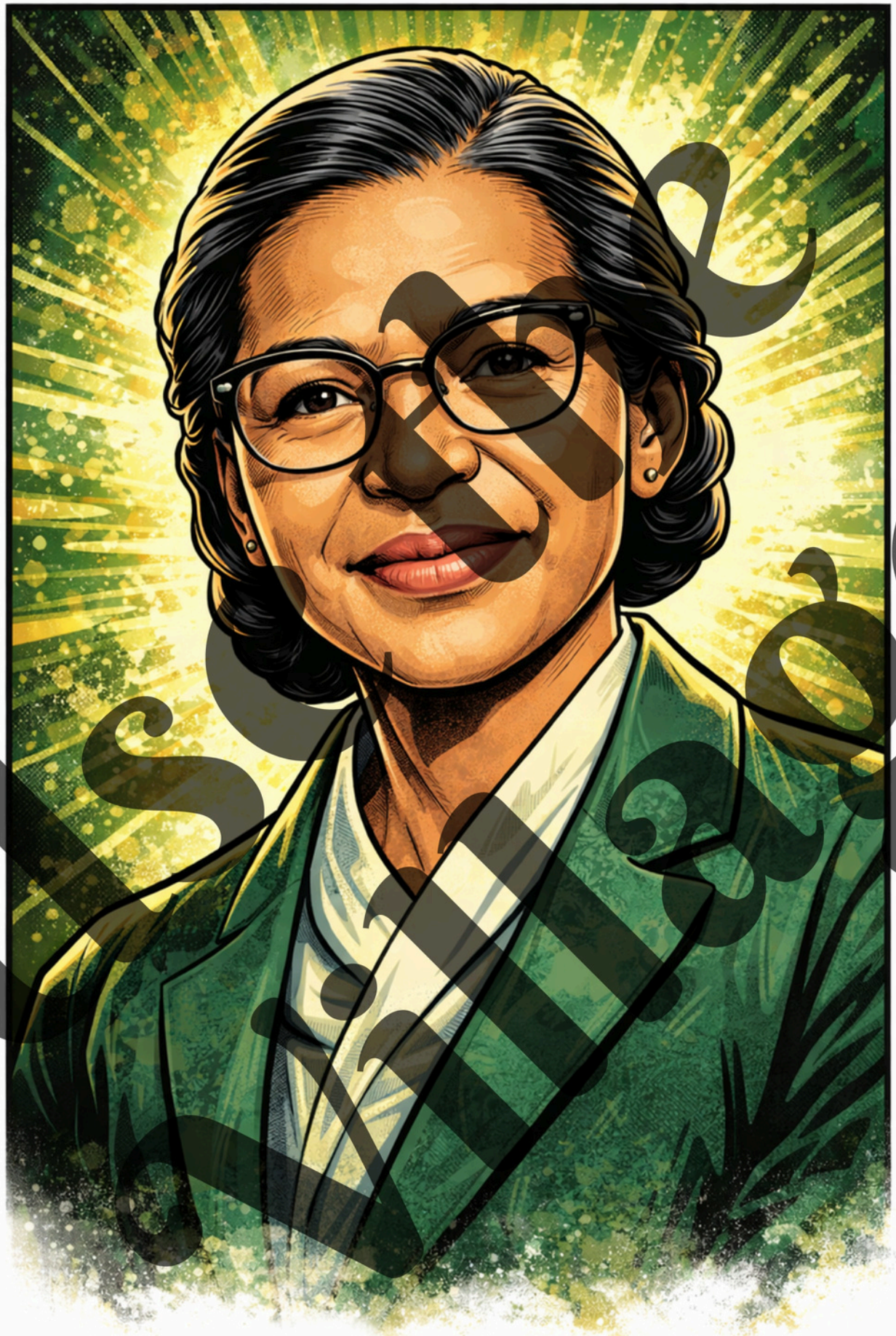

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JACKIE ROBINSON



ROSA PARKS



MAYA ANGELOU

JESSE OWENS



Use this image

MAYA ANGELOU



Name: _____ Date: _____

MAYA ANGELOU



Read the biographical passage about Maya Angelou and answer the questions.

Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014) was a towering figure in American literature and civil rights activism. Born Marguerite Annie Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, Angelou's early years were fraught with the traumas of racial discrimination and personal violation. At the age of eight, she experienced a harrowing assault by her mother's boyfriend, a trauma that led her to become mute for five years, finding solace in books and literature.

