

## **Seven Character Traits in Education:**

Respect Responsibility Kindness Perseverance  
Self-Discipline Honesty Fairness

### **Respect**

To show respect for something means to treat it as valuable and worthy. A person should exhibit respect for him/herself, other people, property, and the environment.

Those who show respect:  
Care about others' feelings  
Are courteous and polite  
Honor roles of authority

### **Responsibility**

To be responsible means to be accountable for one's own actions and to know and follow laws, rules, and conduct codes.

Those who are responsible:  
Think before acting  
Accept the consequences of their actions  
Keep Promises  
Are dependable

### **Kindness**

To be kind means to treat other people as you want to be treated.

Those who are kind:  
Show compassion  
Show empathy  
Are considerate  
Are unselfish  
Are friendly  
Are helpful

### **Perseverance**

To persevere means to complete a task even when it becomes boring, difficult, or discouraging.

Those who show perseverance:  
Work hard toward goals  
Overcome obstacles  
Do not give up easily  
Are resourceful in reaching a goal

### **Self-Discipline**

To be self-disciplined means to control one's behaviors and emotions and, when necessary, to postpone immediate needs/desires for long-term benefits.

Those who are self-disciplined:  
Show self-control  
Do things in moderation  
Show patience  
Develop effective habits

### **Honesty**

To be honest means to be truthful, trustworthy, and behave with integrity.

Those who are honest:  
Do not mislead others  
Are forthright

### **Fairness**

To be fair means to promote equal opportunity for everyone and to apply agreed upon rules equally to everyone.

A fair person:  
Is impartial  
Is without prejudice  
Is just

**Collier County Public Schools. Character Education Traits in the Collier  
County Public Schools** [On-line].

Available: [www.collier.k12.fl.us/student\\_services/character\\_education.htm](http://www.collier.k12.fl.us/student_services/character_education.htm)

# Rosa Parks

1913-

Rosa Parks sparked the start of the civil rights movement when she refused to give her seat on a bus to a white man. Her courageous act led to the end of segregation in America.

Rosa grew up in the segregated city of Montgomery, Alabama. Up to the age of 11, her mother, who was a schoolteacher, taught her. Later she attended an all-black school for girls. She was used to obeying the laws that separated whites from blacks, even though she found those laws humiliating.

In 1933, Rosa married Raymond Parks. She became a seamstress and held various jobs over the years. She was well respected in the black community for her work as secretary of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She was also an active member of the Montgomery Voters League, a group that helped black citizens register to vote.

By 1955, Parks had found her own quiet way to protest segregation. Rather than take the “blacks only” elevator in a building, Rosa would take the stairs. She also avoided traveling by bus, preferring to walk home from work when she was not too tired. At that time, segregation laws ruled that blacks could not sit in the first three rows of a bus. Whenever the white

section in the front was full, black passengers had to give up their seats and stand.

On the evening of December 1, 1955, Mrs. Parks was feeling tired after a long day of work. She found a seat in the middle of a crowded bus and sat down. When a white man boarded and could not find a seat in the front, he demanded that Rosa give her seat to him. But this time Rosa would not get up; she was just too tired. More than that, she was tired of being a second-class citizen.

Parks was quickly arrested and put in jail. When the community learned of her arrest, Martin Luther King, Jr., a Montgomery preacher, organized a bus boycott to protest her treatment. For more than a year, blacks refused to ride the Montgomery buses. After a long court battle, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the bus laws were illegal. Soon, people in other cities followed Montgomery’s example and protested the segregation laws. Parks had started far more than a bus boycott. The civil rights movement was underway.

In 1979, Rosa Parks was awarded the Spingarn Medal, the NAACP’s highest award. In 1999, she was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Today, Mrs. Parks is celebrated for her heroic achievements as the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.”

# Dr. Charles Drew

1904-1950

Dr. Charles Drew was a brilliant doctor and humanitarian. His development of the first blood bank saved thousands of lives during World War II.

