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Using mentor texts to enhance the teaching of reading comprehension and writing

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Using mentor texts to enhance the teaching of reading comprehension and writing

Abstract

This project is an instructional unit designed to teach knowledge of both the Civil Rights Movement and racial/social injustices across multiple curricular areas and academic settings using mentor texts. The academic areas that will be addressed are reading, language arts, and writing. This unit includes lesson plans and materials that accompany mentor texts and provide additional information to students in the classroom.

Using Mentor Texts to Enhance the Teaching of Reading Comprehension and Writing

A Graduate Paper

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Introduction

Mentor texts have been used in the classroom to foster a love of literacy for both readers and writers. The teacher selects a mentor text, a piece of literature that both the teacher and student can return to and reread for different purposes, that supports the curriculum that is being taught in her classroom, and that will appeal to her students. Engaging students in mentor text learning shows the students new ways of writing that captures both high level interest and imagination.

According to Dorfman and Capelli (2017), there are many things a teacher needs to look for when choosing mentor texts for their classroom. Some things they include are flipping through the book to find examples of the author's craft in the text, finding use of imagery, rhythm, and rhyme, and finding a text that serves their students' needs and curriculum. They also insist that mentor texts chosen must exemplify the kind of writing the teacher wishes to see from their students. Another important issue is to have a variety of genres in the classroom with mentor texts, and not just fiction.

Purpose of the Unit Plan

The goal of this project is to enhance students' reading comprehension and writing skills using mentor texts which are pieces of literature that both the teacher and student can return to and reread for different purposes (Dorfman, 2013). Another goal of this project is to build a culturally relevant library and a culturally responsive classroom. Dorfman argues that mentor texts are texts to be studied and imitated. Mentor texts help students to take risks and be different writers tomorrow than they are today. They encourage students to try out new strategies and formats for their writing. Mentor texts should be books that students can relate to and can read

independently *or* with some support. Mentor texts do not need to come in the form of a book but can be any written form of media that students can read.

Review of the Literature

Wanless and Crawford (2016) suggest that race related teaching practices in the classroom may include helping children develop positive racial identities, abilities to build relationships across race, and the awareness of race-related injustices and the innate desire to take action to stop these injustices. One way Wanless and Crawford (2016) direct teachers to begin with race related teaching practices is to start with children's literature which is an accessible medium for earlier childhood and elementary educators. This review of the literature will focus on enhancing comprehension and writing through the use of culturally responsive mentor texts to facilitate the development of culturally responsive classrooms.

Enhancing Comprehension Using Mentor Texts

One of the benefits of using mentor texts, especially in association, or as part of the workshop model, is that it allows students to be able to talk about what they are hearing. They can ask questions of both the teacher and each other during a read aloud of a mentor text. Dorn and Saffos (2006) state that the best way to understand a text is to talk about it. They also note that the urge to discuss ideas with others is part of the innate desire to confirm and clarify thinking. This is important for achieving deeper comprehension levels in our students.

Allowing students to speak to each other in a large group, or in small groups, allows them to explore questions around the topic and synthesize across texts according to Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2012). They also argue that acknowledging that students have important things to reiterate in a group, which is crucial when the student is speaking about experiences as they relate their

own experience to what is happening in the text. It is important, the authors note, that the discussion in a group setting with other students must be directed back to the text itself if the discussion begins to go off topic, forgetting the importance of the text.

Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2012) indicate that it is important for teachers to remember to silence their own thoughts and opinions and let students discuss the text and form their conclusions about the books on their own. When a teacher introduces their own opinion or thoughts, it may lead students on a thinking pathway. Allowing students to generate thoughts and opinions on the mentor texts will ensure rich conversation in the classroom and, eventually, on paper when they begin writing.

Fisher, Frey, and Hattie (2016) suggest building in points where the teacher prompts students to create their own questions about the readings. This can be set up as a teacher reads a mentor text prior to it being read aloud to the students. The purpose of these stopping points is to encourage the students to draw conclusions, infer things from the author's writing, or question characters or their behaviors in the text.

Using a variety of texts in the classroom, along with text that is both culturally diverse and rich, helps all students to form connections with what they are reading. Mentor texts should be able to show a student the future and their future possibilities as a writer and author (Dorfman & Capelli, 2017). Being able to connect with these stories allows for a wide variety of conversations to take place both with the teacher and peers in the classroom. The more they are able to talk about what they are reading, the more they are able to connect to and understand the text, enriching their comprehension and enhancing their writing skills applied to meaningful real world concepts and problems when it comes their turn to be the author.

Enhancing Writing Using Mentor Texts

Mentor texts can lend themselves very well to pointing out a specific skill to students as they are analyzing the story and the writing. Dorfman and Dougherty (2014) explain that writers can study one or several skills at a time while they work to become adept and sophisticated in grammar and conventions application. They also point out that teachers can use the author's writing to point out how the author is trying to get the listeners to feel about a certain character, action, or an event through specific word usage in the text.

Dorfman and Dougherty (2014) also suggest transferring some of the responsibility of describing the writing style in a mentor text to the student. Using close reading with students is one way for them to notice some of these things on their own. They also highlight that the student is engaged with the content area. By doing this the students are putting themselves in the shoes of the author to consider their choice of words, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Calkins and Tolan (2015) indicate in their 4th grade unit of study on narrative writing, that a writer should know the character they are writing so well that they can count the change in their pocket. This is a great visualization for students to both think about for their own writing and look at the author's writing in a mentor text.

Another way mentor texts can lend themselves to model writing structure is for the teacher to look for mentor sentences to use within the text. Mentor texts do not always have to be picture books and can be from any genre.

Importance of Building a Culturally Responsive Classrooms Through Mentor Text Usage

Now more than ever, it is imperative that teachers give students a voice. It is imperative the students relate to stories they are being read, and can see themselves in these stories if they are going to get meaningful information out of them or be able to produce meaningful writing after they finish reading.

Using mentor texts as read-alouds can not only enhance comprehension, engage students, and help transform students' writing, but it can also help shape a culturally responsive classroom. It is important for the teacher to consider their students when picking out books.

According to Wanless and Crawford (2016), showing children that we see and value all aspects of them especially the parts of them that is related to race and culture, is a critical step in helping them feel welcome and connected to their teachers and peers in the classroom. It is a teacher's responsibility to build classroom rapport around that. Teaching the students to lift each other up and embrace and celebrate their differences, is one way to ensure everyone feels seen, wanted, and included in the classroom activities. The author's stress in this reading that many teacher's try to do this by taking a color-blind approach or not talking directly about race or race related experiences. Children's literature offers a window to generate these conversations, as described by Wanless and Crawford, and we, as teachers, should use these windows to include teaching practices that intentionally involve and talk about race. They suggest instead of a color-blind approach with teaching and literacy, a color aware approach is more important and effective. One step farther than that, they say, is a social injustice approach to teaching about race. Also suggested is that educators should identify any opportunities in teaching to enrich all aspects of children's learning with color awareness and social justice connections.

An issue that educators face sometimes, even unknowingly, is sharing and teaching texts in the classroom that are not culturally relevant to their students. The characters in the books they

are reading do not look like their students, or do not share experiences, families, or struggles their students do. This makes the books harder for the students to relate to or make connections. It is important for students to see themselves in order to relate enough to the texts they're hearing and come away with knowledge that furthers their understanding in the areas of reading comprehension, writing, and the content used as the vehicle for reading and writing development.

Choosing Texts That Contribute to Creating a Culturally Relevant in the Classroom

Not only is it important for students to see themselves in the texts they are reading, it is also important for students to see people of other cultures and races represented in texts as well. Wanless and Crawford explain that books can enable young readers to gain new perspectives into other's worlds. They also go on to state that teachers and adult figures in a child's life can make the most of these mirrors and windows by choosing texts that represents the diverse experiences of children and using it effectively to develop culturally responsive classrooms that promote color awareness and social justice. If teachers have control of the text they read to their students, then choosing literature that is culturally relevant is especially important. Not only the texts available to read, but things to display in the classroom and assignments that are chosen are all conscious ways a teacher can get their students thinking about other cultures.

Methodology

This unit about civil rights and social injustices is taught mainly using mentor texts to 5th graders but uses multiple sources as well. The mentor text teachings support reading comprehension as well as writing instruction and language development. The content of the mentor texts supports children's understanding of the content study- civil rights and social injustices. Students will work independently, as well as in partner pairs and small groups.

Unit Design

The unit will last for one quarter (9 weeks) and will cover all standards for 5th graders during that time in the area of literacy. This model will engage students by incorporating both *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016), which is a literacy framework that instills behaviors of independence, creates a classroom of highly engaged readers, writers, and learners, and provides teachers with the time and structure to meet diverse student needs (Boushey, 2020), and various aspects of the reading and writing workshops which are deliberately designed to offer a simple and predictable environment so that the teacher can focus on the complex work of observing students' progress and helping assess their needs (Calkins, 2020).

