

# Making Meaning®

SECOND EDITION

## Respond to Informational Text

### ► Compare Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts

Use after Unit 8, “Determining Important Ideas and Summarizing,” Week 4.

In the lessons that follow, the students compare two accounts of the same historical events—Rosa Parks’s encounters with segregation on Montgomery, Alabama, buses in the 1940s and 1950s. The students compare Parks’s own account of the events with a secondhand account told by author David A. Adler. The students integrate information from the two accounts to deepen their understanding of the events. Socially, the students continue to focus on giving reasons for their opinions and discussing opinions respectfully.

#### **This activity addresses the following Common Core State Standards:**

CCSS.ELA.RI.4.6. Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

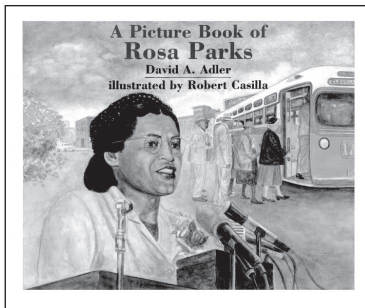
CCSS.ELA.RI.4.9. Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.



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## NARRATIVE NONFICTION AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY



### ***A Picture Book of Rosa Parks\****

by David A. Adler, illustrated by Robert Casilla  
(Holiday House, 1993)

\*This book was also used in Unit 8, Week 4.



### Excerpts from ***Rosa Parks: My Story***

by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins  
(Dial Books, 1992)

### Comprehension Focus

- Students think about important ideas in texts.
- Students compare and contrast firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same event.
- Students identify the differences in focus and information in firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same events.
- Students integrate information from two texts on the same topic to speak knowledgeably about the topic.

### Social Development Focus

- Students take responsibility for their learning and behavior.
- Students develop the group skills of giving reasons for their opinions and discussing opinions respectfully.

### DO AHEAD

- Prior to Day 1, prepare a two-column chart titled “Excerpt from *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*” with columns titled “1943” and “1955” (see Day 1, Step 2, on page 5).
- Prior to Day 1, make a copy of “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” (BLM1–BLM7) for each student.
- Prior to Day 2, prepare a two-column chart titled “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” with columns titled “1943” and “1955” (see Day 2, Step 2, on page 9).

# Day 1

## Materials

- *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*
- (Optional) *Student Response Book* pages 63–64 (see the Teacher Note below)
- Chart titled “Excerpt from *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*,” prepared ahead, and a marker
- “Excerpts from Rosa Parks: My Story” (BLM1–BLM7)
- Copies of “Excerpts from Rosa Parks: My Story,” one for each student

## Teacher Note

If the students cannot recall the important information, give them a minute or two to review the notes they wrote on *Student Response Book* pages 63–64. Then ask the question again.

## Read-aloud/ Guided Strategy Practice

### In this lesson, the students:

- Hear, read, and discuss a firsthand and secondhand account of the same historical events
- Identify the important information in each account
- Discuss their opinions respectfully

### 1 Review Important Ideas in *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*

Have partners sit together. Show the cover of *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* and review that last week the students heard the book, identified important ideas in it, and wrote a summary of an excerpt from the book. Ask:

**Q** *What are some important ideas we identified in A Picture Book of Rosa Parks?*

Have a few students share their thinking with the class.

Tell the students that this week they will hear part of *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* again. Then they will hear another account, or description, of the same events and discuss how the two accounts are alike and how they are different.

### 2 Read an Excerpt from *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* and Introduce Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts

Show the illustration on pages 16–17 of *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* and review that this part of the book tells about Rosa’s experiences on James Blake’s bus in Montgomery, Alabama—first in 1943, and then in 1955. Ask the students to listen carefully as you read from this part of the book. Then read pages 16–18 aloud.

Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

**Q** *What important information is included about the 1943 bus event?*

**Q** *What important information is included about the 1955 bus event?*

Display the chart titled “Excerpt from *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*.” Record the students’ responses to the questions in the appropriate column on the chart.

<u>Excerpt From <i>A Picture Book of Rosa Parks</i></u>	
1943	1955
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African Americans are treated unfairly on buses in Montgomery.</li> <li>- Rosa gets on the front of the bus.</li> <li>- James Blake tells her to use the back door.</li> <li>- Rosa says she doesn't know why she has to use the back door.</li> <li>- She gets off and waits for another bus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rosa sits in the middle section of the bus.</li> <li>- She refuses to give up her seat to white passengers.</li> <li>- James Blake calls the police, and Rosa is arrested.</li> </ul>

### Teacher Note

You might explain that secondhand accounts, such as this one, are told from the third-person point of view. The author uses words such as *she* and *her* to describe events that happened to someone else (for example, “But Rosa got off. She didn’t get on again.”). A firsthand account is told in the first-person point of view, using words such as *I* and *me* to describe events.

