

BRYAN COLLIER: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Grades 1 and 2

**Hills Bank / ICCSD Foundation
Visiting Author/Illustrator
2018**

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The following materials were created to prepare ICCSD first and second grade students for an author/illustrator visit during Community Reading Month. Teacher librarians and classroom teachers are encouraged to use these materials to assist in building background knowledge about the author before his visit in November 2018.

This unit includes the following:

1. Biographical information about the author/illustrator.
2. Bibliography of Bryan Collier books.
3. Resources for meaningful and sensitive discussions.
4. A matrix of nine books illustrated by Bryan Collier with annotations, curricular ties, and themes.
5. A lesson for each of the nine titles with suggestions for background building, discussion questions, and activities.

BRYAN COLLIER: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Bryan Collier was born in Pocomoke City, Maryland. He is the youngest of six children. Bryan's mother was a teacher and always encouraged her kids to read and appreciate books. Mr. Collier remembers always being a very visual child. In fact, in school he used to imagine the words actually floating out of his teachers' mouths. The books that impacted him as a young boy were also very visual. Bryan Collier doesn't necessarily remember the words of the influential *The Snowy Day* and *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, but he definitely remembers the pictures.

When he was 15 years old, Bryan Collier started painting the Pocomoke City world around him. This included the water, the bay, marshland and ducks. Watercolor and his popular collage style also started around these teenage years. He often thinks of his collages like pieces of life's puzzle. He says we don't always see how our life will come together so we have to keep all of the pieces until things start to fit. His collage style was also heavily influenced by the quilts he remembers his grandmother making. She would take pieces of colorful cloth and put them together to make something beautiful and lasting.

Bryan did play sports as a teenager, but he distinctly remembers choosing art over football and basketball. In 1989 Bryan graduated with honors from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY with a bachelor of fine arts degree. While he was in school, he began volunteering with a group in Harlem that gives self-taught artists a place to work and materials to work with. He was Harlem's Horizon Studio's program director for 12 years and still volunteers with the organization because he hopes he is a positive role model. He also knows the importance of connecting oneself to your community.

Bryan Collier realized he wanted to become an illustrator of children's books in 1995 when he went into a bookstore with his kids. He was disappointed because none of the books in the children's section looked or sounded or felt like his family. He believed he could do a better job representing people and families like his.

Becoming a children's illustrator wasn't easy for Bryan Collier, though. In fact, his collage and watercolor paintings were rejected for seven years. Mr. Collier told himself he wasn't going to give up. He went to the publishing houses once a week for those years telling himself he wasn't going to quit until he got a book deal. "Sometimes I had to get up and walk away. I had to shake it off and walk away."

Now, though, we know that Bryan Collier has become a famous author and illustrator of kids' books. He has won four Caldecott honor awards, many Coretta Scott King awards, and his books have been on the NYTimes best-illustrated list.

Some of Bryan's mentors include Jerry Pinkney, EB Lewis, Ashley Bryan, Kadir Nelson, and David Wiesner. He would love to work with writer Jacqueline Woodson someday.

Mr. Collier's day starts out with exercises in the morning. His work as an artist might start around noon. Bryan takes photographs of family and friends acting out scenes for books and begins by sketching those photos. Then he starts with the watercolor painting and the collage follows. For some of his collage materials, he uses old fashioned magazines because of their patterns and their inspiration for creating mood and light. "I collect magazines for my work. I just flip through them from time to time and pick out what I like. The whole process of flipping is a way to think about how I'm going to put the pieces together."

When asked what advice he would give kids, Bryan Collier says art exposure is a must, "Art school was great, but you have to be exposed to art." He also would say, "Tell everyone you know what you want to do. Don't ever let anyone talk you out of it."

You can find more information about Bryan Collier by visiting his website at <http://www.bryancollier.com/index.php>

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BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BRYAN COLLIER BOOKS

Arranged chronologically

Illustrated by Bryan Collier:

- Price, Hope Lynne. *THESE HANDS*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1999.
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- Rappaport, Doreen. *MARTIN'S BIG WORDS: THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.* New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2001.
- Edelman, Marian Wright. *I'M YOUR CHILD, GOD: PRAYERS FOR OUR CHILDREN*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2002.
- Perdomo, Willie. *VISITING LANGSTON*. New York: H. Holt, 2002.
- Rappaport, Doreen. *JOHN'S SECRET DREAMS: THE LIFE OF JOHN LENNON*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004.
- Thomas, Joyce Carol. *WHAT'S THE HURRY, FOX?: AND OTHER ANIMAL STORIES*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.
- Giovanni, Nikki. *ROSA*. New York: Holt, 2005.
- Grimes, Nikki. *WELCOME, PRECIOUS*. New York: Orchard Books, 2006.
- Evans, Kristina. *CHERISH TODAY: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE'S MOMENTS*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2007.
- Johnson, James Weldon. *LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING*. New York: Amistad, 2007.
- Smith, Charles R. *TWELVE ROUNDS TO GLORY: THE STORY OF MUHAMMAD ALI*. Cambridge, MA : Candlewick Press, 2007.
- Giovanni, Nikki. *LINCOLN AND DOUGLASS: AN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2008.
- Grimes, Nikki. *BARACK OBAMA: SON OF PROMISE, CHILD OF HOPE*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2008.
- Schotter, Roni. *DOO-WOP, POP*. New York: Amistad, 2008.
- Hill, Laban Carrick. *DAVE THE POTTER: ARTIST, POET, SLAVE*. New York: Little, Brown, 2010.
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- MacLachlan, Patricia. *YOUR MOON, MY MOON: A GRANDMOTHER'S WORDS TO A FARAWAY CHILD*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2011.
- Asim, Jabari. *FIFTY CENTS AND A DREAM: YOUNG BOOKER T. WASHINGTON*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012.
- Hughes, Langston. *I, TOO, AM AMERICA*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2012.
- Bates, Katharine Lee. *AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL: TOGETHER WE STAND*. New York: Orchard Books, 2013.
- Beaty, Daniel. *KNOCK, KNOCK: MY DAD'S DREAM FOR ME*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013.
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Henson, Heather. ***LIFT YOUR LIGHT A LITTLE HIGHER: THE STORY OF STEPHEN BISHOP: SLAVE-EXPLORER.*** New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Murray, Diana. ***CITY SHAPES.*** New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2016.