The unit follows a week by week framework where each week is dedicated to learning and listening to a specific set of learning outcomes that are supported by a mentor text and assignments that support students achieving a learning outcome. Each week consists of approximately 4-5 assignments dealing with vocabulary, writing responses, comprehension, and the occasional group project.

This unit focuses on the Civil Rights movement and wraps up with social injustices and equal rights for all. The mentor texts are taught in a rough order of when things happened in history, so the students can see a timeline develop over the course of the unit and over the periodical readings of the texts.

Each week begins with a reading of the mentor text on Monday. The teacher stops periodically through the text to ask students questions and draw awareness to certain character struggles or incidents in the story that might warrant more attention. The students are also asked

to “think-pair-share” with a partner on the carpet when the teacher is asking questions about the stories out loud.

After the first reading of the story and discussion as a class the students are asked to go back to their seats and either take out their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006), which is a space where students can write their thoughts, feelings, and questions about what they are studying (Source, 2018) or they respond to a writing prompt on the computer in Google Classroom.

The second day of the week is a retelling of the story with opportunities during the second retelling where the students themselves volunteer or ask questions during the reading or make connections from the story to the outside world, their own lives, or another story that has been read in class. Students are given a vocabulary assignment with words from the story where they define the words and then add in an additional part of the assignment that is described in each lesson. After they are dismissed from the carpet they are to go back to their seats and work on this assignment.

The third-fifth days consist of a variety of assignments correlating to the same mentor text and are often focused on reading comprehension and writing teachings. This may involve students working in partners or small groups and rotating through a station at the back table with the teacher to go over their writing and for the teacher to really dig into comprehension with the students.

Results

This unit is designed for students in 5th grade. Most of the texts that that are a typical 4th-5th grade reading level but with modifications most grades should be well suited for these assignments. It is about an 8-week time frame. The writing assignment at the end of the few

weeks is optional and can take as little or as long as a teacher would like. The Iowa Core Standards (See Appendix A) apply to all standards taught in this unit.

This unit will work in conjunction with *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser 2006). The components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) will include but are not limited to: read to self, read to someone, work on writing, work with the teacher, and work on Chromebook. Work on writing is the students' opportunities to complete their response or notebook/journal/Google Classroom entries for the assignments. When the students are not working on that or with the teacher, they are completing one of the other *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) components that the teacher has assigned. The reading block is 90 minutes. Generally, a full rotation of components consists of 60 minutes, but the teacher has some flexibility on whether she wants to extend those 60 to 90 minutes to include a read aloud or a review of the mentor text.

The room set up consists of 6 tables with 4 students sitting at each table. Any set up of the room is fine if students have access to work in small groups as that is necessary for some activities in the unit. There is one day per week during the lessons which acts as a re-teach day. This day can also be the day where students are being progress monitored in reading or provided specific interventions if needed. This day was built with limited direct instruction to accommodate the many other things teachers need to fit into their schedules with students.

Week 1 Lessons *Henry's Freedom Box* (2007)

Standards addressed (see Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

- **Lesson 1 (Monday) text:** *Henry's Freedom Box* (2007) by Ellen Levine (see Appendix B)

Learning activities: The teacher reads the book *Henry's Freedom Box* (2007). Students are seated on the carpet or within proximity to the teacher and each other to allow for "think, pair, share" moments between them. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. One of the questions is to ask the students "How they think Henry feels when his family is stripped away from him and how they know that." Students need to provide evidence from the story in their answer. Another question the teacher poses to the students is, "What are some dangers Henry came in contact with when shipping himself to freedom, and why did he decide to ship himself anyway?" Once the story is finished the students return to their seats. Students log into Google Classroom and answer the following prompt: "Put yourself in Henry's shoes when he chooses to mail himself to freedom. What was dangerous about making the trip in the box? Why did he choose to mail himself to freedom? Why do you think he chose to risk everything and travel through the mail? Please provide your response in 7-9 sentences". Following this component, they then visit the teacher table in groups of 4 and rotate through every 15 minutes with the teacher for a total of 60 minutes. The teacher has each student share and work with students on their thoughts and comprehension regarding the reading. Day 4 of each lesson will be used for catching up or re-teaching concepts the teacher believes students have missed or need extra help with that was covered during the week. The teacher keeps notes throughout the week during the small group meetings of students they believe need extra support in either the area of writing or reading comprehension strategies.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday):** Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *Henry's Freedom Box* (2007). They are seated in a similar situation as day one close enough to their peers

for discussion. When the teacher comes to the point in the book where Henry pours oil of vitriol on his hand so he can get the day off the teacher pauses and asks the students to think-pair-share over the following question, “ Make a text to self-connection- have you ever not wanted to do something so badly that you did something to get out of it? Discuss with your partner.” After answers are shared and the story is finished students go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix C) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students again rotate around in 15-minute components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences that they came up with on their own for each word.

- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- Students write another comprehension response today in their online journal by logging into Google Classroom. The prompt reads as follows, “We don’t know a lot about what happened to Henry once he arrived in Philadelphia. Given what you know about Henry, (driven, hard worker, positive, and resilient), what do you think he chose to do with his life once he was a free man? Make a prediction of what you think happened next in his life. Sentence requirement- 7-9 sentences.” Students then again rotate through working with the teacher to go over their responses so the teacher can examine both their thoughts and their writing.
- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are grouped based on what they need additional help with: reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-reading the story in a small group. The teacher rotates through these groups and assists students with concerns that need to be addressed.

- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- The teacher leads a discussion with the students who are sitting at their tables with their peers. A piece of chart paper is used that is broken into sections that is to be used with each story within this unit (Appendix D). The teacher directs the students this time on how she wants the students to come up with the answers on how to fill it out, and this is done as a whole group with input given from small groups made up of students at their seats. The chart has three columns: “Character, struggles and inhibiting factors, and triumphs or outcomes.” As the unit advances and the books are finished this activity can be done at the end of each week to add to the same chart to be able to really capitalize on being able to compare and contrast things happening in the same genre which is a standard being addressed but not necessarily this lesson because it is the first one and the students don't have anything to compare it to.

Week 2 Lessons *Pink and Say* (1994)

Standards addressed (see Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

- **Lesson 1 (Monday) text:** *Pink and Say* (1994) by: Patricia Polacco

Learning activities: The teacher reads the story, *Pink and Say* (1994) by Patricia Polacco.

Students are seated on the carpet or within a close proximity of the teacher and each other to allow for “think, pair, share” moments between them. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. Due to the book’s size and depth the teacher must take a few more periodic breaks to check in with the students for

understanding. Teacher's stopping point for student understanding #1 "When Say says, 'flyin' Union colors like me', what do you think that means? Study the picture for evidence to this question. Teacher's stopping point for understanding #2 "What does it say about Pink that he was willing to go back to the war even though he might lose his life in the process?" Teacher's stopping point for understanding #3 "Do you think you would have done the same as Say when he tried to disguise them as southern soldiers by lying? Why or why not?" The questions above can be done with some scaffolding and at the teacher's discretion. These questions can be asked with the students in partners or individually a good "read of the room" needs to be done with how the students are taking the story and whether they are understanding it. Once the students are finished listening to the reading they go back to their seats where they will respond to an assigned prompt in Google Classroom. The prompt is as follows, "There are many times when we are asked to do things that we don't want to do. Think of a time when you did not want to do something, but you did it anyway. How did it make you feel? Name a situation in the book where one of the characters does something, they do not want to do but they did it anyway. How do you relate to them? 6-8 sentences." After finishing the prompts, the students resume their *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) components. Students will bring their computers back to the table (or Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006)s if they chose to hand write the assignment) to share with the teacher and small group in order for the teacher to get a good understanding of whether or not they comprehend what was read to them.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday)**- Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *Pink and Say* (2014). They are seated in a similar situation as day one close enough to their peers for

interaction. After answers are shared and the story is finished, students go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix F) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students again rotate around in 15-minute components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences they came up with on their own for each word. In addition to their regular vocabulary each of the 6 groups of 4 students in the class are also assigned one vocabulary word that “act out” in a game of vocabulary charades. The students work on this when they get finished with their other components with the group that they are with. The skit is approximately 30 seconds long. Then when the teacher has finished meeting with the student the student then performs the skits for the class with the remaining students who are NOT performing in front of the class, guessing which vocabulary word is being acted out.

- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- The students complete a second comprehension and writing prompt over *Pink and Say* (1994). The prompt is in their Google Classroom, but students have the opportunity to use their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006) if they wish to write it out by hand. The prompt reads as follows, “Think about the characters Henry, Pink, and say. How are they alike, and how are they different? It might help to compare the characters, what they went through in their lives, and how they fought for what they believed in and wanted. 6-9 sentence minimum”. Students then take their turns in groups meeting with the teacher to discuss answers and collaborate with other class members in their group.
- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are grouped based on what they need additional help with, reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-

reading the story in a small group. The teacher rotates through these groups and assist students with concerns that need to be addressed.

- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- Students start by voluntarily sharing around the room their writing pieces from lesson 3. This has to do with comparing and contrasting characters from Henry's *Freedom Box* and *Pink and Say*, and the struggles the characters went through to attempt to attain their freedom. It is the goal of the lesson that the students are able to come up with quite a few similarities between the two, and how the characters all fought for what they believed in even when it meant taking a huge risk for their safety or lives in the process. After this large group discussion is done the teacher takes out the anchor chart, Appendix D, and asks the students to again fill in the three columns. This should be easier for them as the large group discussion that was just held should lead to the answers needed for this book's spot on the anchor chart.

Week 3 Lessons *Martin's Big Words* (2001)

Standards addressed (See Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

- **Lesson 1 (Monday) mentor text-** *Martin's Big Words* (2001) by Doreen Rappaport. (Appendix G)

Learning activities: The teacher will read the story, *Martin's Big Words* (2001). Students will be seated on the carpet or within a close proximity of the teacher and each other to allow for "think, pair, share" moments between them. First and foremost, before reading

the text, the teacher addresses the fact that the mentor texts are now making a jump of hundreds of years. It is necessary for the teacher to point out that even though slavery was ended, there were *still hundreds of years of oppression* experienced by Black people, leading into the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. Before the reading the teacher asks the students to be thinking about ways Martin was an advocate for what he believed in and for change. Teacher's stopping point for student understanding #1 "Why do you feel Martin thought it was necessary to use words, instead of violence?" (independently). Teacher's stopping point for student understanding #2 "Did Martin know of the dangers he was facing when he was marching and protesting? Did it affect his decision to continue his march for equality? Why or why not?" (think-pair-share or small groups on carpet share out). After the reading and discussions are finished students go back to their seats to access Google Classroom for their writing and comprehension prompt for the day. They may choose to type directly into the document or write in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). The prompt is as follows, "Compare Martin's Big Words and Pink and Say. How are Martin Luther King Jr. and Pink the same? What are some traits they both have in common? (Think about how they both had an intense passion to fight for what they believed in) How did this book make you feel? Cite evidence from the text. 7-9 sentences". After the students are finished, they will begin their 60-minute components of The Daily 5 (Boushey & Moser, 2016). The teacher then pulls groups back one at a time for 15-minute intervals to have them share their responses with their group. This gives the chance for rich discussion among students as well as an opportunity for the

teacher to gauge where the students are at in terms of comprehension and writing skills over this topic.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday)**- Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *Martin’s Big Words* (2001). They are seated in a similar situation as day one close enough to their peers for d. After answers discussion shared and the story is finished students go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix H) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students again rotate around in 15-minute components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016), coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences they came up with on their own for each word. In addition to the vocabulary activity students also pick two of the words to draw a small illustration for in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006), sharing these with their group mates when they are finished.
- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- The students complete a second comprehension and writing prompt over *Martin’s Big Words* (2001). The prompt is in their Google Classroom, but students will have the opportunity to use their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006) if they wish to write it out by hand. The prompt reads as follows, “Martin’s biggest push for fairness always came back to his quote, “Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.” He also believed in getting their goals accomplished by practicing peace. Why do you think being peaceful when there was so much anger and danger was important? 6-8 sentence minimum). Students will then take their turns in groups meeting with the teacher to discuss answers and collaborate with other class members in their group.
- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are grouped based on what they need additional help with; reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-

reading the story in a small group if students were absent. The teacher rotates through these groups and assists students with concerns that need to be addressed. All students have something to work on during this time, as they can all work on fine tuning these skills!

- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- Students start by voluntarily sharing around the room their writing pieces from lesson 3. This has to do with why it was so important for Martin to hold peacefulness above violence, and how it was a big part of his movement. After this large group discussion is done, the teacher takes out the anchor chart, Appendix D, and asks the students to fill in the three columns. After having gone over how Martin achieved protesting and marching through acts of peace it is goal of the lesson that the students are able to list these as his triumphs and accomplishments while fighting things such as racism and police brutality as obstacles they faced when marching.

Week 4 Lessons *Testing the Ice* (2009)

Standards addressed (See Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

- **Lesson 1 (Monday) text-** *Testing the Ice* (2009) by Sharon Robinson (Appendix I)
- Learning activities: The teacher will read the story *Testing the Ice* (2009). Students are seated on the carpet or within a close proximity of the teacher and each other to allow for “think, pair, share” moments between them. The teacher takes a moment before the reading to address the timeline of racial injustices with the students. The teacher needs to

mention this book is happening during the Civil Rights Movement and that sports were another area where people of color and white people were not treated equally. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. Teacher's stopping point for student understanding #1, "Why do you think Jackie wanted to be away from everyone and the public eye when they moved to their new house in the country?" (independent answers). Teacher's stopping point for student understanding #2, "Why do you think Jackie decided that he would take the job playing for the Dodgers if he knew people would be awful to him?" (think-pair-share or small group sharing out). After the readings are over, students head back to their seats for their first writing and comprehension prompt for the week. This will be in Google Classroom with the students having the option to write theirs in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006) or complete and submit the document in Google Classroom. The prompt reads as follows, "What are some things that made Jackie Robinson brave in this story? How is he like other people we have read about so far in the Civil Rights movement? How is he different? Please cite evidence from the reading to support your answer. 6-8 sentences". Students then rotate through their *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) components and meet with the teacher when it is their turn. Like the other lessons they need to work on this prompt during Work on Writing and visit with the teacher in their small group when it is their turn. They share their answers with the group while engaging in collaborative discussions with their peers that hopefully lead to rich conversations which helps the teacher understand the student's grasping or comprehending of the material.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday)**- Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *Testing the Ice* (2009). They are seated in a similar situation as day one close enough to their peers for interaction. After answers are shared and the story is finished students go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix J) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students will again rotate around in 15-minute components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences they came up with on their own for each word. In addition to their regular vocabulary each of the 6 groups of 4 students in the class are assigned one vocabulary word that they must “act out” in a game of vocabulary charades. Students work on this when they get finished with their other components with the group that they are with. The skit is only approximately 30 seconds long. Then when the teacher has finished meeting with the student, they perform the skits for the class with the remaining students who are NOT performing in front of the class, guessing which vocabulary word is being acted out.
- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- The students complete a second comprehension and writing prompt over *Testing the Ice* (2009). The prompt reads, “At the end of the story, Jackie’s daughter, the author, relates Jackie’s triumphs and struggles in baseball to him going out onto their icy pond, knowing he couldn’t swim. How were Jackie’s struggles in baseball similar to him taking a risk and going out onto the ice to test it for his kids? 5-7 sentence minimum.” Students then take their turns in groups meeting with the teacher to discuss answers and collaborate with other class members in their group.
- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are be grouped based on what they need additional help with: reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-

reading the story in a small group if students were absent. The teacher rotates through these groups and assist students with concerns that need to be addressed. All students will have something to work on during this time as they can all work on fine tuning these skills!

- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- Students start by voluntarily sharing around the room their writing pieces from lesson 3. This has to do with how the author of the story, Jackie Robinson's daughter, related Jackie's experience with breaking the color barrier in baseball to having to muster the courage to walk out on a frozen lake to test it for his children when he knew he couldn't swim. After this large group discussion is done the teacher takes out the anchor chart, Appendix D, and asks the students to again fill in the three columns. After these discussions are finished it is easier for the students to recognize that Jackie's challenges were breaking the color barrier in baseball while having to maintain his composure while insults and threats were hurled at him daily so that other players of color could follow in his footsteps. They would also recognize that his triumphs would be achieving what he set out to do and leading a successful career beyond baseball as well.

Week 5 Lessons A *Sweet Smell of Roses* (2007)

Standards addressed (See Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

- **Lesson 1 mentor (Monday) text-** *A Sweet Smell of Roses* (2007) by Angela Johnson (Appendix K)

- Learning activities: The teacher reads the story, *A Sweet Smell of Roses* (2007). Students are seated on the carpet or within a close proximity of the teacher and each other to allow for “think, pair, share” moments between them. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. Before the reading the teacher asks the students to be paying close attention to the artwork of this book as it is spectacular and ties together what the author is trying to say in a very dignified way. Teacher’s stopping point for student understanding #1 “Imagine you were the age you are now, and you walked by someone who is also your age, but of a different race, and that child yelled, ‘You, are NOT right, equality CAN’T be yours!’ like the young child did to the girls marching here. How would you react to this?” (independently). Teacher’s stopping point for student understanding #2 “Why was the girls’ mama so worried when they returned home from the march? Look at the illustrations to decide how you think she feels now that the girls are home.” (think-pair-share or small groups on carpet share out). After the reading and discussions are finished students go back to their seats to access Google Classroom for their writing and comprehension prompt for the day. They may choose to type directly into the document or write in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). The prompt is as follows, “The children in this story, as well as the story we read last week, are around your age. If you were in their shoes, do you think you would have marched with Dr. Martin Luther King even though it was dangerous? Why or why not? What would YOUR parents or grandparents or relatives say if you were going to go off and march with Dr. Martin Luther King? Please cite evidence from the text in your answer. 5-8 sentence minimum.” Students then rotate through their *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) groups and meet with the teacher when it is their turn. Like the other

lessons, they work on this prompt during Work on Writing and visit with the teacher in their small group when it is their turn. Students share their answers with the group while engaging in collaborative discussions with their peers that hopefully lead to rich conversations which helps the teacher understand the students grasping or comprehending of the material.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday)**- Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *A Sweet Smell of Roses* (2007). They are seated in a similar situation as day one close enough to their peers for interaction. Students are asked if anyone would like to ask a question of the class regarding the story. After answers are shared and the story is finished, students go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix L) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students again rotate around in 15-minute components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences they came up with on their own for each word. In addition to their regular vocabulary assignment, students are coming up with short stories (as a group) incorporating their vocabulary words. Each group has one “recorder” and the rest of the students will be contributing ideas. These stories are short as in a paragraph or two long using their vocabulary words from this week’s lesson. They hold onto them to share at a later day this week.
- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- The students complete a second comprehension and writing prompt over *A Sweet Smell of Roses* (2007). The prompt reads, “Make a text to text connection and compare and contrast the girl in the story to the other characters we have read about in this unit. Pink and Say, Henry, Jackie Robinson, Martin Luther King Jr. What are some ways they are alike? What are some ways they are different? Please

include evidence from the stories in your writing. 6-9 sentences minimum” Students then take their turns in groups meeting with the teacher to discuss answers and collaborate with other class members in their group.

- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are grouped based on what they need additional help with: reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-reading the story in a small group if students were absent. The teacher rotates through these groups and assist students with concerns that need to be addressed. All students will have something to work on during this time as they can all work on fine tuning these skills! The teacher finds a 10-minute slot during this 90-minute block for the students to share their stories they wrote for lesson 2 of this week with the class as well.
- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- Students start by voluntarily sharing around the room their writing pieces from lesson 3. This is regarding the prompt asking how the girls in the story differed or compared to the other characters in the stories that had been read so far. The teacher should lead the students to the fact that they are children and that can be both one of their struggles and their triumphs, relating to both Henry AND Pink and Say who started their fight for social justice when they were children. The girls’ triumphs would be that they had marched without hesitation that something could happen to them. After this large group discussion is done, the teacher takes out the anchor chart, Appendix D, and asks the students to again fill in the three columns. The students should be able to do this with some guidance given the discussion previously in the reading block.

Week 6 Lessons *Let the Children March* (2019)

Standards addressed (See Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

- **Lesson 1 mentor (Monday) text-** *Let the Children March* (2019) by Monica Clark-Robinson (Appendix M)

Learning activities: The teacher reads the story, *Let the Children March* (2019). Students are seated on the carpet or in close proximity of the teacher and each other to allow for “think, pair, share” moments between them. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. Before the reading the teacher asks the students to be thinking about ways the children in the book might be similar to themselves and to also be looking at the illustration to see how much more of a story they tell than just the words themselves. Teacher’s stopping point for student understanding #1 “Why do you think the children’s parents agreed to let them march with Dr. King?” (independently). Teacher’s stopping point for student understanding #2 “When the policemen arrested the children and put them in jail, they continued to sing their peaceful songs of protest. Why was this important for them to do? Do you think people would be able to sing peaceful songs of protest if they were jailed during present day for the same thing?” (think-pair-share or small groups on carpet share out). After the reading and discussions are finished students go back to their seats to access Google Classroom for their writing and comprehension prompt for the day. They may choose to type directly into the document or write in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). The prompt is as follows, “In the story, the two children march with Dr. King and even get thrown in jail. Why were they willing to risk their safety and march with Dr. King? Why is it so

important for young people to take a stand and fight for what they believe in? Do you think anyone of any age can impact change? Why or why not? (5-8 sentences)”. Students then rotate through their *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) groups and meet with the teacher when it is their turn. Like the other lessons they will work on this prompt during Work on Writing and visit with the teacher in their small group when it is their turn. Students share their answers with the group while engaging in collaborative discussions with their peers that hopefully lead to rich conversations which help the teacher understand the student’s grasping or comprehending of the material.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday)**- Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *Let the Children March* (2019). They are seated in a similar situation as day one, close enough to their peers for interaction. After answers are shared and the story is finished, students go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix N) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students again rotate around in 15-minute components of *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences they came up with on their own for each word. In addition to their regular vocabulary assignment students are illustrating at least two of their vocabulary words. If the student chooses to do their vocabulary assignment in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006) they can illustrate using whichever media they choose, however, if they wish to do this exercise on their Google Classroom they may add pictures they feel depict the vocabulary word.
- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- The students complete a second comprehension and writing prompt over *Let the Children March* (2019). This can be found in Appendix O. Although it does have a prompt it is accompanied by two illustrations from the book for the

students to analyze while answering the prompt. The prompt reads, “How does the picture make you FEEL, what emotions does it bring out in you? Why do you think the picture makes you feel this way? Why did the author include such vivid pictures from the illustrator to help tell their story? Are the pictures an important part of the story, why or why not? (5-8 sentences).” Students then take their turns in groups meeting with the teacher to discuss answers and collaborate with other class members in their group.

- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are grouped based on what they need additional help with, reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-reading the story in a small group if students were absent. The teacher rotates through these groups and assist students with concerns that need to be addressed. All students have something to work on during this time as they can all work on fine tuning these skills!
- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- Students start by voluntarily sharing around the room their writing pieces from Lesson 3. This is regarding the pictures from the book and how the students felt the pictures added to what they were feeling reading the story. It also asks why the incredibly vivid pictures are included in the story and asks the students how all of this together makes them feel. The teacher leads the students to the fact that they are around their age and the students should imagine themselves in those situations to be able to empathize with the children in the story. After this large group discussion is done the teacher takes out the anchor chart, Appendix D, and asks the students to again fill in the three columns. The students should be able to do this with some guidance given the discussion previously in the reading block.

Week 7 Lessons *Counting on Katherine* (2019)

Standards addressed (See Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

- **Lesson 1 Mentor (Monday) text-** *Counting on Katherine* (2019) by Helaine Becker (Appendix P)

Learning activities: The teacher reads the story *Counting on Katherine* (2019). Students are seated on the carpet or in close proximity of the teacher and each other to allow for “think, pair, share” moments between them. The teacher stops periodically to ask questions of the students regarding the reading. Before the reading the teacher prefaces the story by telling the students the book in the beginning takes place during the segregation period in American history like so many of the other books in this unit. The teacher also draws attention to the fact that not only does Katherine have barriers when it comes to the color of her skin but also barriers because of being a woman. Teacher’s stopping point for student understanding #1 “Imagine you were the age you are now and you walked by someone who is also your age but of a different race, and that child yelled, ‘You, are NOT right, equality CAN’T be yours!’ like the young child did to the girls marching here. How would you react to this?” (independently). Teacher’s stopping point for student understanding #2 “Why do you think the men had such a problem doing the work of the ‘computers’ or doing the math problems?” (think-pair-share or small groups on carpet share out). After the reading and discussions are finished, students go back to their seats to access Google Classroom for their writing and comprehension prompt for

the day. They may choose to type directly into the document or write in their Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). The prompt is as follows, “How do you think Katherine felt being a female who wanted to do the work males didn’t want to do? Why was Katherine’s work so important? (Think outside of just the space shuttles she was able to get safely into space, why was her work as a female so important?) 5-7 sentences”. Students will then rotate through their *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) groups and meet with the teacher when it is their turn. Like the other lessons, students are working on this prompt during Work on Writing and visit with the teacher in their small group when it is their turn. They share their answers with the group while engaging in collaborative discussions with their peers that hopefully lead to rich conversations which will help the teacher understand the student’s grasping or comprehending of the material.

- **Lesson 2 (Tuesday)-** Students participate in a re-reading of the text, *Counting on Katherine* (2019). They are seated in a similar situation as day one close enough to their peers for discussion. After answers are shared and the story is finished students will go back to their seats and complete the vocabulary activity for the day (see Appendix P) in their Google Classroom and Thoughtful Log (Dorn & Soffos, 2006). Students again rotate around in 15-minute components for *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) coming to the teacher when it is their turn to go over vocabulary and the sentences they came up with on their own for each word. In addition to their regular vocabulary assignment students choose in their own table groups which additional vocabulary activity they would like to do. They can choose from vocabulary charades, short stories involving vocabulary words, or illustrations depicting vocabulary words. The teacher

finds ten minutes out of the 90-minute block for students to share with their peers what they came up with.

- **Lesson 3 (Wednesday)**- The students complete a second comprehension and writing prompt for *Counting on Katherine* (2019.) The prompt will read as follows, “What were some of the obstacles that Katherine faced on her way to becoming a mathematician at NASA? (there were quite a few!) What are some personality traits Katherine had to possess in order to achieve her dreams even though there were obstacles? 5-7 sentences”. Students then take their turns in groups meeting with the teacher to discuss answers and collaborate with other class members in their group.
- **Lesson 4 (Thursday)**- Reteach day for students. Students are grouped based on what they need additional help with: reading comprehension, writing skills, or possibly re-reading the story in a small group if students were absent. The teacher rotates through these groups and assist students with concerns that need to be addressed. All students have something to work on during this time, as they can all work on fine tuning these skills!
- **Lesson 5 (Friday)**- Students start by voluntarily sharing around the room their writing pieces from lesson 3. This is regarding what kind of obstacles and how many Katherine came up against in her lifetime. What were some of the personality traits she possessed to be able to achieve her dreams? What was her result of working so hard? After this large group discussion is done, the teacher then takes out the anchor chart, Appendix D and asks the students to again fill in the three columns. The students should be able to do this with some guidance given the discussion previously in the reading block.

