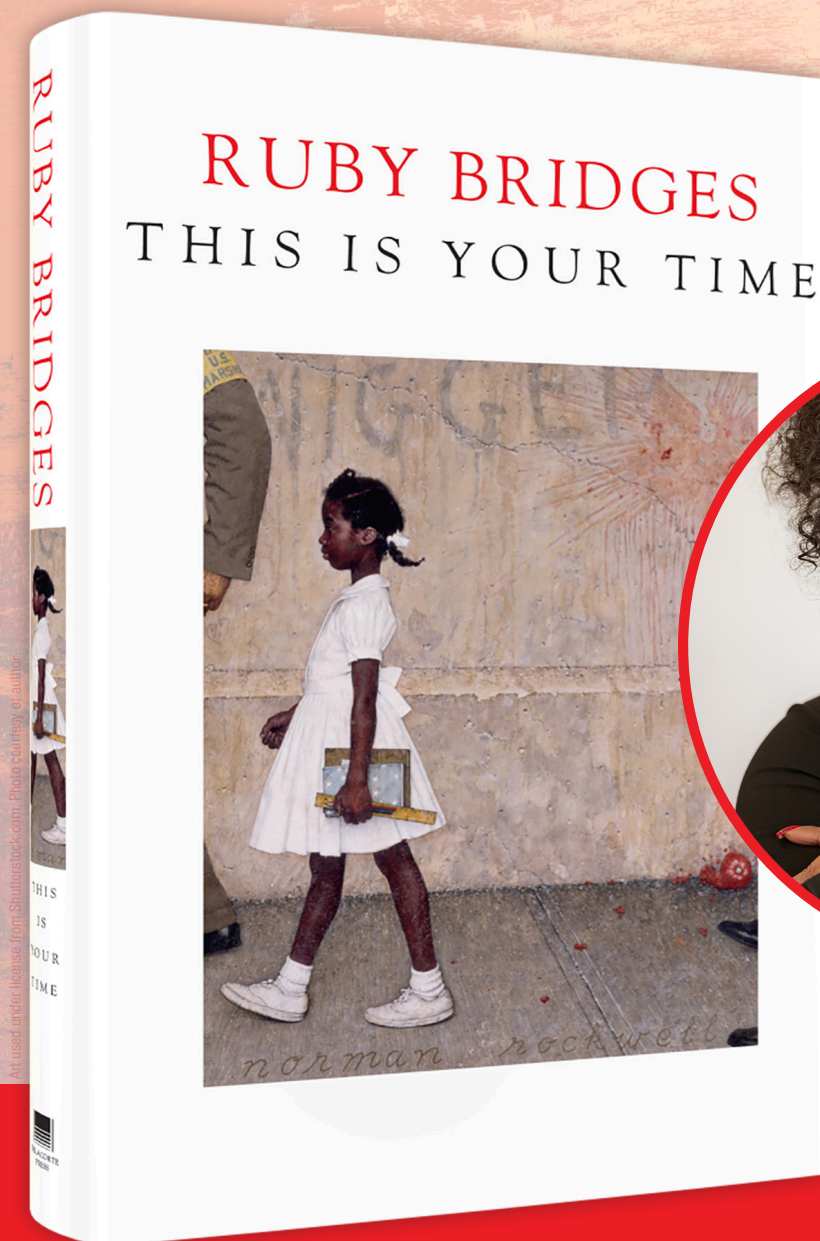


THIS IS YOUR TIME

Reader Discussion and Writing Guide

Guide your family or group's discussion about this inspirational letter to today's young activists from **RUBY BRIDGES** herself.



Language Advisory: *This Is Your Time* contains some images of racist language and other offensive epithets.

This guide was written by Kimiko Cowley-Pettis.

A Brief Overview of the Civil Rights Movement in America

THE FIGHT TO END THE SEGREGATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

May 18,
1896

The Supreme Court made a ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case that established the separate but equal doctrine.

July 2,
1964

President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing racial discrimination in employment, voting, and the use of public facilities.

TIMELINE OF THE FIGHT FOR SCHOOL INTEGRATION

December 4,
1849

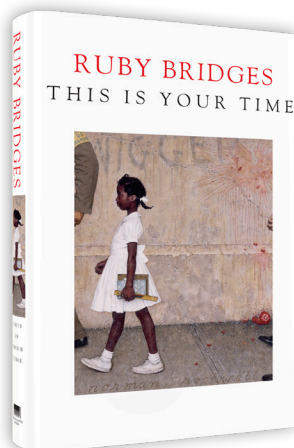
The Massachusetts Supreme Court heard arguments about school segregation in *Roberts v. the City of Boston*. Months later, it declared that school integration would only increase racial prejudice.

