
Climbing Lincoln's Steps - The African American Journey

Written by Suzanne Slade and Illustrated by Colin Bootman

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Using Climbing Lincoln's Steps- The African American Journey by Suzanne Slade and illustrated by Colin Bootman gives teachers the opportunity to implement a research based lesson plan that integrates reading and the arts into Social Studies. Elementary students are exposed to the accomplishments of Abraham Lincoln and African American men and women from the past and present. Student knowledge is enhanced through the implementation of an author introduction, individual research, and the observation of historical videos and use of a website about Civil Rights icons. Students are assessed on their knowledge of a chosen historical figure by participating in a museum theatrical presentation. A comprehension quiz on the Slade text serves as a formal assessment for this lesson. The collaboration of students, teachers, and parents makes this lesson a rewarding learning experience.

Book Title	<i>Climbing Lincoln's Steps- The African American Journey.</i> Written by Suzanne Slade (2010). Illustrated by Colin Bootman Notable Trade Book, 2011 Chicago: Albert Whitman and Company Recommended for Ages 7-11. ISBN-13: 9780807512043 Recommended for students in grades 2-5. This lesson will require 1-2 weeks of implementation.
Book Summary:	This book tells how the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial have been the setting of several important moments in African American history. Marian Anderson gave a vocal performance at the Memorial in 1939, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech in 1963, and President Barack Obama and his family made a visit to this historical site in 2009. The book also mentions and illustrates a number of other African American icons who have and continue to promote change in our society. A consistent message in the book is that change happens slowly, one small step at a time.
NCSS Standard:	II. Time, Continuity, and Change
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book: <i>Climbing Lincoln's Steps- The African American</i>

	<p><i>Journey</i> by Suzanne Slade and illustrated by Colin Bootman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A picture of Abraham Lincoln • Costumes for Museum Role Play presentation • Writing utensil • Index cards • Placemats (used for the Museum Role Play presentation) • Computers and Internet access to look up websites identified in Digital Resources below. • YouTube Videos: Marian Anderson singing at The Lincoln Memorial and Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have A Dream” speech identified in Digital Resources below. • List of Additional References • List of Influential African American Men and Women • Quiz on the Slade text - See Appendix C
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>Overarching Goal: The overarching goal of this lesson is assist students in understanding the impact African Americans have had on change in the areas of politics, science, medicine, sports, entertainment, and education.</p> <p>The students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify Abraham Lincoln and describe his role in African American history. • identify significant people in African American history. Refer to Appendix A for a list of these individuals. • apply the information from <i>Climbing Lincoln’s Steps- The African American Journey</i> about the achievements of influential African Americans and connect it to their own lives. • demonstrate knowledge of changes in the areas of politics, civil rights, human rights, music, hair care, smoke protection, traffic control, space and geographical exploration, medicine, sports, media production, and literature achieved by African Americans through the implementation of individual and collaborative activities.
<p>Procedures:</p> <p>Exploration/ Introduction:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show students a picture of Abraham Lincoln and ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does anyone recognize this individual? • What do you know about him? 2. Write a list of student responses on the board. To fill any gaps of information, provide additional information about Abraham Lincoln’s early life, his presidency, and assassination. 3. Show the book <i>Climbing Lincoln’s Steps- The African American Journey</i> by Suzanne Slade. Ask individual students to identify the title, author, and illustrator. Select random students to make