Weeks 8-9 Lesson

Standards addressed (See Appendix A): RI. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

RL. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

RL. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

SL. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

W. 5.6 Uses technology to produce writing, collaborate with others, and can type two pages in a sitting

Learning activities; Students are given two weeks to write a 9 paragraph paper in which they tell their audience about the texts they have read in this unit and inform their audience of our country's history of social injustice through what they've learned in the mentor texts. One of the standards for this quarter is the students being able to type 2 pages in one sitting which they are working towards at the very least with this project. Although the students may be used to typing in one sitting about something creative or something they enjoy they have not yet had the opportunity to do so about something such as integrating information. Some students may be done in a day or two while others may need the whole two weeks. The teacher follows a rubric to grade these papers (Appendix R) which have specific guidelines for the students to follow. Due to this being the first paper the students will have written the rubric is quite simple. This can be changed by the teacher in order to fit differing needs of the students. The papers will consist of one introductory paragraph, seven paragraphs each pertaining to one of the seven mentor texts that were read this unit, and one conclusion paragraph. This is the first lengthy paper the Iowa standards have required so teachers need to be aware that it will take more fine tuning which is why two weeks have been built into this unit for this

piece. Instead of four, 15 minute sessions of meeting with students like in other lessons of the unit the teacher is instead meeting with two groups of students for 30 minutes each twice a week and then meeting with students individually to conference with them on the other days during the week.

Discussion

This unit came about because my students had expressed to me that they were tired of not seeing themselves in the stories they were being read in school. They were confused as to why we were not learning about different cultures in history. Most importantly I was genuinely concerned with them coming to me and being unfamiliar with the term “segregation” or knowing anything about social injustice by the time they reach 5th grade.

Throughout the development of this unit I have learned many valuable things such as the importance of teachers refraining from giving their own opinion on a text before the students are able to form their own opinions (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp 2012), that mentor texts should show students their future possibilities as writers and authors and citizens in a democracy (Dorfman & Capelli, 2017), and just how incredibly important building a culturally relevant classroom library and environment is for all students regardless of race or heritage (Wanless & Crawford, 2016).

I am growing and learning as an educator and constantly wanting to develop a culture in my classroom that makes all my students feel comfortable, welcomed, included, and cherished. This unit was an answer to my students’ desire to see themselves and feel heard, but I understand it is only a small (but mighty) step of something I can do in my teaching.

Providing students the opportunity to see themselves in literature offers a springboard for teachable moments and conversations where the teacher can focus on their own color awareness, and how to act from a social injustice mindset or perspective with all children in the classroom

(Wanless & Crawford, 2016). Wanless & Crawford suggest that while this is particularly important, it is important for the teacher to remember that no book can fully represent a group or complex issue. It is the teacher's job and responsibility to acknowledge this and prepare the students with this information when presenting texts that are representative of differing cultures, religions, or sexual orientations (Wanless & Crawford, 2016).

Recommendations for Implementation

This unit was created for my diverse classroom. My students represent many different races and cultures with many of my students being African American. My students are all proud of their cultures and backgrounds and who they are; they speak about their lives freely. Their white counterparts are especially interested in their differing cultures and are always willing to learn and support their friends of color in any way.

If implementing this unit with a classroom that is predominantly white, I would suggest laying groundwork from the beginning of the school year that the teacher is going to teach about multiple cultures. It is necessary that these students see this unit as an important piece of history and fight for social injustice and not just "another unit" that is being taught, this is again an important job of the teacher to instill values that reflect respect to others that do not look like the students in the room (Wanless & Crawford 2016).

If this unit is being taught in a classroom setting where many differing cultures and backgrounds are represented, it is important that the teacher lets the student have some choices in the material. This is part of building a culturally relevant and responsive classroom and is necessary for a welcoming environment where everyone feels they can learn (Wanless & Crawford 2016). Switching the texts in this unit out frequently and swapping with new material

based on the same ideology allows for the work and unit to stay current with social events especially in the present state of our nation and its people.

I felt teaching this unit was a great way to instill social injustices knowledge while homing in on skills the students desperately need to learn such as comprehension and writing skills being of the most important. This unit tied in well with the Iowa Core standards, as well as those that my own district selected to be taught.

If a teacher does not employ *The Daily 5* (Boushey & Moser, 2016) in her classroom this unit and lessons could be modified and used in addition to the classroom routines, curriculum, or during a language block that is smaller and lends itself to the teaching of comprehension and writing by implementing mentor texts.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Iowa Core Reading Standards for 5th Grade Literacy, Speaking/Listening, and Writing

Reading Standards for Literature

R.L. 5.6 Describes how a point of view influences how events are described.

R.L. 5.9 Compare and contrasts stories in the same genre.

Reading Standards for Informational Literature

R.I. 5.6 Analyzes accounts of the same event or topic.

Writing Standards

W. 5.4 Produces writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

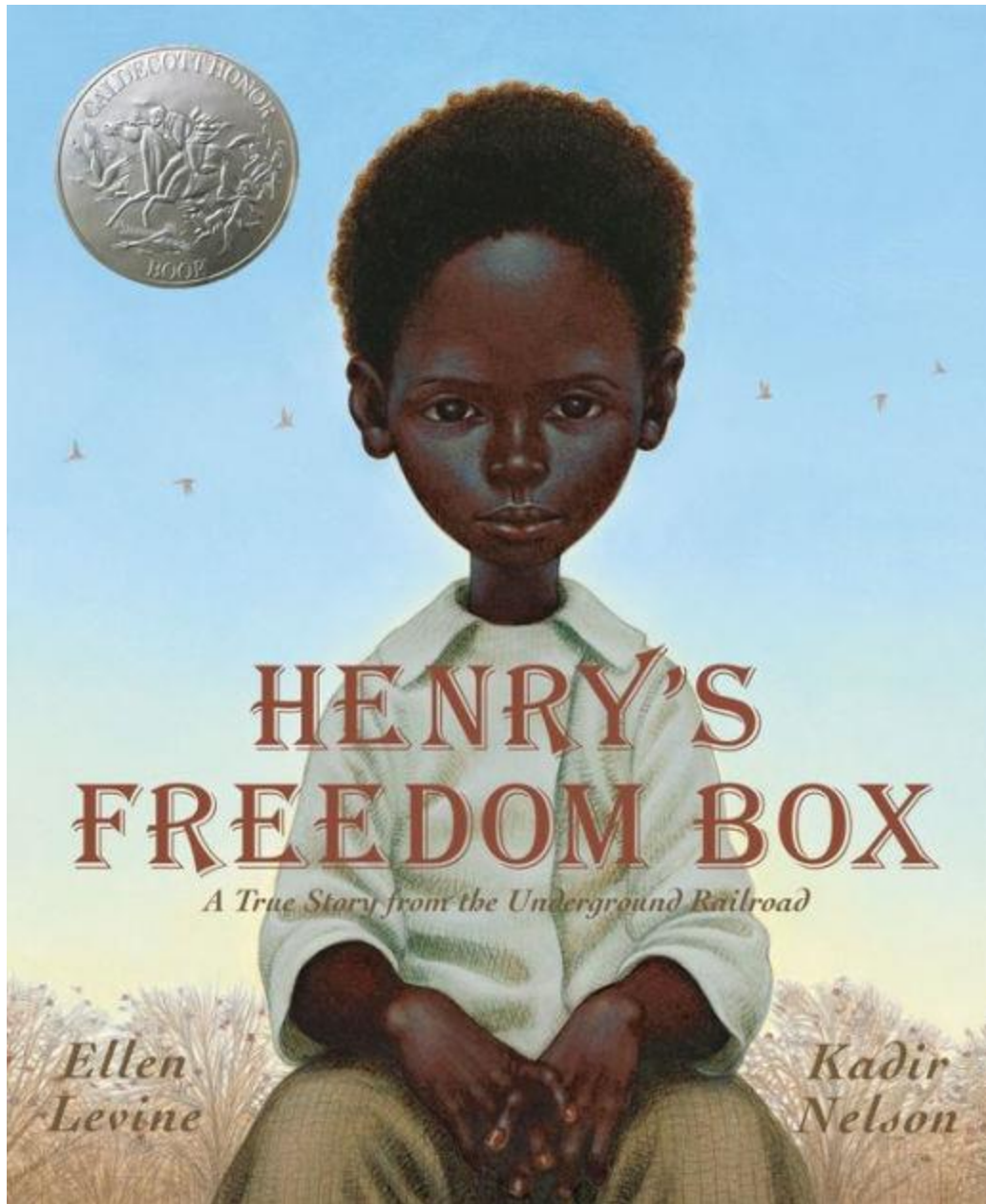
W. 5.6 Uses technology to produce writing, collaborate with others, and can type two pages in one sitting.