Charles first imagined becoming a doctor at age 15 when his sister died of tuberculosis. He won a football scholarship to Amherst College, where, for a while, he seemed destined for a career in sports. However, when a tackler left a metal cleat in his thigh, he turned his attention back to medicine.

In 1928, Drew enrolled at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where he studied medicine. There he witnessed a man's life being saved by a blood transfusion. This event triggered his special interest in blood preservation. Drew earned his medical degree in 1940 from Columbia University and conducted research in two blood projects. He experimented with blood plasma, a type of blood fluid, and discovered that it could be used instead of whole blood. It lasted longer and was less likely to become contaminated.

When World War II broke out, Dr. Drew explored ways to get life-saving blood plasma to the war front. One day he received an urgent request from England. A former teacher needed five thousand units of dried plasma for transfusions. This request led to the

“Blood for Britain” project. Drew was chosen as the medical supervisor for this undertaking, which helped save the lives of many wounded soldiers.

Following this success, Charles Drew was named director of the Red Cross blood bank. From the beginning, Dr. Drew was upset by many of the armed forces regulations about blood collection, storage, and distribution. Dr. Drew knew there were no racial differences in blood and that soldiers and sailors would die needlessly if they had to wait for “same race” blood. In 1911, the armed forces ruled that the blood of blacks would be accepted but would continue to be stored and distributed separately from that of whites. Dr. Drew resigned from his official post in protest.

Drew spent the next eight years as a surgeon and professor of medicine at Howard University. By passing on his knowledge and skills, he helped to create the next generation of black doctors and surgeons.

On April 1, 1950, humanity suffered a great loss when, at the age of 45, Dr. Drew was killed in an automobile accident. His pioneering work in blood preservation revolutionized the medical profession and continues to save countless lives every day.

# Frederick Douglass

1818-1895

In the mid-1800s, the strongest and most effective voice of the anti-slavery movement was that of Frederick Douglass.

Frederick was born with a quick mind and a proud spirit. He was separated from his slave mother as an infant and never knew his white father. While growing up with his grandmother on a Maryland plantation, Frederick found life as a slave unbearable. Many times he had to fight to get enough food to eat.

At the age of 8, Frederick was sent to Baltimore to work as a house servant for the Auld family. While he was there, Mrs. Auld taught him to read and write. Through his studies, Frederick realized that he was not different from any other person, and that he did not have to be a slave all his life.

In 1838, Douglass escaped to New York City. A few years later, he was asked to speak about his experiences as a slave at an anti-slavery convention. Douglass, a tall, bearded man, spoke with such power that he gained everyone's attention. He quickly became the anti-slavery group's strongest leader and was invited to give speeches all over the North. Some people, however, questioned if Frederick had ever been a slave.

This was because he seemed so well educated. He decided to prove his honesty by writing a book about his experiences. He called it ***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass***.

To avoid being captured by his former owner, whose name and location he had given in his book, Douglass left on a two-year speaking tour to England and Ireland. He helped to win many new friends for the anti-slavery movement. Some people were so impressed by his speeches that they raised enough money to buy his freedom in America.

After Frederick returned to New York, he started the ***North Star***, an abolitionist newspaper. During the Civil War, Douglass advised Abraham Lincoln to abolish slavery and to enroll black troops as soldiers in the Union Army.

After the Civil War, Douglass became a leader in business and politics. He was made a U.S. Marshal and served as an advisor to five presidents. During this time, he also joined the cause for women's rights. When Frederick Douglass passed away, thousands mourned him. His call for freedom and equality for African Americans and women would not go unanswered.

# W. E. B. Du Bois

1868 - 1963

During the first half of the twentieth century, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was the most important black protest leader in the United States. He was a scholar, writer, sociologist, and philosopher working to bring justice and equal rights to African Americans.

William was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. His mother taught him the value of hard work, education, and thriftiness. They were a poor but respected family in the community. William was an excellent student and earned a scholarship to Fisk University. In 1895, he became the first black to graduate with a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Many of Du Bois's ideas were responses to the writings of Booker T. Washington, the most influential black leader of the period. Washington believed that in order for blacks to rise in American society, they needed to focus more on gaining wealth and less on higher education and politics. Du Bois agreed with Washington in some ways but strongly disagreed on the point about education. He believed that the best way for blacks to gain status was to get a good education. Their debates led leaders of the black community to form two opposing groups—the “conservative” supporters of

Washington and the “radical” followers of Du Bois.