Grimes, Nikki. ***THE WATCHER.*** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2017.

Perkins, Useni Eugene. ***HEY BLACK CHILD.*** New York: Little Brown & Company, 2017.

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Collier, Bryan. ***UPTOWN.*** New York, H. Holt, 2000.

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Evans, Dylis. ***SHOW AND TELL: EXPLORING THE FINE ART OF CHILDREN’S BOOK ILLUSTRATION.*** San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2008.

Farris, Christine King. ***MARCH ON: THE DAY MY BROTHER MARTIN CHANGED THE WORLD.*** New York: Scholastic Press, 2008.

Cook, Michelle. Illustrations by Bryan Collier et al. ***OUR CHILDREN CAN SOAR: A CELEBRATION OF ROSA, BARACK, AND THE PIONEERS OF CHANGE.*** New York: Bloomsbury, 2009.

Carle, Eric et al. ***WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE COLOR?*** New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2017.

PREPARING FOR MEANINGFUL AND SENSITIVE DISCUSSIONS

While the focus of many books in this curriculum is the accomplishments and empowerment of a number of African Americans, Bryan Collier's body of work includes offerings that address topics of slavery, civil rights, discrimination, Black Lives Matter, and other important and sensitive issues. Some background information may be needed in order for students to understand the books that are part of this curriculum.

Students may also raise questions that present a challenge to teachers to address topics with respect to the subject matter, but also with sensitivity to 6-8 year old students. **In an effort to prepare and encourage teachers to engage in age-appropriate discussions about difficult subjects, we offer the following ideas and suggestions. These are not necessarily discussions and activities that all people using the curriculum will need or use; rather they are a reference for you, the teacher, to incorporate into your class discussions as you deem valuable and appropriate.** Many of these ideas came from this website that you are encouraged to read: [Teaching Young Children About Race: A Guide for Parents and Teachers](#)

Ideas for discussing physical similarities and differences

- Always celebrate differences in appearances - all colors, shades, shapes, sizes are beautiful and make our world more interesting
- Help children have words for their own features. Hand out small mirrors and allow students to observe and describe their features. (Caution: Never label a student's features or race for them. They need to develop their own identity. Also be certain never to single out a student during these activities, as all students' identities are personal and valuable.)
 - Hair
 - Black, dark brown, light brown, blonde, red, auburn, strawberry blonde, multicolored
 - Straight, curly, wavy, smooth, frizzy
 - Eyes
 - Blue, brown, hazel, green, multicolored, dark, bright, speckled
 - Wide, narrow, close together, far apart
 - Skin
 - Light, dark, black, brown, sun-tanned, sun-burned, pale, white, flushed, olive, peachy (Open up the Crayola skin-tone crayons or markers and allow students to find the closest match to their own skin. Do they like the name on the color? What would they call that color instead?) If students struggle with the idea of different shades of skin, read *Shades of Black: A Celebration of our Children* by Sandra L. Pinkney (Scholastic, 2000).

- Dry, sweaty, wrinkled, smooth, flaky, scarred, chapped, hairy, freckled, dimpled
- Allow students to talk about which members of their family share their eye color, hair color or type, skin color or tone. Then allow them to share which family members have *different* features. Talk about how we are alike and different within our families just like we are alike and different within our world. What we look like on the outside doesn't tell what we are like on the inside.
- Allow students to expand their understanding of similar and different features by playing a game. Give each student a [game card](#) and have them find a different person to write their name in each box (I have blue eyes, you have brown, so we can sign each other's card in the box for different eye colors). Remind students before you play that we are celebrating everyone in this activity. We're not saying any type of feature is better or worse than another, we're just making observations about ourselves and our classmates.

Ideas for discussing civil rights issues and discrimination

- **If you are not sure how to respond to a student question, refer students to their parents - their number one teachers!**
- Ask students to explain what it means when people are treated fairly. What does it mean when people are *not* treated fairly? Be sure to guide students to understand that fair doesn't necessarily mean that everyone gets the exact same thing, but it does mean that everyone gets what they need and deserve. These examples might help:
 - If someone in your class has a different eye color than you do, should your that student have to sit at a different table than you in the lunchroom? Is that fair or not? Explain.
 - If someone in your class has blonde hair and you have brown hair, should you both be allowed to play on the same playground equipment? Why or why not?
 - Are there any things you can think of that every single person on earth should have in order for the world to be fair? Give examples and explain. (Food, shelter, clothes, doctors, medicine they need, education, etc. Does everyone need a car? Why or why not?)
 - What are some examples of things everyone needs that we can't buy with money. (love, respect, friendship, fun, rest, etc.). What happens when people don't have these things that they need? How would you feel if you didn't get to have fun? Didn't feel like people respected you? Didn't have friends?
 - When people are not treated fairly in our world, it causes problems. Can you think of examples of times when people have not been treated fairly or are not treated fairly today? How do you feel about these things?

