number before the Speaker of the House sends it to a committee.

3 THE BILL GOES TO COMMITTEE

Representatives or Senators meet in a small group to research, talk about, and make changes to the bill. They vote to accept or reject the bill and its changes before sending it to:

the House or Senate floor for debate or to a subcommittee for further research.

4 CONGRESS DEBATES AND VOTES

Members of the House or Senate can now debate the bill and propose changes or amendments before voting. If the majority vote for and pass the bill, it moves to the other house to go through a similar process of committees, debate, and voting. Both houses have to agree on the same version of the final bill before it goes to the President.



DID YOU KNOW?

The House uses an electronic voting system while the Senate typically votes by voice, saying "yay" or "nay."

5 PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

When the bill reaches the President, he or she can:

✓ APPROVE and PASS

The President signs and approves the bill. The bill is law.



The President can also:

Veto

The President rejects the bill and returns it to Congress with the reasons for the veto. Congress can override the veto with 2/3 vote of those present in both the House and the Senate and the bill will become law.

Choose no action

The President can decide to do nothing. If Congress is in session, after 10 days of no answer from the President, the bill then automatically becomes law.

Pocket veto

If Congress adjourns (goes out of session) within the 10 day period after giving the President the bill, the President can choose not to sign it and the bill will not become law.

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Source: <https://www.usa.gov/how-laws-are-made>

Links

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Montgomery-bus-boycott>

<https://www.biography.com/activist/claudette-colvin>

<https://www.blackpast.org/?s=claudette+colvin>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oskar-Schindler>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anne-Frank>

<https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2014/11/mary-peake.html>

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/underground-railroad>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Fugitive-Slave-Acts>