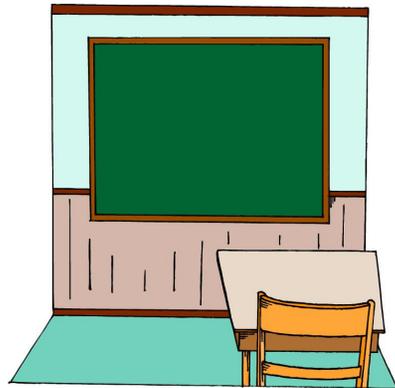


Name \_\_\_\_\_



# Brave Ruby Bridges

by Erin Horner



Answer the following questions **BEFORE** you read this book. It is okay if you do not know as much as you thought. Do the best you can!

**1. Does everyone in your school look alike? Explain your answer.**

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**2. What do you think it would be like to go to a school where everyone else was just like you?**

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**3. What is the bravest thing you have ever done?**

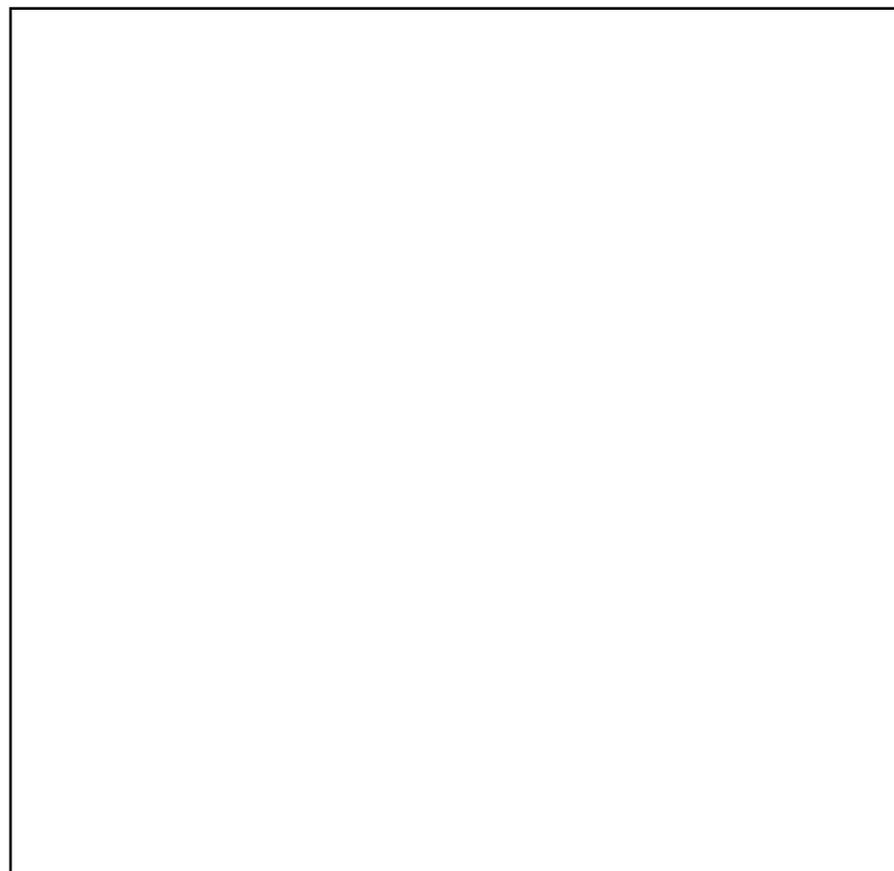
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Think about the bravest person you know. Is it a police officer? It might be. Is it a firefighter? It could be. Is it a little girl named Ruby who went to school? Probably not, but that's only because you haven't yet read her story. Ruby Bridges was a very brave little girl. She did something extraordinary! Read on to learn about brave Miss Bridges.

Draw a picture of the bravest person you know.





Ruby Bridges was a very sweet, young African-American girl. She lived in New Orleans with her family. Her parents did not have a lot of money. Mr. Bridges worked at a gas station. Mrs. Bridges took care of the children. Sometimes she worked different jobs at night, too.



When Ruby was in kindergarten, she loved school. She loved her teacher, Mrs. King. She loved all of her friends too. Ruby's school was full of African-American students and teachers. In New Orleans in 1959, that's the way schools worked. Some schools were only for white kids. Other schools were only for African-American kids. The children were not allowed to go to school together just because they had different colored skin. Doesn't that sound silly?



That year some grown-ups went to court to try to change this. They wanted schools to be integrated. They thought that all boys and girls should be able to go to school together, no matter what they looked like. After many battles, a judge agreed that they were right.



Ruby started first grade at her old school, but she didn't stay there for the whole year. One night, her mom told her that she would be going to a new school the next day. The new school was closer to her house. Ruby didn't know that it was a school for white kids.