- What can you do when you see that someone or a group of people is being treated unfairly? How would it feel to help them? Would it be easy or hard to help? Does it matter whether it's easy? Why or why not?
- For further discussions, read and discuss books that show people being discriminated against because of their skin color. (*These books are NOT written or illustrated by Bryan Collier, but serve the purpose of furthering understanding of challenging concepts.) More book suggestions can be found at <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/civil-rights-teaching/classroom/?hilite=%27white%27%2C%27water%27>
 - *Back of the Bus* by Aaron Reynolds (Puffin Books, 2013)
 - *Jackie's Bat* by Marybeth Lorbiecki (Simon and Schuster's Books for Young Readers, 2006)
 - *New Shoes* by Susan Lynn Meyer (Holiday House, 2015)
 - *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson (Putnam's, 2001)
 - *Separate is Never Equal : Sylvia Mendez and her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh (Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014)
 - *White Water: Inspired by a True Story* by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein (Candlewick Press, 2011)
- Black Lives Matter Movement - One of Bryan Collier's illustrations in *Hey Black Child* shows a child holding a Black Lives Matter sign. **Please consider the following as background information for you as a teacher, so you can respond to questions that students may pose.** These statements are based on an article in the journal *Teaching Tolerance* entitled "[Why Teaching Black Lives Matter Matters - Part I](#)," published in the summer of 2017.
 - Origin of the movement
 - Three African American women started the movement as a response to two separate police shootings of unarmed black teenage boys. **(1-2 grade explanation:** People started this movement because they were worried that black teenage boys weren't as safe as other teenage boys.)
 - The movement has grown in focus to include black people's accomplishments, humanity, and their ability to bounce back from oppression. **(1-2 grade explanation:** The Black Lives Matter movement has also given people a chance to celebrate great things that black people have done, especially when they have faced challenges.)

- Goals of the movement
 - End police brutality and other violence and injustices toward black people by advocating for social justice policies and legislation (**1-2 grade explanation:** People in the Black Lives Matter organization are working hard to make sure all people are being treated fairly and are kept safe by asking for laws to protect all people.)
 - Although the focus of Black Lives Matter is on black people, the group hopes to inspire people to understand that *any* oppression is wrong (LGBTQ, refugees, women, underprivileged, etc.) and *humanity* of all people needs to be emphasized. (**1-2 grade explanation:** People in the Black Lives Matter organization are trying to make it so all people, no matter what they look like or where they come from, are treated with respect.)

Ideas for discussing African American slavery in the US

- **If you are not sure how to address a question that arises in class discussions, refer students to their parents - their number one teachers!**
- Tolerance.org gives these [suggestions](#), paraphrased below, for teachers when discussing slavery with students:
 - Allow for discussions of thoughts and feelings about the topic and the materials used in lessons. Allow for multiple perspectives to be shared rather than implying that the teacher is the “expert” so students are empowered to analyze and express their thoughts, fears, perspectives, and questions.
 - Slavery is a frightening topic - picture a young child imagining what it would be like to be taken from their parent. Make sure students feel socially and emotionally safe.
 - Inform parents of sensitive topics that are addressed in your curriculum. Anti-bias education is only possible when inclusiveness and equity are a priority.
 - Topics that address cultural differences require us as educators to examine our own awareness of our own implicit biases. It is our responsibility to strive for cultural competence so we can connect and communicate with people of all cultures.
 - Reach out for support when needed. If you are unsure of how to approach a topic or you are concerned about how a conversation in your classroom unfolded, seek guidance from the district equity director, your principal, your team, or another appropriate member of your network of support.

- Connect what students learn about slavery to today’s world. Even though slavery is no longer legal in this country, there are still problems that can be linked to a history of injustices and discriminatory practices. For example, if a student says, “We don’t have slavery anymore, so what’s the problem?” you could say, “Because changes take time, we have a lot of catching up to do until all people have the same opportunities in life.” If the discussion made you feel like you needed to say more, you could say, “No matter what people look like or where they come from, people should have the same chance to go to school and buy a house as anyone else.” Here is evidence for YOU (the kids don’t need the specific statistics!) to help you be informed about this issue:
 - About 22% of white people and about 15% of black people get a 4-year college degree (see Table 3 on this [US Census Bureau](#) webpage)
 - Black people earn about ⅔ of what white people earn on average (see Table 1 on this [US Census Bureau](#) webpage)
 - Twice as many black people live in poverty in the US than white people (see Table 3 on this [US Census Bureau](#) webpage)
 - There is still a disproportionate amount of blacks who are incarcerated (see page 13 and Table 10 in this [US Department of Justice](#) report)
- Children’s literature can provide a number of perspectives on a topic. Consider using these sources to help introduce a number of aspects of slavery.
 - *Almost to Freedom* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson (Carolrhoda Books, 2003). A young girl’s father is sold, but the family is able to reconnect and make an attempt at escape through the Underground Railroad. The story is told from the perspective of the girl’s doll, who gets left behind at an Underground Railroad house, only to be found by a young girl in the next slave family to be housed there. The doll, and hence the reader, never know whether the first family made it to freedom, but the risks of escaping and the need to trust the kindness of strangers is clearly evident.
 - *Brick by Brick* by Charles R. Smith, Jr. (Scholastic Inc, 2007). The role slaves played in building the White House is described in this lyrical text. An author’s note at the end provides details of the work the slaves did and the conditions in which they worked. The book shows both the tragedy of slave owners receiving the pay for slave work and the benefit of slaves learning new crafts during construction which allowed them to earn money toward their freedom.