<p>Development:</p>	<p>predictions about the book based on the cover.</p> <p>4. Do a picture walk of the book prior to reading. (When teachers implement the picture walk technique, they are turning pages of the book so that students can see the illustrations prior to reading.) Have students listen to an <i>Albert Whitman and Company Podcast Series: Climbing Lincoln's Steps</i>. This podcast was posted by Melissa Ackerman on September 29, 2010. The author describes her inspiration for writing the book.</p> <p><i>Assessment.</i> Pass out two K-W-L charts and have students indicate what they know about Abraham Lincoln on one of the charts and what they know about African Americans who initiated change and on the other chart. Collect and analyze these charts in order to determine what information will be covered during the activities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the book to the students. At appropriate times while reading the book, ask: Who is Abraham Lincoln? What is Lincoln's connection to the Emancipation Proclamation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point to a picture of the Lincoln Memorial in the book and ask, Can you tell me the location of this historical landmark? • Ask, have you ever been to Washington D. C.? Have you seen the Lincoln Memorial? 2. Continue reading the book and emphasize singer Marian Anderson's performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday in 1939. Also emphasize the significance Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 delivery of the "I Have A Dream" speech in this same location. 3. During the reading, mention the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. This law made it illegal for those who work in hotels, restaurants, and other public establishments to turn away African Americans. These examples will help the students understand the theme clearly quoted by the author throughout the book: "Change. It happens slowly, one small step at a time". 4. Closure: At the end of the book, the author mentions that President Barack Obama visited the Lincoln Memorial with his family in 2009. Ask, How is the election of President Barack Obama a symbol of change? Allow students to ask questions or make comments about the book in a discussion format. <p><i>Assessment.</i> Note students' questions to determine their concept of change and record those who indicate inaccurate or very incomplete understanding of the concept.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will watch the following YouTube videos: "Marian Anderson Sings at the Lincoln Memorial" and the "I Have A Dream" speech. See Digital Resources for links. Initiate discussion about each video and establish a connection with the concept of change.
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Expansion	<p>2. Next, each student will choose a person from the list titled “Change Agents in African American History”. (Add to or make revisions to the list if necessary.) (See Appendix A.) Have students do research and participate in a role-playing activity depicting their chosen person.</p> <p>3. Research portion: When doing research on their chosen person, have students use: digital resources, the list of additional references, and other literary texts from the media center to find out the following information: early life (i.e. time and place of birth, family), formal education, professional accomplishments in his/her field of expertise, and how this individual influenced change in society. (See Appendix A.) Implementing research can help to enhance the students’ understanding of the person each will be representing. Have student record information found on index cards. Divide up the index cards and check the research information for accuracy. Assist students in writing and memorizing their speeches for the event. These activities can take place before school officially starts in the morning for those teachers and students who are able to come early, the last 45-60 minutes of the school day (with permission from school administration), or after school for those teachers and students who are able to stay. The teacher will need to receive written permission from a parent or guardian if the student comes before or after school.</p> <p>4. Museum Portion (Role Playing activity): Involve each student participate in a museum activity using the following process. Have each student stand around the perimeter of the school cafeteria or auditorium, or have them stand in a row. Each student will be dressed to represent the person researched.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Invite faculty and staff, students, and parents for your grade level to the event. If multiple teachers in your building are implementing the same project, it could become a school-wide event. b. On the day of the event, invite visitors to approach the historical figure they want to hear; step on a placemat located in front of the historical figure; and hear the student briefly share information about the person being portrayed. They can move on to other people of interest then exit the room. <p>Preparing for the Museum Event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get permission from the school principal to host the event before any other planning takes place. • Two weeks before the actual event, email and send letters home to parents or guardians explaining the research and museum project. Include a description of the activity, location,
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	<p>time, place, the person their child will be portraying, and the need for family volunteers to help children during the dress rehearsal and on the day of the event. Emphasize the importance of the activity and let family members know that their child is being graded on activities pertaining to this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two weeks before the event, communicate information about the museum event to other grade level teachers. • Distribute, or post, a schedule and have each teacher sign up for a time to bring his or her class. Tip: You might want to schedule each class in 20 minute increments. • Once students have chosen the individual they are portraying, they will conduct research and you will assist them with writing out their lines, which they will later memorize for the presentation. • One week before the presentation, email family members and volunteers to remind them about the event and the dress rehearsal. • Two to three days before the event, have a dress rehearsal. Have students recite lines in costume, work on posture, and standing. Differentiation Note: For those students who have difficulty reciting their lines due to a language barrier or learning disability, adjust the lines by simplifying the wording and decreasing the length of the speech. • One to two days before the event, have each student present the information before the entire class. Use a rubric to give a rating on a scale of 0-5 for accuracy, voice quality, and stage presence. See Appendix B. • Send a final reminder to family members and volunteers, as well as faculty and staff about the event, schedules, roles, etc. Let parents know their child should arrive at school dressed in costume. If it is uncomfortable for traveling on the school bus, allow them to dress at school. • On the day of the museum event, get students in place and it is “Lights, Camera, Action!” Once the event is over, make sure the area is clean and ready for future use. • Send thank you notes or emails to everyone who helped to make the event a success.
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Students are assessed on presenting their lines for a grade. This is the overall assessment the for presentation piece. (See Appendix B.) Students will receive a participation grade for taking part in the museum project. A day of two after the museum activity, give the</p>