Her memoir, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," vividly recounts the struggles of her childhood in the Jim Crow South, capturing the pervasive racism and her journey to reclaim her voice and identity. This seminal work laid bare the stark realities of racial injustice, while also conveying a message of hope and resilience.

Over her 50-year career, Angelou penned a multitude of works, including poetry, essays, and a series of autobiographies. Her writings, characterized by a lyrical prose style and powerful evocation of the Black experience in America, earned her numerous accolades, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Angelou's artistic versatility extended to acting, singing, and dancing, and she became a renowned speaker and professor, influencing countless individuals with her advocacy for equality and human rights. She worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X during the Civil Rights Movement and her writings continue to inspire advocates for equality and justice across the world.

Use the Village

Name: _____ Date: _____

W.E.B. DU BOIS



Read the biography of W.E.B. Du Bois and answer the comprehension questions using the passage for reference.

W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963) was a trailblazing African American scholar, writer, and activist who dedicated his life to the pursuit of civil rights and racial equality. He was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, to a family that valued education and believed in hard work. Excelling in his studies from an early age, Du Bois was encouraged by his teachers to push boundaries and achieve greatness.

In 1895, Du Bois became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, an achievement that cemented his place as a pioneer in higher education. His work focused on the systemic injustices faced by African Americans, particularly in the post-Reconstruction era. He believed education and knowledge were essential tools for dismantling racism and fostering social progress.

Du Bois was a key founder of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in 1909, where he worked tirelessly to fight segregation and promote equality through activism and education. Earlier, in 1905, he co-founded the Niagara Movement, which opposed the accommodationist policies of Booker T. Washington and advocated for civil rights through direct action. Through his writing, including his seminal book The Souls of Black Folk, and his role as editor of The Crisis, Du Bois became a powerful voice for justice and progress.

Later in life, Du Bois turned his attention to Pan-Africanism, advocating for unity among people of African descent worldwide. In 1961, he moved to Ghana, where he spent his final years working on the Encyclopedia Africana and supporting African independence movements. He passed away in 1963, just one day before the historic March on Washington.

W.E.B. Du Bois remains a towering figure in history, whose life's work underscores the importance of education, activism, and the relentless pursuit of justice. His legacy continues to inspire movements for equality and freedom worldwide.

Use the Image

Name: _____ Date: _____

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER



Read the passage about George Washington Carver and answer the questions.

Born into slavery around 1864 in Missouri, George Washington Carver overcame racial barriers to become a renowned agricultural scientist. His fascination with plants led him to Iowa State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University), where he was the first African American student and later, a master's graduate in botany.

At Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Carver revolutionized agriculture in the South. He introduced crop rotation with nitrogen-fixing plants like peanuts and sweet potatoes, rejuvenating depleted soils. Carver's extensive research on peanuts yielded over 300 products, including dyes and plastics, greatly benefiting Southern farmers and the economy.

Carver's dedicated education and research also made significant contributions to environmental conservation. His work went beyond agriculture, embodying his values of hard work, education, and racial harmony.

Passing away in 1943, Carver left a lasting impact as a pioneering scientist and humanitarian, remembered for his innovative agricultural methods and his commitment to social progress.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



Read the passage about Martin Luther King Jr. and answer the questions.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 – 1968) was a pivotal figure in the American Civil Rights Movement. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, King experienced racial segregation early in life, shaping his commitment to social justice. He excelled academically, attending Morehouse College at fifteen and later obtaining a doctorate in theology.

King's leadership in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, sparked by Rosa Parks' arrest, brought him national prominence. He advocated for nonviolent protest, drawing inspiration from Gandhi's principles. His eloquence as a speaker peaked in the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered the iconic "I Have a Dream" speech, articulating his vision of racial equality and justice.

King's activism led to significant civil rights advancements, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Despite facing arrests, threats, and violence, he remained steadfast in his pursuit of equality.

Tragically, King's life was cut short when he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968. His legacy endures, inspiring generations to continue the fight for civil rights.

Use the Village

Name: _____ Date: _____

RUBY BRIDGES



Read the biography of Ruby Bridges and answer the comprehension questions using the passage for reference.

Ruby Bridges was born on September 8, 1954, in Tylertown, Mississippi. At the age of four, her family relocated to New Orleans, Louisiana, in search of better opportunities.