- *Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levine (Scholastic Press, 2007). A young slave named Henry is separated from his family. When he grows up and has his own family, they are sold away from him without warning. In his despair, he comes up with a plan to mail himself to a friend in Pennsylvania, and therefore, to freedom! Kadir Nelson's illustrations show us Henry's cramped quarters during his 27 hour and 350 mile journey to freedom.
- *Now Let me Fly: The Story of a Slave Family* by Dolores Johnson (Macmillan Books, 1993). A young girl is captured from her African tribe and sold to slavers. As an adult, she marries another slave and they have four children. The story describes her experiences, including the sale of her husband and oldest son, and the choices she makes to ensure the safety of her remaining children. There are reference to whippings, but all the hardships in the story are described appropriately for a 1-2 grade audience.
- *Poet: The Remarkable Story of George Moses Horton* by Don Tate. (Peachtree Publishers, 2015). George was enslaved but taught himself to read by being a keen observer. He wrote poems but had to memorize them since he hadn't learned to write yet. On Sundays, he walked 8 miles to the university town of Chapel Hill to sell his master's produce. There he would recite his poetry, which drew the attention of college students, who began paying him to write love poems for them to give to their sweethearts. Eventually George became a published writer. His poems protested slavery and shared his experiences and heartbreaks. He earned enough to pay his master for his time, but not enough to buy his freedom. When new laws were passed forbidding slaves to read and write, it was too dangerous for George to continue publishing. He had to return to the master's farm until the end of the Civil War, when he was finally free at age 66.

**BRYAN COLLIER: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER
CURRICULUM MATRIX**

TITLE	TOPICS/ CURRICULAR TIES	TYPE OF LITERATUR E	ANNOTATION	THEME
<i>The 5 O’Clock Band</i>	New Orleans Dedication Honoring tradition	Biography	Trombone Shorty asks locals in his New Orleans neighborhood what it takes to be a leader and he learns about being an artist, a leader and a friend.	You need to honor tradition, and have both love and dedication to be a good leader.
<i>Between the Lines: How Ernie Barnes Went from the Football Field to the Art Gallery</i>	Painting Football Stereotypes	Biography	Ernie Barnes dreamed of becoming an artist, even after succeeding in professional football.	Follow your dreams no matter what people tell you.
<i>Dave the Potter</i>	Slavery Art (pottery) Literacy	Biography	In second person narration we learn about a remarkable potter named Dave, who used his art to transcend some of the boundaries of slavery.	Even in the harshest circumstances, a person can take pride in his/her skills and leave a lasting mark on the world.
<i>Hey Black Child</i>	Civil rights Diversity Self-esteem	Poetry	Rhythmical text and powerful illustrations inform children of color they CAN be, learn, and do what they want to in life.	Children can pursue their dreams and make a difference in the world.
<i>I, Too, Am America</i>	Citizenship Rail travel Literacy	Poetry	Using Langston Hughes’ “I, Too,” the book portrays	African Americans are an

			the life of a Pullman porter as he travels across the country.	integral part of America.
<i>It's Shoe Time</i>	Self expression Family relationships Making choices	Fantasy	Talking shoes comically vie for a young girl's attention as she sets out to choose a pair for the day.	A "pair," whether they be shoes, people or friends, does not need to match to go together.
<i>Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me</i>	Father/child relationships Absent parents	Realistic Fiction	A boy misses his father and the way he used to wake him up by saying, "Knock knock."	A parent's influence can be present even if the parent is not.
<i>Rosa</i>	The Civil Rights Movement Civil disobedience Courage	Biography	In 1955 Rosa Parks, an ordinary person, made history by refusing to give up her seat to a white person on a bus.	The act of a single person can change history.
<i>Trombone Shorty</i>	Jazz Louisiana/New Orleans	Biography	Troy Andrews grew up in New Orleans loving jazz. With the support of his family and community, and lots of practice, he became Trombone Shorty.	With hard work and dedication, you can make your dreams come true. Also, do everything you can to help others follow their passion.

5 O’Clock Band
Written by Tony “Trombone” Andrews with Bill Taylor
Illustrated by Bryan Collier

Type of Literature: Biography

Characters:

Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews
5 O’Clock Band members
Tuba Tremé
Queen Lola
Big Chief, chief of the neighborhood Mardi Gras Indian tribe

Setting: Tremé, a neighborhood in New Orleans, LA

Plot: As a young boy, Shorty loved playing music with his friends so much that they created the 5 O’Clock band, named because they practiced at 5:00 after finishing homework and chores. In this story, Troy becomes caught up in playing his own music and arrives late for the band’s performance and parade to discover that they left without him. Disappointed with himself, Troy wonders how he might ever become a bandleader after letting down his own band members. He then walks through town, looking for his band. On his way, he meets up with three New Orleans icons - musician Tuba Tremé; Queen Lola, Creole chef; and a group of Mardi Gras Indians—who help him understand what it takes to be a good leader. Bryan Collier’s bold collages represent Troy’s struggle for success, and the level of detail in them represents the beauty of New Orleans..