1960

Black and white children went to separate schools in New Orleans. A judge ordered that four black girls attend two all-white schools—McDonogh Elementary School and William Frantz Elementary School. One of these girls was **RUBY BRIDGES**.

May 17,
1954

The US Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. the Board of Education* that segregation is unconstitutional.



Look at the cover of *This Is Your Time*. This painting was created by Norman Rockwell in 1964 and is titled *The Problem We All Live With*. It is considered an iconic image of the civil rights movement.

Turn to the Image Credits page of the book to read more about the history of this painting and about Norman Rockwell.

Key Terms for Your Guided Discussion

bigotry: obstinate or unreasonable attachment to a belief, opinion, or faction; in particular, prejudice against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular group

desegregation: the ending of a policy of separation

federal marshal: an officer responsible for carrying out law enforcement on behalf of the federal courts

integration: bringing separate people or things together

Jim Crow laws: a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation

March on Washington: a massive protest march that occurred on August 28, 1963, when 250,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC

protest: express an objection to what someone has said or done

racism: a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race

racist: a person who is prejudiced against or antagonistic toward people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or is marginalized

resilience: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

unrest: a state of dissatisfaction, disturbance, and agitation in a group of people, typically involving public demonstrations or disorder

Discussion Questions

1. Explain how Ruby's parents (Lucille Bridges and Abon Bridges) were courageous.
2. Why would the National Guard be needed to escort a kindergartner to school?
3. What criteria did Ruby meet in order to be accepted as the first black child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School?
4. Why did some white adults hate Ruby Bridges?
5. What character traits do you think Ruby Bridges's teacher possessed? Why?
6. Watch [this video of Ruby Bridges](https://youtu.be/hzuS8CI-sSI) (https://youtu.be/hzuS8CI-sSI) reflecting on her experience integrating William Frantz Elementary School. If you were Ruby Bridges, would you want to attend William Frantz Elementary School the following the school year? Share your thought process.
7. How would you describe US Marshal Charles Burks, one of the men who escorted Ruby Bridges to school?
8. Dr. Robert Coles was a psychiatrist who volunteered to work with Ruby Bridges. Put yourself in Ruby's shoes. What do you think it was like to walk to school? What type of social or emotional trauma do you think Ruby had to deal with?
9. Why do you think Ruby titled her book *This Is Your Time*?
10. What is the central theme of this book?
11. How does Ruby's story contribute to the development of the theme?
12. If you could interview Ruby Bridges, what would you ask her?
13. How do the images in the book help you understand Ruby's experience?

Further Materials

Click through the embedded links for additional articles on this topic!

- [“School Segregation and Integration”](#) from the Library of Congress
- [“The Secret to School Integration”](#) by Halley Potter and Kimberly Quick
- [“Why School Integration Matters”](#) by Pedro A. Noguera
- [“Youth in the Civil Rights Movement”](#) from the Library of Congress
- [“Nearly Half of New York City’s Public-School Students Stayed Home to Protest: Segregation in a 1964 Boycott. That Fight Is Still Unfinished”](#) by Olivia B. Waxman
- [“The Largest Civil Rights Protest You’ve Never Heard Of: Teaching the 1964 New York City School Boycott”](#) by Adam Sanchez

Supplemental Books for Discussion

Picture Books

- *Thurgood* by Jonah Winter
- *Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop* by Alice Faye Duncan
- *Lift as You Climb: The Story of Ella Baker* by Patricia Hruby Powell

Middle Grade

- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth* edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
- *The Lions of Little Rock* by Kristin Levine
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia
- *The Promise of Change* by Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy
- *The Power of One: Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine* by Dennis B. Fradin and Judith Fradin

Further Materials Continued

- *Tell All the Children Our Story: Memories and Mementos of Being Young and Black in America* by Tonya Bolden

For Older Readers

- The March Trilogy by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell
- *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High* by Melba Pattillo Beals
- *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement* by Hasan Kwame Jeffries
- *How to Be Less Stupid About Race* by Crystal Fleming
- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo

Supplemental Films for Discussion

- *The Ernest Green Story* (1993) is a docudrama detailing the story of Ernest Green and eight other African American high school students (known as the Little Rock Nine) as they embarked on their historic journey to integrate Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.
- *Ruby Bridges* (1998) tells the story of one of the first African American children to integrate a school in the Deep South.
- *Soundtrack for a Revolution* (2009) is a documentary that traces the history of the civil rights movement through its music.
- *Selma* (2014) is a historical drama based on the 1965 voting rights marches from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama.
- *Voices from the Black Lives Matter Protests* (2020) is an oral and visual recounting of the fourteen days that followed the murder of George Floyd. From Minnesota politicians and friends of the victim to activists at the front lines of the Black Lives Matter protests, rallies, and marches, we hear from pivotal voices who paint a picture of the beginnings of a revolution.