Speaking and Listening Standards

S.L. 5.1 Engages effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

Appendix B

Henry's Freedom Box (2007) Image



Appendix C

Henry's Freedom Box (2007) Vocabulary Activity

Please remember to have your own sentence written as well as a definition for these words. For your reference I have included the work in a sentence from the book.

Beckoned-

“He beckoned them to come over.”

Obey-

“You must obey him and never tell a lie.”

Swirl-

“The leaves swirled in the wind.”

Warehouse-

“They met early the next day at an empty warehouse.”

Pried (Pry)-

“The top was pried off.”

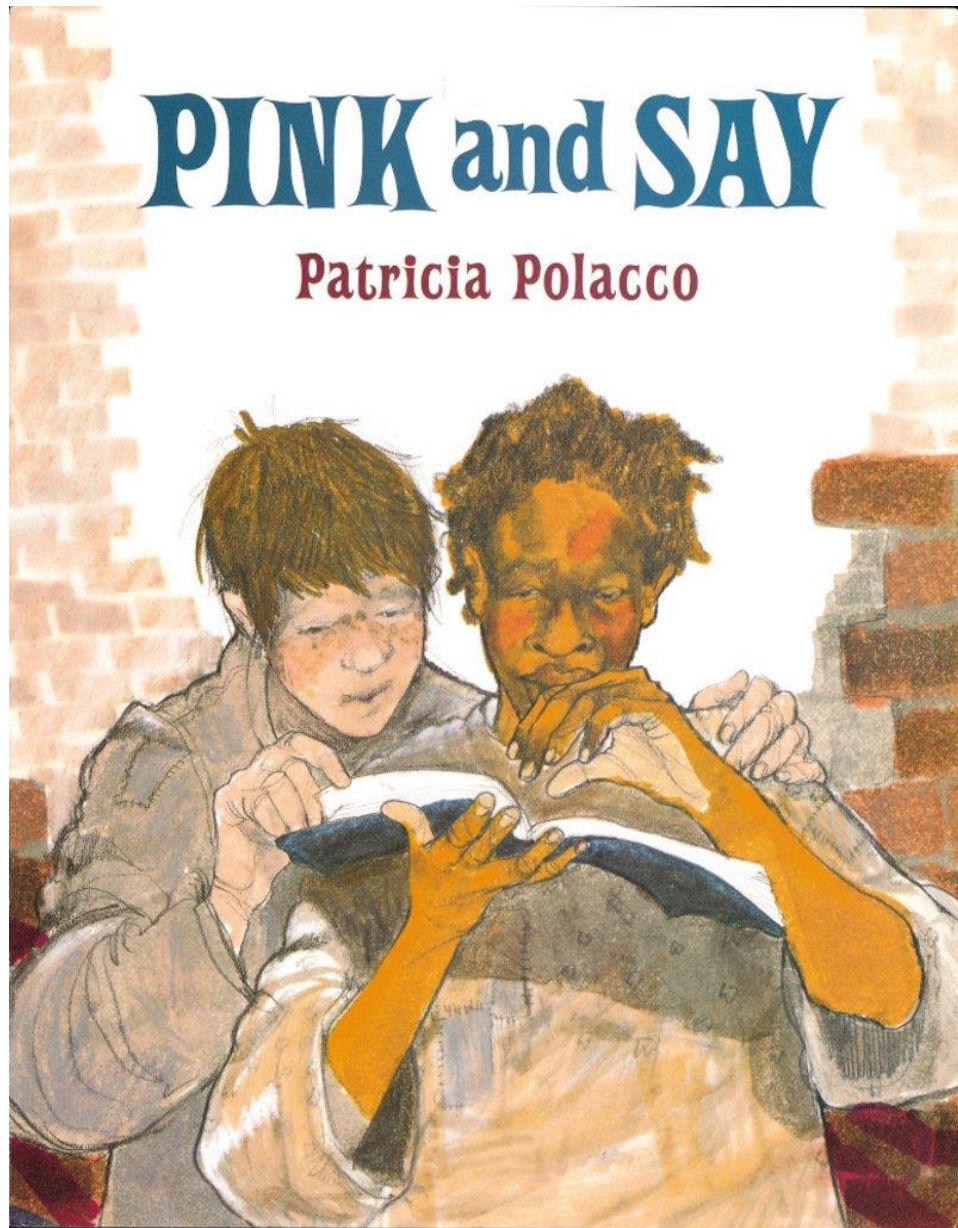
Appendix D

Anchor Chart (Print Version)

Book Title/Characters	Obstacles to overcome	Triumphs/Successes
Henry's Freedom Box (Henry)		
Pink and Say (Pink, Say, MoeMoe Bay)		
Testing the Ice (Jackie Robinson)		
Martin's Big Words (Martin Luther King Jr.)		
A Sweet Smell of Roses (children)		
Let the Children March (children)		
Counting on Katherine (Katherine Johnson)		

Appendix E

Pink and Say (1994) Image



Appendix F

Pink and Say (1994) Vocabulary Activity

Please remember to have your own sentence written as well as a definition for these words. For your reference I have included the work in a sentence from the book.

Misfired-

“Those muskets jammed and misfired!”

Marauder-

“If you hear marauders comin’ get for the root-cellar door...”

Lodged-

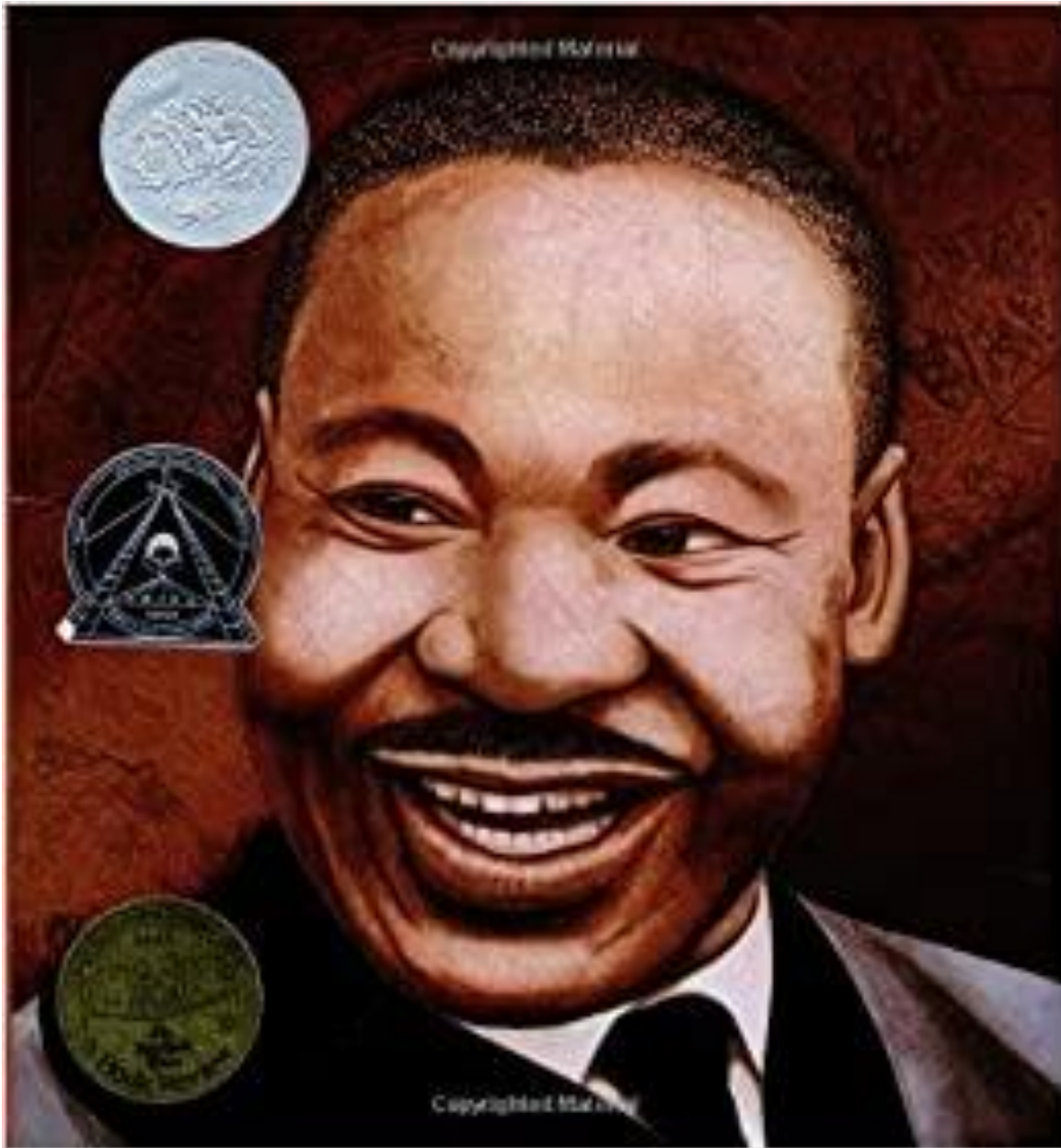
“My leg burned and was angry from the lead ball that was lodged in it just above my knee.”