Point of view: Third person

Theme: You need to honor tradition, and have both love and dedication to be a good leader.

Pre-reading and background:

- This is a companion book to *Trombone Shorty* and should be read after *Trombone Shorty*.
- There are detailed author’s and illustrator’s notes in the back of the book, along with a short blurb about Trombone Shorty’s Foundation.

- Throughout the book, Shorty asks several people for advice on what makes a good leader. The characters are based on real influences of Trombone Shorty, including [Tuba Fats](#) (YouTube video -play the first minute which shows him playing the tuba and singing) and Big Chief and the [Mardi Gras Indians](#) (2:35 video shares history and importance of them).

Discussion: [RL. 1.1, 1.3, 2.3, 1.7, 2.7]

- Talk about Shorty's hopes and dreams in *The 5 O'Clock Band*. What does Shorty want to accomplish? Do you have something special you want to do? Are you worried in any way that you won't be able to do it?
- Do you have adults like Tuba Tremé, Queen Lola, and Big Chief who give you good advice? Who are they? How have they helped you?
- If "Everyone's hometown is special," how is yours special? How is the place you live helping you "grow into the person you'll become"?
- Bryan Collier said he wanted to share the smells of food and sounds of the steamboat and horns ringing through his illustrations. How did he do that?
- Where did he use large, close-up portraits of the characters throughout the story? Be specific. Why did he do that?

Activities:

- Watch [Trombone Shorty](#) at the age of 13 (watch from 1:10-3:30).
- Watch [Trombone Shorty](#) play and sing When the Saints go Marching In (first 1:30 shows both).
- Shorty lived in a 'lively' neighborhood called Tremé where musicians would parade through the streets. Draw a picture/map of you in your neighborhood. What makes your neighborhood unique? Sights? Smells? Sounds? Tastes?
- Is there someone in your neighborhood who is important? Who? Why are they important? Draw a picture using cut-out pictures from magazines, as Bryan Collier does.

Between the Lines:
How Ernie Barnes Went from the Football Field to the Art Gallery
Written by Sandra Neil Wallace, Illustrated by Bryan Collier

Type of Literature: Biography

Characters:

Ernie Barnes

Mama

Mr. Wilson, art teacher

Sonny Werblin, owner of the New York Jets

Setting:

Mostly in Durham, North Carolina

Baltimore, Maryland, and New York City, New York are mentioned

Plot: Ernie Barnes was born in segregated North Carolina. His mama cleaned houses for a white lawyer in Durham and would often take Ernie to work with her. It was here in the lawyer's office and home that he was introduced to books and paintings, but when he asked about African American artists at an art museum he was told his people don't express themselves in this way. He was frustrated with these words because he knew they weren't true.

Because of Ernie's size, people always assumed he would play sports, though his own personal dream was to be an artist. Eventually he did play professional football, but his heart was always with drawing and painting, so much so that he was fined when caught drawing on the bench during games. Eventually he realized art was his true calling, and he told his coach he was done playing football, but could he become the official artist for the American Football League? His first art show in New York City, arranged with Sonny Werblin's help, was a big success. Many of the pictures were framed with the picket fence from his home. Many of Mr. Barnes's paintings are now found in art museums and galleries.

Point of view: Third-person

Theme: Follow your dreams no matter what people tell you.

Pre-reading and background: Ernie Barnes was born in 1938 without equal access to the arts, but his mother made sure Ernie and all of her children knew about music and art. Ernie was always shy and sensitive and often bullied at school. Drawing was what he loved to do, though because of his size most people assumed it would be sports that would help him gain confidence.

Ernie did end up playing professional football and would always sketch on the sidelines. One of his most famous paintings, *The Bench*, was painted from his experiences on the sidelines. Mr. Banks was known for elongating and exaggerating the movements of the people. He was also known to draw and paint people with their eyes closed, "We don't see into the depths of our interconnection. The gifts, the strength and potential within other human beings. We stop at color quite often....But when you cannot visualize the offerings of another human being you're obviously not looking at the human being with open eyes."

For teachers: If you remember the show *Good Times* (aired on CBS from 1974-1979), the very last scene in the opening credits shows an Ernie Barnes painting. A character named J.J. in the show had artistic aspirations which were modeled after Barnes's life.

Marvin Gaye's [I Want You album cover](#) also adapts one of Barnes's paintings, *The Sugar Shack*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernie_Barnes

Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave
Written by Laban Carrick Hill, Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Caldecott Honor
Coretta Scott King Award Winner

Type of Literature: Biography

Characters:

Dave

Other unnamed slaves in the illustrations

Setting: Approximately 200 years ago, near Edgefield, South Carolina, USA

Summary: A slave known simply as Dave left his mark on the world by becoming a master potter. But he is remembered for far more than his remarkable craftsmanship with clay. It was unusual for a slave to know how to read and write, and Dave used his literacy skills to add his name, dates, and sometimes poems he created on the sides of the pots he threw using a potter's wheel.

