

Ruby Bridges Reading Comprehension Name _____

Ruby Bridges became a symbol and pioneer for the American civil rights movement at just six years old. She was born on September 8, 1954, as the oldest of five children. At two years old, her family moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, in search of better work opportunities. Bridges was born during the same year as Brown v. Board of Education, a famous Supreme Court case that made racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. However, despite this court ruling, many schools continued to separate students based on race, forcing Black students to attend inferior institutions and giving them fewer opportunities for success.

Bridges attended segregated kindergarten in New Orleans. A year later, federal courts ordered New Orleans' schools to desegregate. To circumvent these laws, schools wrote challenging entrance exams that Black students had to pass to prove they were at the same academic level as white students. Ruby Bridges passed the exam along with five other students, gaining admission to the all-white William Franz Elementary School. Bridges, however, was the only one who ended up going to William Franz; two students decided to stay at their old school, and the other three were sent to another all-white school.

Bridges' first day of school was like no other. Ruby and her mother were escorted to school by four federal marshals every day, fighting through crowds of people screaming racial slurs and protesting her admission. Bridges later commented that the only moment that scared her throughout the protests was the sight of a woman holding a Black baby doll in a coffin. Her first day at school was spent solely in the principal's office due to the commotion caused by white parents pulling their children out of the school. She sat in a class of one with Barbara Henry, the only teacher who accepted her into the classroom; she ate lunch alone and played with her teacher at recess. Bridges' family suffered, too; her father lost his job and grocery stores refused to sell to her mother. Despite the oppression the Bridges family faced for nothing more than getting their daughter an education, Ruby Bridges never missed a day of school.

Over time, other Black students enrolled at the school, including Bridges' four nieces. Ruby Bridges helped pave the way for racial integration in schools, dealing with severe racism and continuing to push for her right to learn. She wrote about her experiences in two books and won the Carter G. Woodson Award; she also established the Ruby Bridges Foundation in 1999 to promote tolerance and push for change via education.

1. Which of the following statements about school segregation is true?

- a. It ended immediately after Brown v. Board of Education.
- b. Segregated schools did not have equal conditions for Black and white children.
- c. School segregation was never directly addressed by the federal government.
- d. Segregated schools offered the same learning opportunities for Black and white students.

2. **Which of the following problems did Ruby Bridges have to deal with when she tried to go to school?**
 - a. Threats
 - b. Exclusion
 - c. Racism
 - d. All of the above

3. **Which of the following best explains why all-white schools instituted entrance exams to permit Black students to enter?**
 - a. Despite the federal mandate, they wanted to keep schools segregated any way they could.
 - b. To ensure that only the highest-achieving white students were allowed to attend the school.
 - c. To make sure as many Black students could attend the school as possible.
 - d. They were big supporters of school integration.

4. **Which of the following best describes the impact of Ruby Bridges on school segregation?**
 - a. Bridges' attempts to go to school made segregation more prominent.
 - b. Bridges was a pioneer for the future safe integration of schools.
 - c. Bridges' transition to a white school was easy, and paved the way for future Black students.
 - d. Bridges was the only student fighting for school integration, and she won her fight.

5. **Which of the following statements is true?**
 - a. Ruby Bridges was the only member of her family impacted by her attending an all-white school.
 - b. The students in Bridges' class eventually began to get to know her and overcome the perceived barrier between them.
 - c. Bridges continued to push for equal and civil rights even after her experiences in elementary school.
 - d. Bridges was the youngest child in her family.

6. **What can be inferred from the fact that Ruby Bridges never missed a day of school?**
 - a. She did not let racism stop her from seizing her right to learn.
 - b. She was willing to face the racism if it meant she could play with her friends at recess.
 - c. She did not care about her education.
 - d. She was never threatened over her right to go to school, so she was able to attend every day.

7. **Which of the following initiatives would the Ruby Bridges Foundation be most likely to support?**
 - a. A campaign to immediately expel a student who says a racist remark
 - b. A resolution to teach all elementary school aged students about Brown v. Board of Education and the civil rights movement
 - c. A social media campaign shaming the teachers who refused to teach Ruby Bridges at her elementary school
 - d. An educational pamphlet detailing the stories of white children who attended the same school as Ruby Bridges