Ransacked-

“There was a terrible commotion as they ransacked, lookin’ for food.”

Appendix G

Martin’s Big Words (2001) Image



Appendix H

Martin's Big Words (2001) Vocabulary Activity

Define the words using a dictionary on your computer. You also need to come up with a sentence for each word. Turn in when you are finished!

1. Hymn:

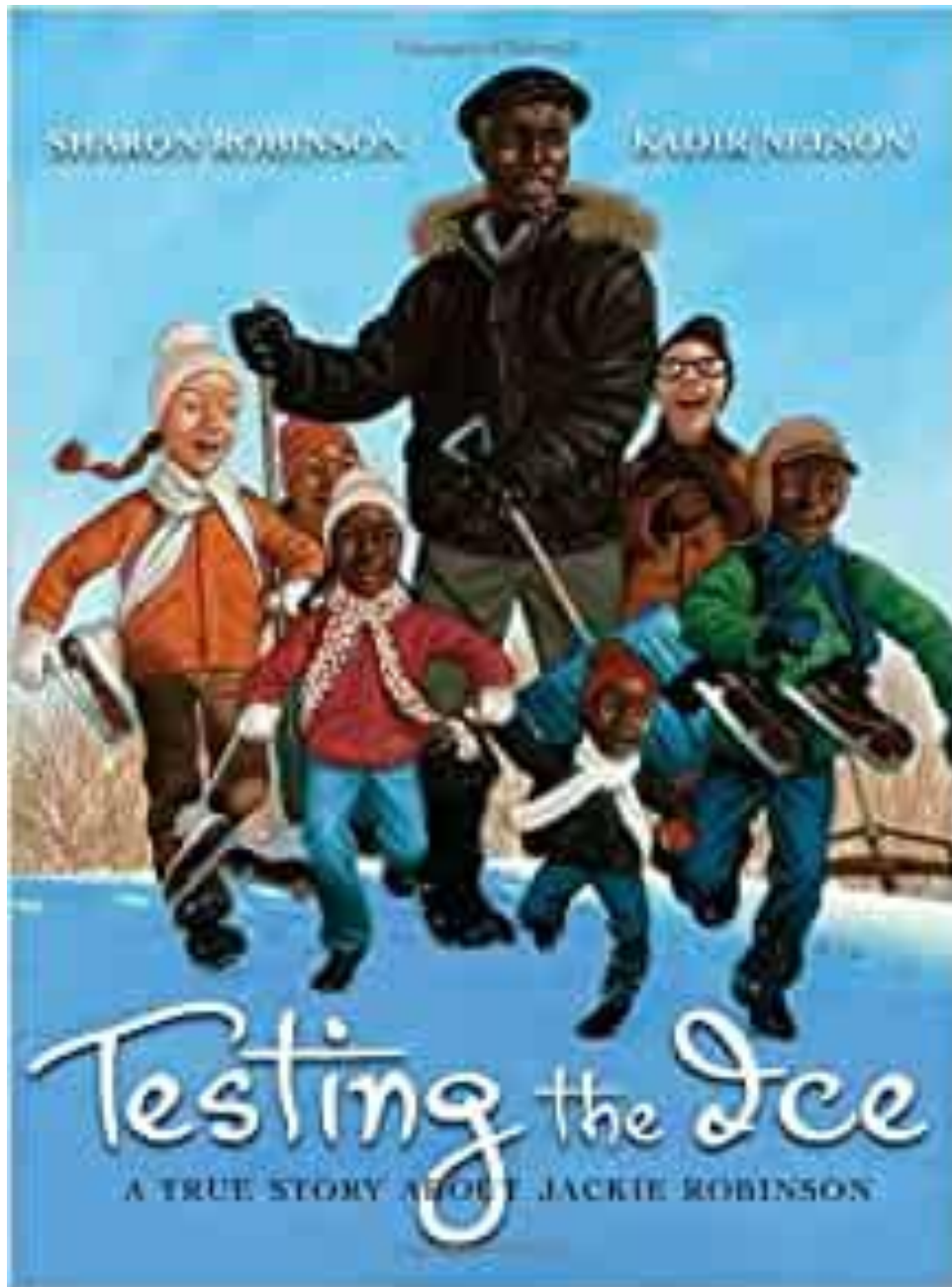
2.) protest:

3.) segregation:

4.) creed:

Appendix I

Testing the Ice (2009) Image



Appendix J

Testing the Ice (2009) Vocabulary Activity

Please remember to have your own sentence written as well as a definition for these words. For your reference I have included the work in a sentence from the book.

1. Curious-

“The best part, according to my father, was the woods on three sides of the house, which screened us from passing cars and curious strangers.”

2.) adoringly-

“They stared adoringly at his plaques, his silver bath, the signed baseballs, and Dad’s bronzed football cleat.”

3.) startled- (startle)

“The next question he asked startled me even more.”

4.) barrier-

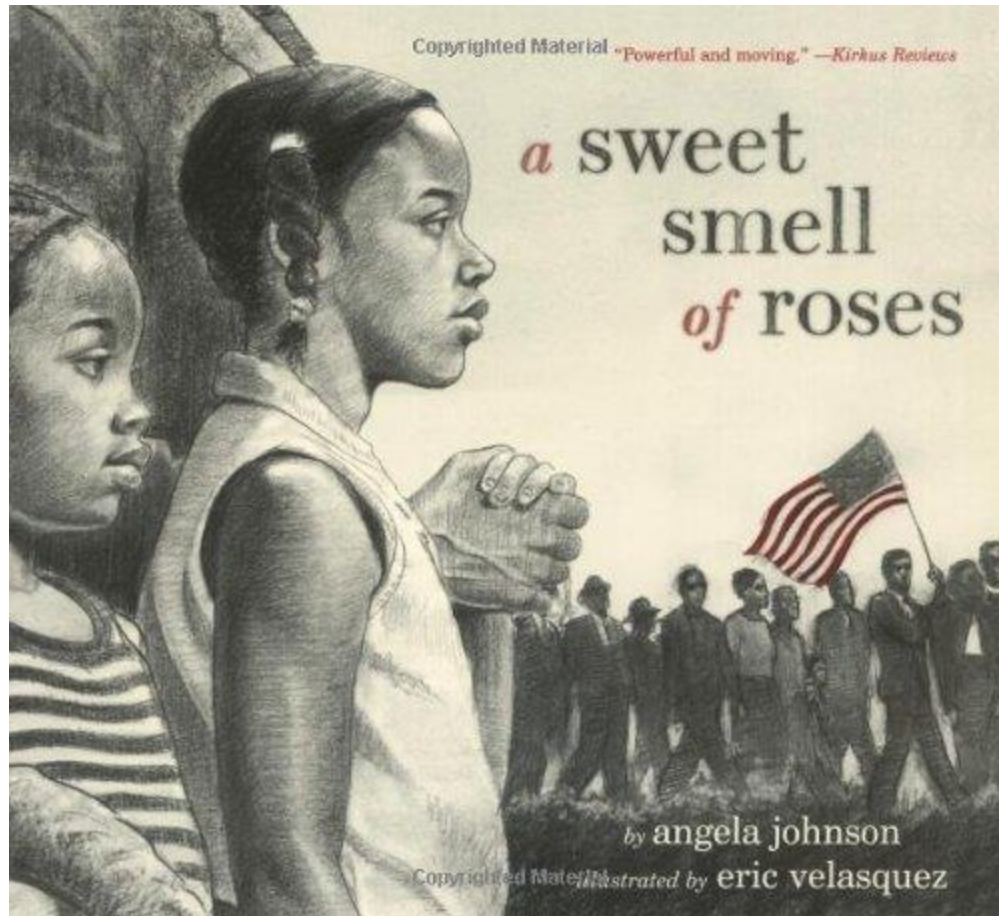
“I thought of the doors opening to other black players after me, and how the color barrier of baseball would be shattered.”

5.) reluctantly-

“When dad was dressed, he reluctantly led the way.”

Appendix K

A Sweet Smell of Roses (2007) Image



Appendix L

A Sweet Smell of Roses (2007) Vocabulary Activity

Please remember to have your own sentence written as well as a definition for these words. For your reference I have included the work in a sentence from the book.