	students a short quiz on material from the Slade text. See Appendix C.
Suggested Extension Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections with books that have similar themes like <i>Harriett Tubman and the Freedom Train</i> by Sharon Gayle and <i>Martin's Big Words</i> by Doreen Rappaport.2. Students can write a review of <i>Climbing Lincoln's Step-The African American Journey</i> and post it online.3. The teacher can take their students on a field trip to Washington, D.C. and visit the Lincoln Memorial and other historical sites.4. Read other books by Suzanne Slade such as <i>The House that George Built</i> and <i>The Great Divide</i>.
References:	<p>Bridges, R. (1999). <i>Through my eyes</i>. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.</p> <p>Gayle, S. (2003). <i>Harriett Tubman and the freedom train</i>. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks.</p> <p>Grimes, N. (2012). <i>Barack Obama: Son of promise, child of hope</i>. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers.</p> <p>Herman, G. (2011). <i>Who is Jackie Robinson?</i> New York, NY: Scholastic Incorporated.</p> <p>Hudson, W. (1995). <i>Five brave explorers</i>. New York, NY: Scholastic Incorporated.</p> <p>Pickney, A. (2006). <i>Duke Ellington: The piano prince and his orchestra</i>. New York, NY: Jump the Sun Hyperion Books for children.</p> <p>Rappaport, D. (2007). <i>Martin's big words</i>. New York, NY: Jump the Sun Hyperion Books for Children.</p> <p>Ringgold, F. (1999). <i>If a bus could talk: The story of Rosa Parks</i>. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks.</p> <p>Sullivan, O. R. (2002). <i>Black stars African American women scientists and inventors</i>. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.</p>

Digital Resources:	Stamp on Black History: Black History Tour Retrieved from http://library.thinkquest.org/10320/Tour.htm . “Welcome to African American History!” Retrieved from http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/ . “Boxcars, Books, and a Blog” Retrieved from http://www.albertwhitman.wordpress.com . Martin Luther King- “I Have A Dream” Speech- 1963 Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnnklfYs Marian Anderson Sings at the Lincoln Memorial Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAONYTMf2pk
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Appendix A

Change Agents in African American History

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - Civil Rights Activist
Rosa Parks - Civil Rights Activist
Harriett Tubman - Abolitionist
Duke Ellington - Jazz Musician
Garrett Morgan - Smoke Protection, Hair Care, and Traffic Control Expert
Madam C. J. Walker - Self-Made Millionaire in the Hair Care Industry
Matthew Henson - Geographical Explorer
Mae Jemison - Astronaut
President Barack Obama - Politician and Human Rights Activist
Dr. Charles Drew - Physician and Medical Researcher in the area of blood transfusions
Ruby Bridges - Civil and Human Rights Activist (Education)
Jackie Robinson - Athlete (Baseball)
Frederick Douglass - Human Rights Activist (African American Military Soldiers)
Marian Anderson -Vocalist
Arthur Ashe - Athlete (Tennis)
Oprah Winfrey -Media Producer
Toni Morrison -Novelist and Editor

Appendix B

Presentation Rubric

	Excellent (5 points)	Good (2-4 points)	Unsatisfactory (0-1 point)
Accuracy of Information during the presentation	All information about the influential African Americans is accurate, thorough, and complete.	Most of the information about Africans is accurate. Some information is omitted.	The information about influential African Americans is limited and inaccurate.
Voice Quality	The presenter speaks loud, clear and articulately with confidence.	The presenter speaks loud and clear.	The presenter speaks in a monotone voice
Stage Presence	The presenter has excellent posture and eye contact with the audience.	The presenter has good posture and eye contact with the audience.	The presenter has poor posture and eye contact with the audience.

Author's Bio

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Suzanne Slade, Colin Bootman. This empowering and emotionally driven story showcases significant moments in African American history that tie back to the Lincoln Memorial by introducing iconic civil rights activists as well as exploring President Abraham Lincoln's role in abolishing slavery. This book highlights the hardships and triumphs faced while fighting for racial equality in America. show more. Important moments in African American history have occurred at the Lincoln Memorial: Marian Anderson's concert in 1939; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech in 1963; and a visit in 2009 from the first black president and his family. This book interweaves these key events with the story of black Americans' struggle for equality. Academics & Activities. African American. The repetition of imagery and a key phrase add to the literary strength; This is an excellent chronicle of important steps made toward equality since Abraham Lincoln in a picture book format. - Library Media Connection. Awards & Accolades.