Then ask:

**Q** *Who is describing the events in *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*? Whose account, or description, of Rosa’s story is this?*

If necessary, explain that the author, David A. Adler, is describing what happened to Rosa. Explain that an account of an event told by someone who did not actually experience the event is called a *secondhand account*. Explain that an account of an event told by someone who actually experienced the event is called a *firsthand account*. Then tell the students that next they will hear Rosa’s firsthand accounts of the events on the bus.

### 3 Introduce “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” and Read Them Aloud

Distribute a copy of “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” to each student and read the title aloud. Explain that the excerpts are from Rosa’s autobiography and that an *autobiography* is the story of a person’s life written by that person.

Explain that the first excerpt the students will hear is Rosa’s firsthand account of the 1943 encounter with James Blake on the Montgomery bus. Tell the students that, as you read, you want them to follow along and think about what information is important in Rosa’s account. Then read the first excerpt aloud slowly and clearly, clarifying vocabulary as you read.

#### Suggested Vocabulary

**segregation:** practice of keeping people of different races apart (BLM1)

**vicious:** cruel and hateful (BLM2)

**intimidating posture:** way of standing that makes other people feel scared (BLM2)

**stepwell:** place on a bus where the stairs for getting on and off are located (BLM3)

**resisting:** struggling or fighting back (BLM3)



#### ELL Vocabulary

English Language Learners may benefit from discussing additional vocabulary, including:

**enforce:** make sure people obey a rule (BLM1)

**thickset:** big, heavy, or overweight (BLM2)

**strike:** hit (BLM3)

**mumblng and grumblng:** complaining in a quiet voice (BLM4)



Have the students use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss the questions that follow. Be prepared to reread passages to help the students recall what they heard.

**Q** *What is most important to understand or remember about the excerpt you just heard? Why do you think that?*

**Students might say:**

“African Americans had to give up their seats to white people. That’s important to remember because it’s unfair and it made Rosa mad.”

“The driver was mean and disrespectful. I think that’s important to remember because people need to stand up to mean people.”

“I think it’s important to understand that the driver had a gun because that’s really scary.”

Have one or two pairs share what they discussed.

Tell the students that the last excerpt they will hear is Rosa’s firsthand account of the 1955 encounter with James Blake. Then read and discuss the excerpt, clarifying vocabulary as you read.

**Suggested Vocabulary**

**make it light on yourselves:** make it easy for yourselves (BLM5)

**complied:** obeyed (BLM6)

**manhandled:** touched roughly in a way that causes harm (BLM7)

**NAACP:** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a civil-rights organization (BLM7)

**ELL Vocabulary**

English Language Learners may benefit from discussing additional vocabulary, including:

**vacant:** empty (BLM5)

Again, have the students use “Think, Pair, Share” to discuss the same questions as before. Tell the students that tomorrow they will compare Rosa’s firsthand accounts of the encounters on the bus with the secondhand account in *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*. Ask the students to put their copies of “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” in a safe place.

**Teacher Note** ▶

Save the “Excerpt from *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*” chart for use on Day 2.



# Day 2

## Materials

- “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” (BLM1–BLM7)
- Student copies of “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*,” from Day 1
- Chart titled “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*,” prepared ahead, and a marker
- “Excerpt from *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*” chart from Day 1

## Guided Strategy Practice

### In this lesson, the students:

- Identify the important information in a firsthand account of events
- Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account
- Discuss their opinions respectfully

### 1 Review Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts

Have the students get out their copies of “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*” and sit with their partners. Review that yesterday they heard two accounts of Rosa Parks’s encounters with James Blake on a Montgomery bus—a secondhand account written by David A. Adler and a firsthand account written by Rosa Parks. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** *How is a firsthand account, or description, of an event different from a secondhand account of an event?*

Have one or two students share their thinking with the class.

Explain that today the students will compare the two accounts of Rosa’s encounters with James Blake.