The next morning four men came to take Ruby and her mom to the new school. The men were sent by the President of the United States! They were US federal marshals. They had come to keep Ruby safe. Many white people did not want Ruby or any other African-American kids going to school with their kids.



When they arrived at her new school, Ruby saw many people. Were they there to welcome her? No, they were there to protest. They yelled and screamed mean things. They held up signs and shouted. One person even held up a picture of an African-American baby in a coffin.



Ruby was brave. She walked with her mom and the marshals up the steps to her new school. She entered the office and was told to wait for the principal. As she waited, she looked out the windows. Just then she noticed something; everyone in this new building was white.



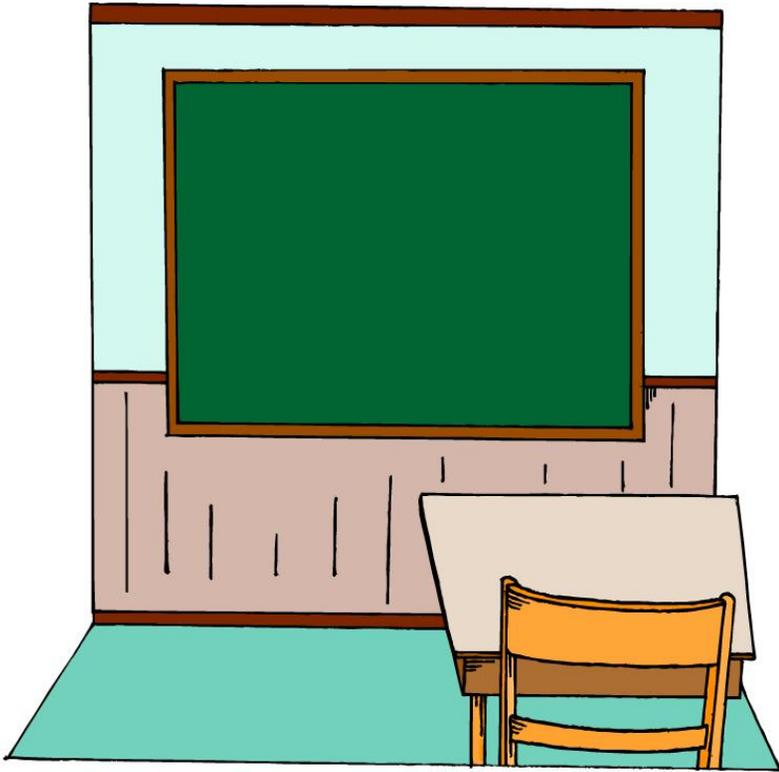
Ruby and her mother sat there all day long. As they sat there, they watched white parents parade in and out. The parents were angry. Ruby could see that they were arguing with the school staff. They were also pointing at her. The parents were rushing in and pulling their children out of the school. They didn't want their kids to go to school with an African-American child.

Ruby and her mom spent the entire day sitting in the office. They waited and waited. They did not talk to anybody. Finally at 3:00 it was time for Ruby to go home. As she left the building, Ruby noticed more protesters. The crowd had grown during the day. There were reporters and TV crews there too. Even while the people yelled and chanted, Ruby was brave.

Draw a picture of Ruby and her mother waiting in the office.



The next morning brought much of the same. Protesters waited for Ruby and yelled mean things as she arrived at school. Some people spat at her. One lady even told her that she was going to poison her. Still, Ruby was brave.



On her second day, Ruby met her new teacher. Her name was Mrs. Henry. Mrs. Henry led Ruby to her new classroom. Ruby expected to see many children in her new school. She was wrong. The halls were empty. So was her classroom. Ruby was the only student in her entire class. Most of the parents at William Frantz School had removed their children.



Ruby and Mrs. Henry spent the entire day together. It was kind of like having a private tutor. Ruby liked her teacher. She was very nice. Sadly, Ruby wasn't allowed to go outside and play. She wasn't allowed to eat lunch in the cafeteria. She missed her friends from her old school. She was lonely, but she was still brave.