Point of view: 2nd person

Theme: Even in the harshest circumstances, a person can take pride in his/her skills and leave a lasting mark on the world.

Pre-reading and background: [L.1.5; L.2.5]

- Read [Bryan Collier's comments](#) about his illustrations for this book on teachingbooks.net. Your teacher librarian has the username and password if it asks you to supply them (same as for all GWAEA online resources).
- Dave was a slave. Though the focus of this book is on Dave's accomplishments in spite of his barriers, the students will need to have a basic understanding of what slavery means in order to appreciate the remarkable nature of his legacy. Some simply stated facts are as follows:
 - Slavery means people are forced to do very hard jobs all day every day for no money.
 - Slaves are people who are not treated with the rights people are supposed to have.

- Please refer to the “Preparing for Meaningful and Sensitive Discussions” for suggestions about how to address student questions or comments that may arise during the sharing of *Dave the Potter* and for suggested literature to help students grasp the meaning of slavery in an age-appropriate way.
- Dave lived near Edgefield, SC. Show the students Edgefield on Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Edgefield,+SC+29824/@33.7981132,-82.4632715,9z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x88f8393948d0a1c9:0x58e81aeb7b4f8ba1!8m2!3d33.7895774!4d-81.9295582>
- Bring in handmade clay pots to show students, or show these images to help them understand what a clay pot is (Each of these is a pot made by Dave.)
 - http://mesda.org/files/2016/12/ACC_4317_b.jpg
 - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Drake_\(potter\)#/media/File:Lm_may_3rd_1862_by_dave_the_slave.jpeg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Drake_(potter)#/media/File:Lm_may_3rd_1862_by_dave_the_slave.jpeg)
 - https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bd/Dave_the_Potter%2C_I_made_this_jar_for_cash%2C_though_it_is_called_lucre_trash.jpg
 - https://leonardtoddconversations.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/1999-18-1_150dpi_3.jpg
- Vocabulary to pre-teach (image or video linked to each) - use this [Google Slides presentation](#)

Discussion: (be certain to read the back matter and all of the author/illustrator notes) [RI.1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7; RI.2.1, 2.4, 2.7; RL.1.7, 1.10; RL.2.7, 2.10; SL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3; SL.2.1, 2.2, 2.3; L.1.5, 1.6; L.2.5, 2.6]

- Many slaves worked in fields of cotton, pulling weeds or harvesting at the end of the growing season. How do you think Dave’s life was different from other slaves?
 - Would you imagine his days were easier or harder? Why? In what ways?
 - We know about Dave because his name and his poems mark his work, and some of his clay pots and jugs are still around today. Would Dave have been able to leave something behind in the world if he worked in the fields rather than creating pottery? Give reasons for your opinions.
- In the book, the narrator says “To us it is just a pot, round and tall, good for keeping marbles or fresh-cut flowers. But to Dave, it was a pot large enough to store a season’s grain harvest, to put up salted meat, to hold memories.”
 - Why would the pot mean something different to Dave during his lifetime than it does to us today?
 - What can you think of that would mean something different to you than it does to the rest of us? (Maybe a favorite stuffed animal, a plain looking toy that was a special gift to you) If possible, bring in an item that is special to you and share it with your students. Ask them to tell you what they see, then you tell them what you see and remember when you look at it.

- Look carefully at the illustration on that page of the book (“To us it is just a pot...”). What memories is Dave holding in the pot that is hidden in the background? What evidence do you have to support your idea?
- Look at the illustration on the page that begins with “As the wheel spun round and round...” Why do you think the illustrator might have chosen to make the pot and Dave’s face look like they are made out of sharp pieces? Give reasons for your ideas.
- Look at the picture on the next page, where the text begins with “The jar grew so large...” Whose faces do you think those are in the tree? What can you find in the illustration and in the text to support your idea?
- On the next page (“Only then did he stop his potter’s wheel...”) Dave is rolling clay into a long rope. What or who do you think he is thinking about as he does this? What evidence do you see in the picture to help you?
- The narrator says that Dave knew what a pot would look like when it was just a lump of raw clay on the potter’s wheel. What does that mean? Why couldn’t you or I see what it would look like?
- Does Dave take pride in his work? What evidence you do find in the illustrations or in the text that help you answer that question?
- We talked about slavery before reading this book. Knowing what you know about slaves and their families, what do you think Dave’s poem means that says:

*I wonder where
is all my relation
friendship to all--
and, every nation*

- This [image](#) is a photo of a diorama (or model) of a potter’s yard in the area where Dave worked. Look at the different buildings and items in the yard and see if you can identify where the clay was mixed (the pug mill), made into pots (the workshop), and [fired in a kiln](#). What evidence do you have to help you figure it out?
- A [YouTube video](#) of a live auction shows that one of Dave’s pieces was sold at auction on March 25, 2017 for \$19,000! According to [Wikipedia](#), his works can sell for \$40,000 or more! Dave’s clay pots are so expensive because they are rare, they are made so well, and they are old. What other things are worth more money as they get older? (Can you think of other old things that are rare and made well?)

Activities: [W.1.1, 1.6, 2.1, 2.6]

- Dave wrote couplets on his pottery. Couplets are short poems with 2 lines that rhyme at the end. (ex. I am so hot - it’s not a dream. I wish I had some sweet ice cream.) Try writing your own couplets or another poetry form, such as haiku. Type them and add an image (or write and illustrate your poem to be scanned) and publish them on the library website or your class website.