### 2 Reread and Discuss the Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*

Have the students reread the excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* in pairs or quietly to themselves. Ask them to think about the important information that Rosa includes, including her thoughts and feelings. When most students have finished, facilitate a discussion by using the following questions:

**Q** *What important information does Rosa include in her account of the 1943 event?*

**Q** What important information does Rosa include in her account of the 1955 event?

Display the chart titled “Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story*.” Record the students’ responses to the questions in the appropriate column on the chart.

<u>Excerpts From <i>Rosa Parks: My Story</i></u>	
1943	1955
- Blacks on Montgomery buses are treated unfairly.	- Rosa gets on a bus driven by the same driver from 12 years earlier.
- Bus drivers carry guns.	- Rosa takes a vacant seat.
- James Blake is rough looking, mean, and scary.	- James Blake threatens Rosa.
- Rosa disobeys James Blake's order and stays on the bus.	- Rosa doesn't give up her seat because she's tired of giving in.
- Rosa thinks James Blake might hit her.	- While waiting for the police, Rosa tries not to think of the awful things that could happen to her.
- Rosa decides not to ride on Blake's bus again.	

### **3** Compare the Two Accounts

Display the chart from Day 1 next to today's chart. Have the students compare the two accounts by asking:

- Q** What information in the two accounts is similar?
- Q** What information in the two accounts is different?
- Q** What more do you know about Rosa's encounters with James Blake from reading her firsthand account?

#### **Teacher Note**

If the students have difficulty identifying differences, ask questions such as:

- Q** In which account do you find out how Rosa Park feels about what is happening to her?
- Q** In which account do you find out what Rosa Parks is thinking?

**Students might say:**

“Both accounts say that African Americans were treated unfairly on buses and they tell how Rosa tried to stay on the bus the first time the driver told her to get off.”

“In the firsthand account, Rosa tells how she feels about being treated unfairly. The secondhand account doesn’t talk about her feelings.”

“In addition to what [Clia] said, in the firsthand account Rosa says she thought James Blake might hit her and that he threatened her.”

“I know more about how Rosa felt from reading her firsthand account. I also know details like how Rosa thought James Blake might hit her and that he was rough looking and scary.”

Then ask:

**Q** *Why do you think it is a good idea to read more than one account of an event?*

Have two or three students share their thinking with the class.

If necessary, explain that reading more than one account of an event gives readers more information and a clearer picture of what happened. Explain that firsthand accounts often include more details than a secondhand account as well as the author’s thoughts and feelings. Knowing a person’s thoughts and feelings helps readers better understand the reasons for that person’s actions.

**4****Reflect on Discussing Opinions Respectfully**

Facilitate a brief discussion of how the students did giving reasons for their opinions and discussing opinions respectfully. Share examples of these behaviors that you observed today and yesterday, and give the students an opportunity to share examples they observed.

## EXTENSION

**Compare Other Firsthand and Secondhand Accounts**

Have pairs of students read and discuss two accounts of another historical event, such as Charles Lindbergh’s transatlantic flight in 1927. The students might read *Flight* by Robert Burleigh (from Unit 8, Week 1) and *Charles Lindbergh, A Short Biography for Kids* by Jonathan Madden. As an alternative, have students read the firsthand account of finding T. rex fossils in *Digging Up Tyrannosaurus Rex* by John R. Horner and Don Lessem (from Unit 2, Week 1) and a secondhand account of this event in a newspaper or magazine. (To find a secondhand account, conduct an Internet search using such keywords as “newspaper account Wankel T. rex 1988.”) Have each pair compare and contrast the information in the two accounts. Then have the pairs work together to write a summary of the event, using information from both accounts.

# Blackline Masters



## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins

### Excerpt 1

Black people had special rules to follow. Some drivers made black passengers step in the front door and pay their fare, and then we had to get off and go around to the back door and get on. Often, before the black passengers got around to the back door, the bus would take off without them. There were thirty-six seats on the Montgomery bus. The first ten were reserved for whites, even if there were no white passengers on the bus. There was no law about the ten seats in the back of the bus, but it was sort of understood that they were for black people. Blacks were required to sit in the back of the bus, and even if there were empty seats in the front, we couldn't sit in them. Once the seats in the back were filled, then all the other black passengers had to stand. If whites filled up the front section, some drivers would demand that blacks give up their seats in the back section.

It was up to the bus drivers, if they chose, to adjust the seating in the middle sixteen seats. They carried guns and had what they called police power to rearrange the seating and enforce all the other rules of segregation on the buses.

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## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* *continued*

Some bus drivers were meaner than others. Not all of them were hateful, but segregation itself is vicious, and to my mind there was no way you could make segregation decent or nice or acceptable.