Du Bois's greatest achievements were his writings. He had a gift for words and wrote many books and essays expressing his beliefs about racial prejudice and the conflicts blacks faced in American society. Another of his most notable achievements was the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). With a number of other black and white leaders who shared his beliefs, Du Bois founded this organization in 1909. He also served as editor of ***Crisis***, the NAACP magazine. The NAACP grew to become a leading civil rights organization. It continues today to bring justice and equality to Americans.

Du Bois supported the fight for black rights in Africa and throughout the world, but not everyone agreed with his ideas. His critics claimed that he spoke only to the educated and that he overlooked much of the black population. Eventually, Du Bois became discouraged with conditions in American society. After years of struggle, he moved to Ghana, West Africa. He died there on August 27, 1963—only one day before Martin Luther King's great march on Washington, D.C.

# Harriet Tubman

1820 - 1913

It has been written that Harriet Tubman was as strong as a lion and as clever as a fox, but in the beginning of her life, it did not appear that she would live past 13 years old.

Harriet Tubman was born in Maryland to Harriet Greene and Benjamin Ross, both slaves. Her childhood was brutal, and she was often beaten by slave owners. At 13 she was struck on the head with a rock while trying to protect another slave. Harriet survived but continued to experience some blackouts until her death

During the day, Harriet worked hard under the hot sun as a field hand. She developed great physical strength. At night she plotted how she would use the North Star to guide her escape to freedom. Finally, in 1849, she escaped. Once she was free, however, she found no real happiness. She could not forget the people she had left behind, especially her parents. So Harriet traveled back to the South to help bring other slaves to freedom. This is why she became known as the “Moses of Her People.”

Harriet followed a secret escape route called the Underground Railroad. It wasn't a real railroad but a series of “stations,” or safe houses, where free people protected and hid slaves on their difficult journey north. They used secret code words to hide their plans from the slave owners. For example, the escaping slaves were called *passengers*; the people who led slaves north were called *conductors*.

Acting alone on trips, Harriet always outsmarted the slave trackers. She confused their dogs by sprinkling red pepper along her trail. Sometimes she even had to use force to keep frightened runaways from turning back. Over her lifetime, Tubman became known as the greatest conductor of the Underground Railroad. She led more than 300 slaves to freedom!

During the Civil War, Harriet Tubman served with the Union Army—first as a nurse and then as a spy. After the war, she returned to New York, where she turned her home into a shelter for the sick, the elderly, and the poor. When she died in 1913, she received full military honors for her courage and service.

# Writing Rubric

6 points	The writing is focused on a biography of the Black History person and character trait that helped the person to become noteworthy. The essay follows logical organizational pattern of an introduction, two supporting paragraphs with examples, and a conclusion. Examples given describe how the person demonstrated the trait.
5 Points	The writing is focused on a biography of the Black History person and character trait that helped the person to become noteworthy. The essay follows logical organizational pattern of an introduction, two supporting paragraphs with examples, and a conclusion. Both examples given do not describe how the person demonstrated the trait.
4 points	The writing is focused on a biography of the Black History person and character trait that helped the person to become noteworthy. The essay lacks one of following organizational patterns of an introduction, two supporting paragraphs with examples, and a conclusion. Both examples given do not describe how the person demonstrated the trait.
3 points	The writing is focused on a biography of the Black History person and character trait that helped the person to become noteworthy. The essay lacks two of following organizational patterns of an introduction, two supporting paragraphs with examples, and a conclusion. Both examples given do not describe how the person demonstrated the trait.
0-2 points	The writing is not focused on a biography of the Black History person and character trait that helped the person to become noteworthy. The essay lacks one or more of following organizational patterns of an introduction, two supporting paragraphs with examples, and a conclusion. Both examples given do not describe how the person demonstrated the trait.