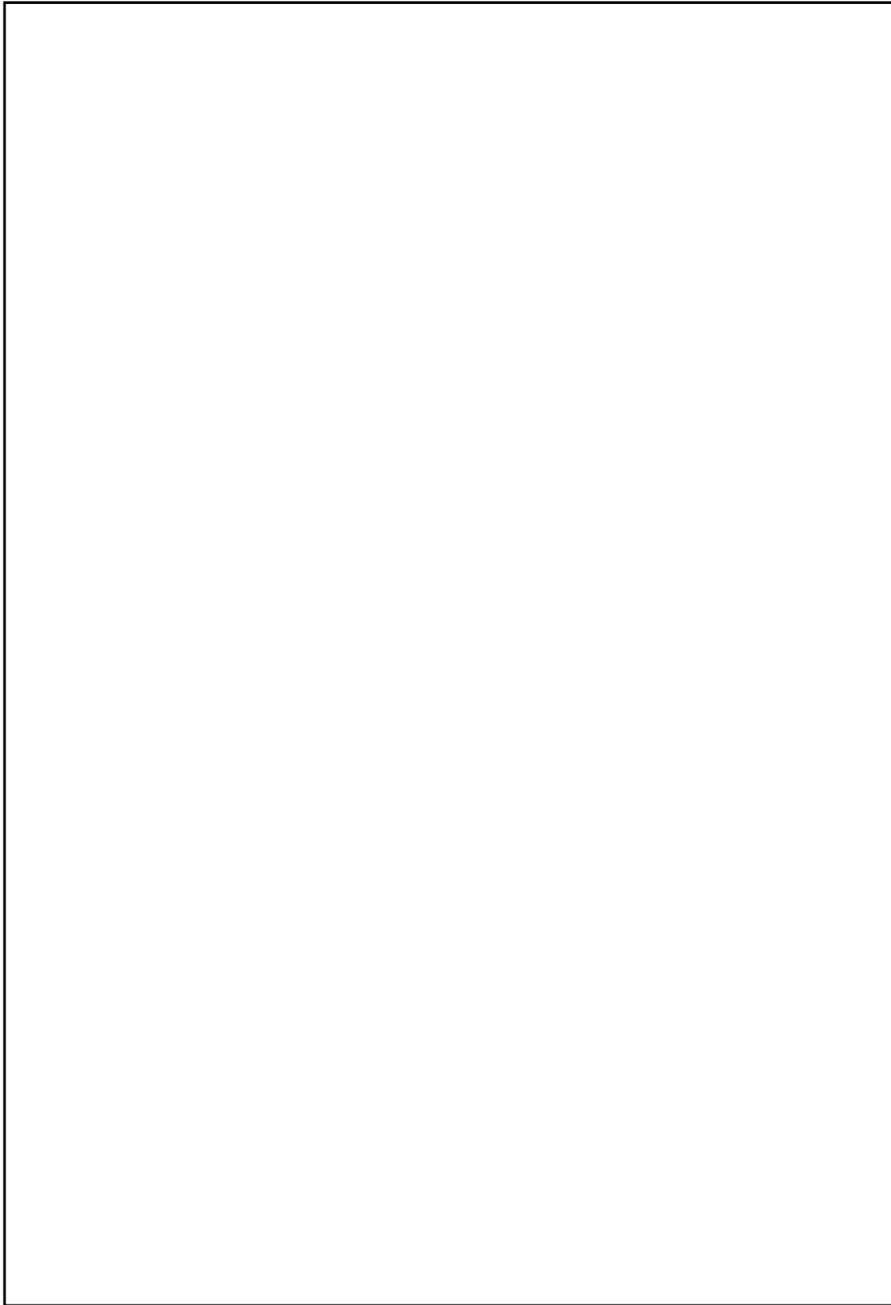
As the year went on, slowly but surely, other children started to return to Frantz. Mrs. Henry arranged for Ruby to spend some time with the other students. Ruby was able to visit with them a few times. Once when visiting with the other children, Ruby asked a little boy if he would like to play with her. He said no. He told her that his mom would not allow him to play with her because of her dark skin.



Ruby was brave all year long. Her family believed that everyone in New Orleans deserved a great education. Thankfully, other people did too. The men who went to court, Mrs. Henry, and countless others supported her. Integration was a good thing! Ruby was helping to make a difference.

First grade ended. Summer came and went. Soon it was time to start second grade. Ruby awoke on the first day and readied herself for another year just like the last. She arrived at Frantz that morning and walked towards her classroom. A teacher stopped her and sent her to a different room. To her surprise, the room was full of children! Some of them were even African-American! Her school was finally integrated!

Draw a picture of Ruby's second grade class.



Ruby Bridges was very brave. She helped to make integration a reality. Thanks in part to brave Miss Bridges, schools today are full of children with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Ruby also helped to teach many adults a great lesson. She showed them that people with dark skin and people with light skin are all the same on the inside, and that's where it really counts anyway!

Answer the following questions **AFTER** you have completed this book.

**1. Ruby Bridges was very brave. Write three ways that she showed her bravery.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. If, like Ruby, you were the only student in your classroom, which of the following would you miss the most?**

Making new friends

Outdoor recess

Eating in the cafeteria

Passing notes

Working together

Playing on the playground

Telling jokes

Telling secrets

Sharing ideas

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Do you think you could have done what Ruby Bridges did? Why or why not?**

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**4. If I could ask Ruby Bridges anything about her first grade year, I'd want to ask her** \_\_\_\_\_

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**I'd also want to tell her** \_\_\_\_\_

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