Lots of the activities and discussion topics in these teacher’s notes are deliberately left open to encourage pupils to develop independent thinking around the book. This will help pupils build confidence in their ability to problem solve as individuals and also as part of a group.
The Front Cover
Why do you think Rosa Parks was famous?

The Blurb
Find out in an atlas where Alabama is.

What do the following words mean:
- civil rights
- activist
- segregation
- equal rights

What have we learned about Rosa Parks from the blurb?

The Endpapers
Why do you think that the artist chose this design for the endpapers?

What sort of home life do you think Rosa had?

What do we find out about her character as a child?
When she was young, Rosa’s grandparents told her stories about slavery, when black people weren’t free to live like other people.

Slavery was over, but times were still hard for Rosa and her family. Black people were treated very badly and told they were not equal to white people.

Every day, Rosa watched the school bus go by taking white children to their big school. It didn’t stop for her. She had to walk a long way to the one-room school that was just for black children.

Lots of times, she had to make sure other people knew it too. Rosa knew this wasn’t right. She knew she was a regular person, just as good as anyone else.

Why do you think Rosa’s grandparents told her about slavery?

Why do you think black people were treated differently by white people?

How do you think Rosa felt as she watched the white children?

Why were black and white children segregated?

What does the author mean by the phrase ‘a regular person’?

What adjectives could you use to describe Rosa? You might want to use a thesaurus to extend your choice of words.

In a group of five, freeze frame the scenario, whilst another child touches each person, one at a time, to find out what they are thinking or saying.

How would you feel if you were excluded from spaces that other people were allowed to use?

Can you think of any rules today which you feel are not right?
On her way home from the city one day, a bus driver told Rosa to stand up so a white person could take her seat. She was sick of rules that she knew were wrong. She thought, enough. She said, “No.”

Rosa was taken to jail. She wasn’t scared, because she knew that what she was fighting for was right. When Rosa came home that night, she talked with her friends and family about what to do. She decided to keep fighting, no matter how hard it would be.

Black people all over the city heard what had happened to Rosa. They thought, enough. Rosa inspired them to stop riding the buses until the rules changed.

So they walked, to school and to work and to the store, in all kinds of weather.

Soon Rosa started working, too, trying to get more rights for black people and help for those who were treated badly. She worked day after day, even when it seemed like nothing would ever change.

Rosa fell in love with a man named Raymond who was trying to change the rules to be more fair and equal.

Do you think it is important that when people become partners, they have the same values and outlook on life?

Support your opinion with reasons.

Why do you think Rosa was motivated to start working for black rights?

What is your opinion of Rosa’s response to the bus driver?

Recreate the scene on the bus. Freeze frame. Select one person to touch the characters in turn to find out what they really think about the situation.

Discuss whether knowing you are right makes you braver. Can you think of any real life examples?

What do you think Rosa means by the term ‘fighting’?

How did Rosa motivate people?

Why would walking, instead of taking the bus, have impact?
Rosa traveled the country—from New York to San Francisco—to convince other people to join the fight. Finally, after one year, the Supreme Court decided that treating black people differently from white people on buses was wrong. The rules were going to change!

It was no longer safe for Rosa to live in Alabama. She moved to Detroit and fought for fair schools, jobs and houses for black people.

She fought for voting rights, women’s rights and the rights of people in prison.

When Rosa was an older woman, she was given awards and told she was a hero. But she knew who she was. A regular person, just as good as anyone else. And she had work to do.

Find New York and San Francisco in an atlas. Why do you think it was important for Rosa to travel the country?

What did Rosa achieve by activating people?

What do you think the Supreme Court is?

How do you think the American public will react?

Write your own short speech to motivate people to take action. You might want to use a rhetorical question or forceful statement to start.

Why do you think it was no longer safe for Rosa to live in Alabama?

Find Detroit in an atlas. Use the internet to find out how far she had to move from Alabama.

What other causes was Rosa fighting for?

What do you think of the slogan: ‘WE HAVE TO KEEP TRYING AS LONG AS WE ARE ALIVE’?

What do you think of Rosa’s response to the awards?

How would you sum up Rosa’s attitude to life?
Rosa Parks was an American activist and one of the most important figures in the civil rights movement. The granddaughter of former slaves, she grew up with her mother, brother, and grandparents on a small farm outside of Montgomery, Alabama, where she faced mean and unfair treatment because of her skin color. She regularly resisted with bravery and dignity. It wasn’t until she met her husband, Raymond Parks, that she learned about activism. At 30, she became a leader in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Montgomery and began working to end inequality.

When she was 42, Rosa was taken from a bus and jailed because she refused to give her seat to a white person. Her arrest brought the black people of Montgomery together to demand change and she helped lead them in a year-long boycott of the buses. Rosa’s actions and hard work helped establish the civil rights movement. They also cost her family their jobs and safety. They moved north to Detroit, where Rosa was dismayed to find that great inequality persisted. She remained an activist for the rest of her life, helping many people and inspiring countless others with her bravery, dignity, and determination in the ongoing fight for human equality.

What do you think the author means when she says that Rosa ‘resisted with bravery and dignity’?

What does the word ‘boycott’ mean?

Do you think there is still inequality in society? Do some countries suffer from greater inequality than others? Why do you think this is?

Create your own timeline of Rosa’s life, adding in any important events, such as the World Wars and anything else you find through your own research.

You might find this video interesting: quartokno.ws/2uhU9M7
Be bold, be brave, dream BIG!
Discover inspirational lives from around the world.