Cobbled-

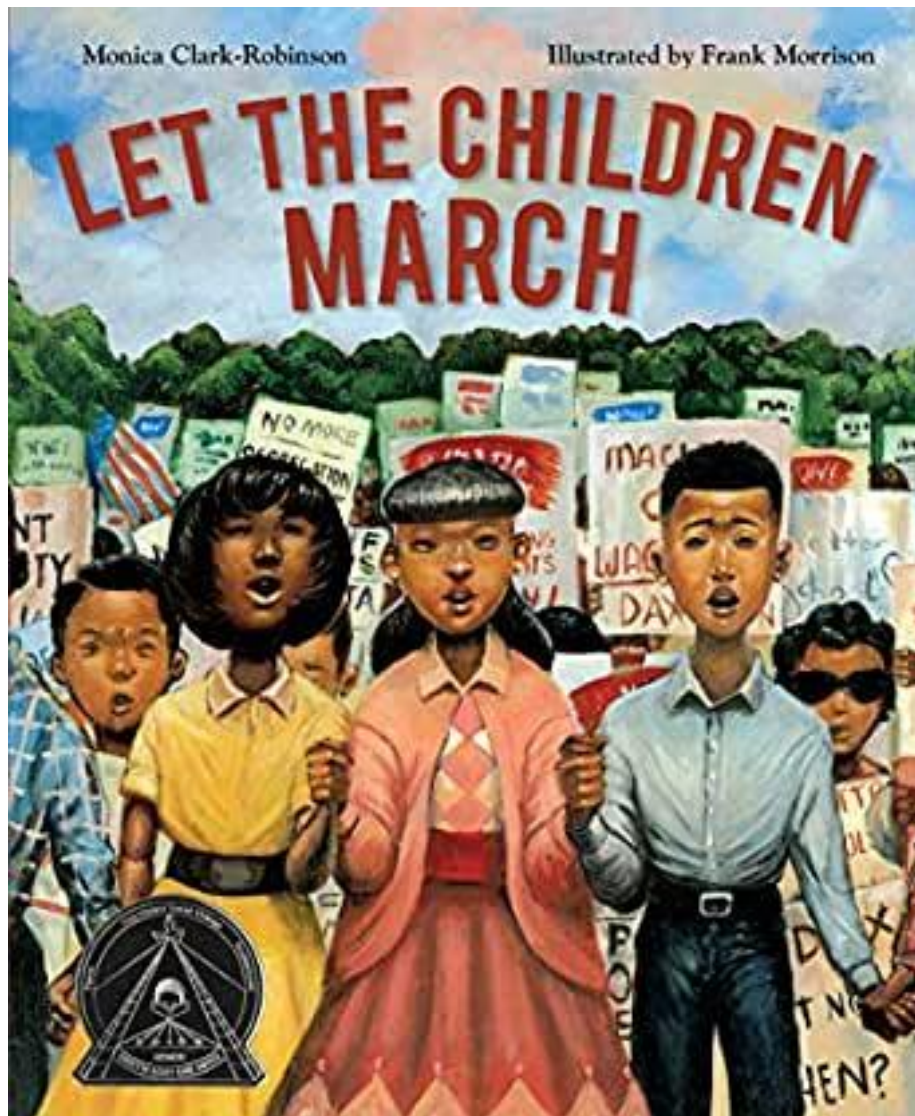
“Past the early-morning milkman, over the cobbled bridge and through the curb market...”

Equality-

“We are right, we march for equality and freedom.”

Appendix M

Let the Children March (2019) Image



Appendix N

Let the Children March (2019) Vocabulary Activity

Please remember to have your own sentence written as well as a definition for these words. For your reference I have included the work in a sentence from the book.

Protesters-

Example in book- "He wanted to raise an army of peaceful protesters to fight for freedom."

Your own example-

Burden-

Example in book- "The weight of the world rested on our parents' shoulders, but this burden, this time, did not have to be theirs to bear."

Your own example-

Disperse-

Example in book- "Disperse or you'll be jailed! The police shouted."

Your own example-

Sown

Example in book- "But we had been heard, and the seeds of revolution were sown!"

Your own example-

Appendix O

Let the Children March (2019) Book Activity



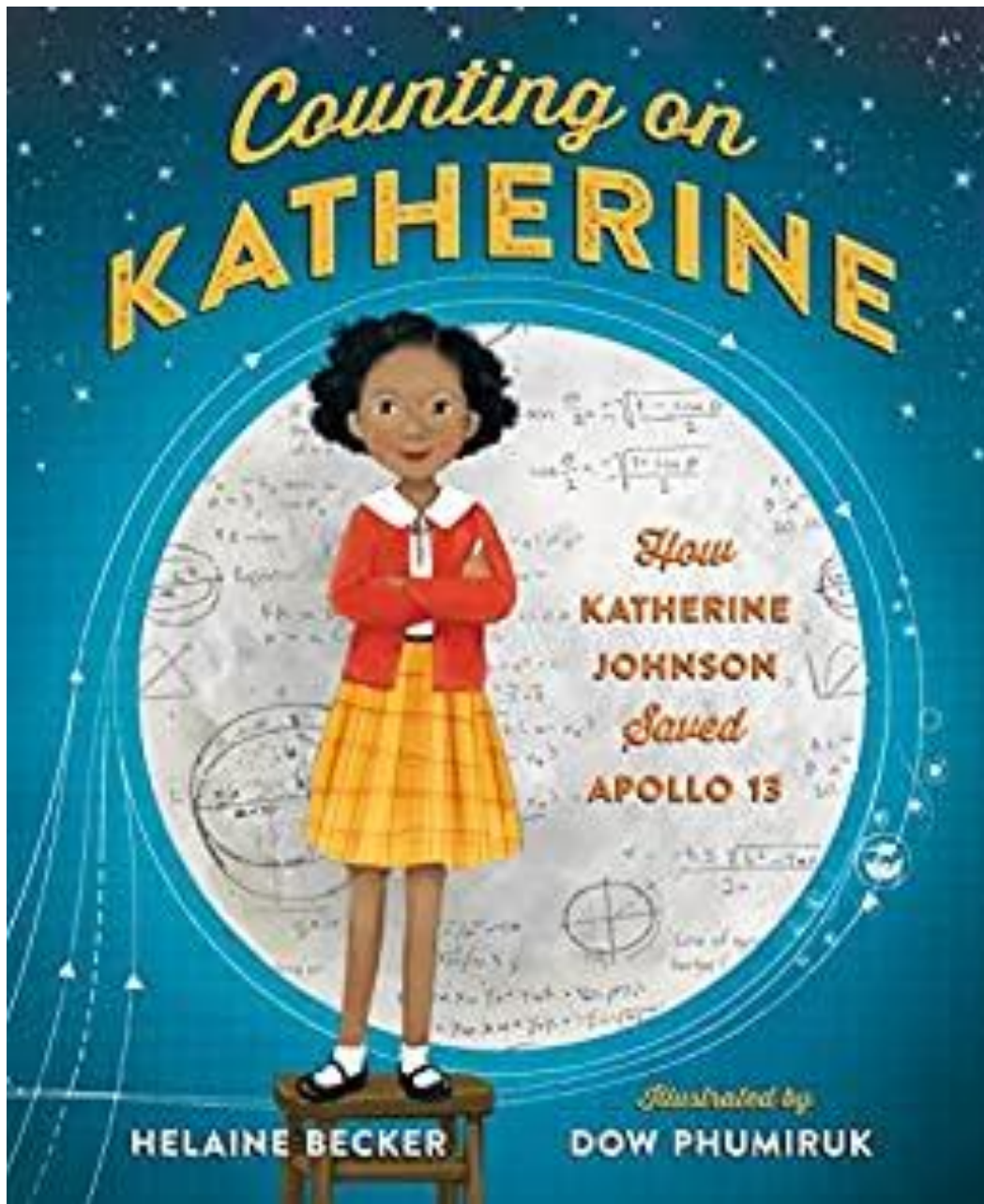
Appendix O (continued)



Pick one of the illustrations above and answer the following questions. Tell me which picture you chose.

1. How does the picture make you FEEL, what emotions does it bring out in you?
2. Why do you think the picture makes you feel this way?
3. Why did the author include such vivid pictures from the illustrator to help tell their story?
4. Are the pictures an important part of the story, why or why not? (5-8 sentences)

Counting on Katherine (2019) Image



Counting on Katherine (2019) Vocabulary Activity

Please remember to have your own sentence written as well as a definition for these words. For your reference I have included the work in a sentence from the book.

Yearned-

“Katherine yearned to know as much as she could about numbers, about the universe, about everything!”

Reputation-

“Katherine’s reputation for accuracy and strong leadership skills (she was known for asking lots of questions!) got her promoted to Project Mercury, a new program designed to send the first American astronauts into space.”

Feat-

“Their feat was celebrated around the world.”

Peril

“The three astronauts on board were in grave peril.”

Writing Rubric

	0- Little to no relevant details	1- One supportive detail per paragraph	2- Two supporting details per paragraph	3- Three or more supporting details per paragraph
Introductory Paragraph				
Henry's Freedom Box				
Pink and Say				
Martin's Big Words				
Testing the Ice				
A Sweet Smell of Roses				
Let the Children March				
Counting on Katherine				
Conclusion Paragraph				
	0- Little to no relevant details	1- One supportive detail per paragraph	2- Two supporting details per paragraph	3- Three or more supporting details per paragraph

Spelling and Grammar (0 or 3 pts. possible)				
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