- Dave had 5 owners during his lifetime. He mentions Mr. Miles by name in one of his poems. Write a letter to Mr. Miles, giving at least 3 reasons why Dave should have his freedom even though slavery is legal at that time.
- Watch this video of a potter making a clay pot and lid on a potter's wheel. There is no narration, so students can predict what is coming and also infer how the potter makes changes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8styuac15I>
- This video shows glaze being mixed and applied, then what the clay pieces look like before and after firing in an electric kiln. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqTFWBdqd_0
- These videos show examples of Dave's pottery. The two vessels in the videos look very similar, but the speaker does a nice job of explaining how the signatures are unique. The speaker also explains the different effects of the glazing that Dave used on each vessel. Each selection is about 4 minutes long, so you may want to preview and select certain portions to show (recommendations below):
Video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vAL66jrAak> (watch starting 02:15)
Video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acuh1NJgkX0> (first 3 ½ minutes are most relevant to a student audience)
- According to the Wikipedia article about [Dave](#), Dave's largest jar measured 29 inches tall and 85 inches in circumference. Use a tape measure to show the students these measurements. Have students cluster together and measure how far it is around them until you reach 85 inches!
- The jar referenced in the Wikipedia article had a 40 gallon capacity. Bring in 5-gallon buckets or whatever containers you can find to help students conceptualize 40 gallons.
- Coordinate with the art teacher at your school.
 - Allow the students to use a piece of clay to make a pot. If possible, allow the students to see the glazing process and view the kiln where the pots are fired.
 - Allow students to make a coil with clay and shape it into a pot.

Hey Black Child
Written by Useni Eugene Perkins, Illustrated by Bryan Collier

Type of Literature: Poetry.

Characters:

Several anonymous black children

Setting: Present day

Plot: The poem speaks to the “black child” of the audience. It asks “Do you know who you are?” The poem, in combination with the illustrations, goes on to encourage the reader to be, learn, and do whatever he/she wishes in order to change the nation. Illustrations in the book both hearken back to the accomplishments of black Americans in history, and reference the potential of black children to create and influence the future.

Point of view: First Person

Theme: Children can pursue their dreams and make a difference in the world.

Pre-reading and background:

- Read the quote from the author's and illustrator's notes at the back of the book; ask students why the book might be titled *Hey Black Child* instead of *Hey Child*? If you are not black can you still read and enjoy this book?
- Ask students if they have heard of the Black Lives Matter movement. What is this movement about? Watch the video “Our Lives Matter” at <https://youtu.be/QUG811qtRs> and discuss.¹

¹Davis, Kiri Laurelle. “Our Lives Matter.” *YouTube*, Just Us Project, 21 Dec. 2014, youtu.be/QUG811qtRs.

Discussion: [RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7; RL.2.2 2.4, 2.5, 2.7]

- Go through the book one page at a time and closely observe the illustrations. Bryan Collier uses foreshadowing throughout the book. For instance, you will notice the little girl with the bow on her head is in the painting that the boy character is making, then she appears again on the following page. Mr. Collier also repeated patterns of balloons and sun rays in the illustrations. Why do you think he chose those images for this book? To hear Mr. Collier himself discuss one of the illustrations watch all or part of this video from Little Brown School: <https://vimeo.com/229746715>.²
- This book is about believing in yourself and pursuing your dreams. Bryan Collier did not become interested in art until he was a teenager.³ He wanted to be a basketball player when he was young. What do you want to be when you grow up? Do you think you might change your mind? Why do you think that Bryan Collier was not interested in art until he was older?

Activities:

- This poem was actually written as a song lyric. Useni Eugene Perkins wrote a play called *The Black Fairy* in 1975 and this is one of the songs from the play. How do you imagine it being sung? Display the entire poem and ask students to sing part (or all) of it in a manner that matches the feeling of the words. Use tambourine, drum, maracas or other percussion instruments to make the poem come alive. Alternatively, share this book with your music teacher and collaborate on making it into an actual performance.
- Reread the book as choral reading, using refrains or in unison. How does this make you feel?

² “Book Chat with the Illustrator: Bryan Collier on Hey Black Child.” *Vimeo*, Little Brown School and Library, 15 Aug. 2017, vimeo.com/229746715.

³ Bailey, Alan R. “From Uptown to Trombone Shorty and Beyond: An Invited Dialogue with Bryan Collier.” *Language Arts*, Mar. 2017, pp. 257–262.

I, Too, Am America
Written by Langston Hughes, Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Coretta Scott King Award Winner

Type of Literature: Poetry

Characters:

Unnamed Pullman porter
Unnamed girl from the times of slavery
Unnamed boy from recent times

Setting: Train routes across the south, urban city

Plot: The words of the book are Langston Hughes’s poem, “I, Too” which speaks about the segregation of African Americans and how black people are citizens of the United States and should be treated as so. The illustrations in the book, though, show a Pullman porter collecting the left behind books, magazines, and albums of white people riding the trains. The porter, “acting as a conduit of culture,” throws those items to black people along the train tracks. This cultural knowledge is passed down to the present day where a young boy peers through the metaphorical flag of the United States, unsure of what his future will bring.