The driver who put me off was a mean one. He was tall and thickset with an intimidating posture. His skin was rough-looking, and he had a mole near his mouth. He just treated everybody black badly. I had been on his bus as a passenger before, and I remember when a young woman got on the bus at the front and started to the back and he made her get off the bus and go around to the back door. One day in the winter of 1943 the bus came along, and the back was crowded with black people. They were even standing on the steps leading up from the back door. But up front there were vacant seats right up to the very front seats. So I got on at the front and went through this little bunch of folks standing in the back, and I looked toward the front and saw the driver standing there and looking at me. He told me to get off the bus and go to the back door and get on. I told him I was already on the bus and didn't see the need of getting off and getting back on when people were

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## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* *continued*

standing in the stepwell, and how was I going to squeeze on anyway? So he told me if I couldn't go through the back door that I would have to get off the bus—"my bus," he called it. I stood where I was. He came back and he took my coat sleeve; not my arm, just my coat sleeve.

He didn't take his gun out. I was hardly worth the effort because I wasn't resisting. I just didn't get off and go around like he told me. So after he took my coat sleeve, I went up to the front, and I dropped my purse. Rather than stoop or bend over to get it, I sat right down in the front seat and from a sitting position I picked up my purse.

He was standing over me and he said, "Get off my bus." I said, "I will get off." He looked like he was ready to hit me. I said, "I know one thing. You better not hit me." He didn't strike me. I got off, and I heard someone mumble from the back, "How come she don't go around and get in the back."

I guess the black people were getting tired because they wanted to get home and they were standing in the back and were tired of standing up. I do know they were

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## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* *continued*

mumbling and grumbling as I went up there to get myself off the bus. “She ought to go around the back and get on.” They always wondered why you didn’t want to be like the rest of the black people. That was the 1940s, when people took a lot without fighting back.

I did not get back on the bus through the rear door. I was coming from work, and so I had already gotten a transfer slip to give the next driver. I never wanted to be on that man’s bus again. After that, I made a point of looking at who was driving the bus before I got on. I didn’t want any more run-ins with that mean one.

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### Excerpt 2

When I got off work that evening of December 1, I went to Court Square as usual to catch the Cleveland Avenue bus home. I didn’t look to see who was driving when I got on, and by the time I recognized him, I had already paid my fare. It was the same driver who had put me off the bus back in 1943, twelve years earlier. He was

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## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* *continued*

still tall and heavy, with red, rough-looking skin. And he was still mean-looking. I didn't know if he had been on that route before—they switched the drivers around sometimes. I do know that most of the time if I saw him on a bus, I wouldn't get on it.

I saw a vacant seat in the middle section of the bus and took it. I didn't even question why there was a vacant seat even though there were quite a few people standing in the back. If I had thought about it at all, I would probably have figured maybe someone saw me get on and did not take the seat but left it vacant for me. There was a man sitting next to the window and two women across the aisle.

The next stop was the Empire Theater, and some whites got on. They filled up the white seats, and one man was left standing. The driver looked back and noticed the man standing. Then he looked back at us. He said, "Let me have those front seats," because they were the front seats of the black section. Didn't anybody move. We just sat right where we were, the four of us. Then he spoke a second time: "Y'all better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats."

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## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* *continued*

The man in the window seat next to me stood up, and I moved to let him pass by me, and then I looked across the aisle and saw that the two women were also standing. I moved over to the window seat. I could not see how standing up was going to “make it light” for me. The more we gave in and complied, the worse they treated us.

I thought back to the time when I used to sit up all night and didn’t sleep, and my grandfather would have his gun right by the fireplace, or if he had his one-horse wagon going anywhere, he always had his gun in the back of the wagon. People always say that I didn’t give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn’t true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.

The driver of the bus saw me still sitting there, and he asked was I going to stand up. I said, “No.” He said, “Well, I’m going to have you arrested.” Then I said, “You may do that.” These were the only words we said to each other. I didn’t even know his name, which was James Blake, until

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## Excerpts from *Rosa Parks: My Story* *continued*

we were in court together. He got out of the bus and stayed outside for a few minutes, waiting for the police.

As I sat there, I tried not to think about what might happen. I knew that anything was possible. I could be manhandled or beaten. I could be arrested. People have asked me if it occurred to me then that I could be the test case the NAACP had been looking for. I did not think about that at all. In fact if I had let myself think too deeply about what might happen to me, I might have gotten off the bus. But I chose to remain.

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