

**Letter to Rosa Parks**

Dear Ms. Parks,

I just finished reading and writing about your life. I wanted to write to you to tell you how amazed I am by everything you have accomplished and to say thank you for teaching me some important lessons.

I learned that you did not have an easy life. You lived during the time of Jim Crow laws, which treated African Americans unfairly. For example, you had to walk to school while white children were able to take the bus. Also, you were not able to go to schools that were as nice as the schools white children went to. I also learned that you didn't get to finish high school because you had to leave and take care of your sick grandmother. That must have been hard!

Later, you inspired the Montgomery bus boycott when you refused to give up your seat on the bus to a white person. The bus boycott went on for more than a year. After the bus boycott, you worked with Martin Luther King, Jr., giving speeches and working for the civil rights movement. I think it is really cool that you got to meet and work with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reading about your life has taught me that one person can actually make a difference. You lived during very unfair times, but your decision to not give up your seat on the bus helped to change the unfair laws African Americans had to live by. I want to try to make a difference in my community someday, too, and hope I am brave enough to stand up for what I believe in just like you.

Thank you for everything you did.

Sincerely,

**Close Reading Framework**Setting the Stage (Introduction)

Slowing down with reading instruction is imperative for creating critical thinking skills. When students linger over a text, they can start to identify patterns and pinpoint an author's underlying message and purpose for writing the text. Stylistically, it is also important for students to realize that writing is a true form of artistry and self-expression. Gather the class to set the stage for the close reading exercise. Explain the importance of close reading and also remind students of recent teaching objectives that they should be on the lookout for specifically. You could say:

*Friends, I want to encourage you to slow down when you're reading to make sure you notice every word on the page. Have you ever wondered why an author chose one word over another? Nothing on the page is an accident! Author's read and reread their work and write each sentence carefully. As readers, our job is to try to figure out what the author was thinking as he or she was writing. We should always take time to pause and ask questions. Why did that character do that? Why does the author choose to use one word instead of another word?*

*As you read today, I want you to slow down and study the words on the page that you might not notice if you read the story very quickly. I also want you to make a guess about why the author is writing. What message is she sending you? What is she trying to teach you about the world?*

Whole-Class Practice

Read the story with the class, pausing after the first few paragraphs to have a whole-class discussion to model close reading.

*Let's start by looking just at the first few sentences of the story. I can tell right away that this is a letter because it is addressed "Dear Ms. Parks." From the first few sentences it seems to me that Rosa Parks is a personal hero of the author of this letter. I'm not sure if she wrote the letter before or after Rosa Parks died, but she seems to be writing to share her admiration and gratitude for Ms. Parks's bravery. Let's keep reading to learn more about the reason for this letter.*

Continue reading, pausing to answer the close reading questions from the Core Ready worksheet below. When you reach the end of the story, instruct students to continue their analysis of the text by answering the remaining questions from the Core Ready worksheet.

Independent Practice

Instruct students to reread the story and answer the questions from the Core Lens worksheet below. Have students discuss their thinking in a small group or with a partner while you circulate to monitor progress.

<p><b>7 Core Ready Lenses</b>  <i>Guiding Questions for Close Reading Instruction</i></p>		<p><b>The Personal Lens</b></p> <p>1) Who is one of your heroes? What would you like to tell your hero if you had the chance to meet him or her?</p> <p>2) What did you know about Rosa Parks before reading this letter?</p>
<p><b>The Linguistic Lens</b></p> <p>1) Underline and rewrite words or groups of words that the author used to describe Rosa Parks.</p> <p>2) What words or sentences tell you that the author admires Rosa Parks?</p>	<p><b>The Semantic Lens</b></p> <p>1) Write down three facts about Rosa Parks that the author shares in her letter.</p> <p>2) Does the author want something from Rosa Parks in return for writing this letter?</p>	<p><b>The Analytical Lens</b></p> <p>1) How did learning about Rosa Parks’s life change the author? Write down evidence from the letter.</p> <p>2) It is possible that the author wrote this letter after Rosa Parks died. Why would someone write a letter to a person who is no longer alive?</p>
<p><b>The Context Lens</b></p> <p>1) Why do you think the author decided to write a letter to Rosa Parks?</p> <p>2) If Rosa Parks were still alive, how do you think she would feel after reading this letter?</p>	<p><b>The Metaphoric Lens (not truly applicable for this text)</b></p> <p>1) What does it mean to “stand up for what you believe in”?</p>	<p><b>The Critical Lens</b></p> <p>1) Does this letter make you want to learn more about Rosa Parks? Why or why not?</p> <p>2) Does it sound like the author learned a lot about Rosa Parks before writing this letter?</p>