In 1960, at just six years old, Ruby Bridges became a pivotal figure in the American Civil Rights Movement when she integrated William Frantz Elementary School, becoming the first African American student to attend an all-white elementary school in the South. Her enrollment was part of the desegregation efforts mandated by the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education, which declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

Despite the legal ruling, the reality of integration was met with strong resistance. On her first day, Ruby was escorted by federal marshals as she faced hostile crowds who protested her presence at the school. Many white parents withdrew their children in opposition, leaving Ruby alone in her classroom. Her teacher, Barbara Henry, a Boston native, was the only one willing to educate her, and she provided Ruby with individualized instruction for the entire year.

Ruby's perseverance and courage symbolized the fight for racial equality in education. Over the following years, more students returned to school, and integration slowly took hold. Her bravery was recognized internationally, and she became a key figure in the struggle against segregation.

As an adult, Ruby Bridges continued her advocacy for education and racial equality. She founded the Ruby Bridges Foundation, which promotes tolerance, respect, and equal opportunities for all children. Her story has been immortalized in books, films, and even a famous painting by Norman Rockwell titled The Problem We All Live With. Ruby Bridges' legacy serves as a powerful reminder of the impact one individual can have in shaping history and fighting injustice.

Use the Image

Name: _____ Date: _____

FREDERICK DOUGLASS



Read the biography of Frederick Douglass and answer the comprehension questions using the passage for reference.

Frederick Douglass (1818 – 1895), born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. Born into slavery in Talbot County, Maryland, Douglass was separated from his mother, Harriet Bailey, at a young age and raised by his maternal grandmother. Despite the hardships of his early life, he developed a passion for learning.

In 1838, Douglass made a daring escape to freedom, journeying to New York City using the papers of a free Black sailor. He later settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and became a prominent leader in the abolitionist movement. His autobiographies, especially "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave" (1845), played a crucial role in exposing the horrors of slavery.

Douglass's exceptional oratory skills and persuasive writings made him a central figure in the fight against slavery. He advised President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, significantly influencing the decision to allow African Americans to serve in the Union Army and emphasizing the importance of abolition.

Post-Civil War, Douglass continued to fight for civil rights and women's suffrage, holding various public offices. His later years were marked by his role as U.S. Marshal and Minister Resident and Consul General to Haiti. His inadvertent nomination as Vice President on the Equal Rights Party ticket, alongside Victoria Woodhull, further underscores his impact on civil rights movements.

Douglass remains a pivotal figure in American history, symbolizing resilience and the pursuit of justice and equality.

Use the Village

Name: _____ Date: _____

ROSA PARKS



Read the biographical passage about Rosa Parks and answer the questions.

Rosa Parks (1913 – 2005) was an African American civil rights activist whose refusal to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Born on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama, Parks grew up in an era of rampant racial segregation and discrimination. Parks was a seamstress and a long-time member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Her act of defiance on December 1, 1955, was not a spontaneous gesture but a planned act of civil disobedience. She was arrested and fined, but her action became a powerful symbol in the fight against racial injustice.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott, triggered by her arrest, lasted for over a year and was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement. It led to a Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. Parks' quiet strength and moral courage continued to inspire the movement, earning her the nickname "the mother of the civil rights movement."

After the boycott, Parks faced harassment and threats in Montgomery. She moved to Detroit, Michigan, where she continued to be active in the struggle for justice and equality until her death in 2005. Her legacy as an icon of the Civil Rights Movement lives on, symbolizing the power of individual action in the fight for equality and justice.

Use the Village

Name: _____ Date: _____

HARRIET TUBMAN



Read the biography of Harriet Tubman and answer the comprehension questions using the passage for reference.

Harriet Tubman (c. 1820 – 1913), born Araminta Ross in Dorchester County, Maryland, was an American abolitionist and political activist. Despite the harsh conditions of her enslavement, including a severe head injury suffered as a child, Tubman escaped to freedom in 1849. Her escape marked the beginning of her remarkable journey as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad.

As a key figure in the Underground Railroad, Tubman returned to the South about 13 times, helping approximately 70 enslaved people, including her family and friends, escape to freedom.

She became known for her strategic planning, use of disguises, and unwavering determination. Despite the increased risks after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which forced her to extend her routes to Canada, Tubman never lost a passenger.

During the Civil War, Tubman served as a nurse, scout, spy, and guerrilla soldier for the Union Army. She led the Combahee River Raid, resulting in the liberation of over 700 slaves, and was the first woman to lead an armed expedition in the war.

After the war, Tubman settled in Auburn, New York, where she was active in the women's suffrage movement and cared for her aging parents. Her legacy as a symbol of courage and freedom continues to inspire countless people worldwide.

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