Point of view: First-person

Theme: African Americans are an integral part of America

Tone: Optimistic and proud

Teacher background:

Bryan Collier took illustrative liberties with the poem “I, Too” by Langston Hughes in the book *I, Too, Am America*. While Hughes did not name a specific person in the poem, Collier envisioned the main character as a Pullman porter. George Pullman’s sleeper cars served people looking for rail transportation until 1968. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, Pullman sought out to employ former slaves as porters. The porters often worked as cook, wait staff, and maid all in one. While the pay was low according to this period’s standards and a Pullman porter wasn’t always treated fairly on the job, being a Pullman porter was considered one of the best jobs for a black man to have and, according to Wikipedia, has been credited for the development of the black middle class.

Because of the travel opportunities of the Pullman porters, and because of their access to newspapers, books, and albums that may have been discussed on the trains or even left behind, they were often the conduits to cultural experiences not afforded to other African Americans of the time. In *I, Too, Am America*, Collier drew the Pullman porter literally throwing the artifacts off the train, finding their way into the hands of a slave girl and later, affecting the life of a present day boy in an urban setting, most likely Harlem where Langston Hughes lived part of his life. Be sure to note the presence of the stars and stripes in the book.

*This book would be good read close to the time you read *Hey, Black Child* since that, too, is a poem.

Pre-reading for the students:

Show the students a [picture of Langston Hughes](#). Tell them he was a famous writer who lived from 1902-1967. He wrote poems, plays, books, and wrote about social issues.

Explain to the students that Bryan Collier decided to illustrate, or draw, his interpretation of Langston Hughes's poem called, "I, Too" and this is the book.

Discussion: [RL.1.4, 1.6, 1.9, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5., 2.6, RI. 2.3, SL.1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1]

- Simply read the book to the students. Consider saying, "Wow! That was short! I think we should read it again." Read the book a second time.
- "I don't think I've ever read a book like this. I am not sure what to think. What do YOU think?"
- Take time for the kids to share their thoughts about the words.
- "What did you notice about the pictures?"
 - Hopefully the students notice the collage style that Bryan Collier uses. Do they notice the stars and stripes throughout? Do they notice the boy peeking through the United States flag? Do they notice the train?
- "Has anyone heard of a Pullman train?"
 - Explain that a long time ago, people used to travel by trains more often. "Why do you think that was the case?"
 - Pullman cars were sleeper cars and were created by a man named George Pullman and were considered high class. [Show some pictures of Pullman trains](#).
 - Create a Safeshare link of this YouTube video. Watch only from 1:00 to 1:40 for some historical footage of Pullman trains:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhZw1tKgxfc>

- Explain who the Pullman porters were (see above)
 - What would you learn if you were a Pullman porter and traveling all over the country? (If students are having a hard time visualizing this, ask the question a different way, “What about pilots? Or Greyhound bus drivers? What do you think they learn when they travel to different cities?”) Is this learning important? Why or why not? How does it influence other people?
- Guide students towards the illustrations again.
 - What is the Pullman porter doing? How is he sharing the information he has learned?
 - Why do you think Bryan Collier decided to use a Pullman porter and a train to illustrate the poem?
- What does it mean that the setting goes from the field to a city so quickly?
- Why do you think Langston Hughes wrote this poem?
- Does the poem end on a positive note? Or a sad note? Why do you think the way you do?
- When discussion is done, listen to this audio link of Bryan Collier discussing his artistic process. You will need the GWAEA username and password for your school:
https://www.teachingbooks.net/book_reading.cgi?id=8438

Activities: (RL 1.10, 2.3, 2.4, 2.10, SL 1.2, 1.5, 2.2, 2.5)

1. Perform a choral reading of the poem, “I, Too.”
2. Possible collaboration with the music teacher (or not): Play music from the 1930s era, especially jazz and blues pieces. Pick two songs they can learn to sing as a group and teach them the songs.
3. Possible collaboration with the art teacher (or not): Have children draw pictures of themselves and use tissue paper to create an overlay of the American flag.
4. In the poem, I would argue there is a feeling of being set aside or not looked at as an important person. In small groups, have the students talk about a time they felt set aside. Have them discuss a time when they felt very proud of themselves! Listen to their conversations and bring some of their examples back to the whole group to share.
5. Listen to Langston Hughes read his poem. Start the reading at 0:34 seconds.
<https://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/langston-hughes>

It's Shoe Time
By Bryan Collier

Type of Literature: Fantasy (Early Reader)

Characters:

A young girl
The girl's Daddy
Many talking shoes
Elephant and Piggie

Setting: Present day; a closet and steps inside a house, outside the house, and a fantastic maze

Plot: This is part of the *Elephant and Piggie Like Reading!* Series, which means that the characters of Elephant and Piggie appear in cameo, thus adding the hilarious metafiction element familiar to Mo Willems' audience. The central story concerns a young girl of color who is choosing shoes for a "Daddy-and-Me Day." All the shoes want to be chosen; the fancy ballet slippers, boots, flip flops, and sneakers. Ultimately, the girl makes the unconventional choice of a "pair" of non-matching shoes, much to the shoes' dismay! When she meets up with Daddy outside the house, the shoes get a pleasant surprise.

Point of view: First person

Theme: A "pair," whether they be shoes, people, or friends, does not have to match to go together.

Pre-reading and background:

- Share *Elephant and Piggie* series books to familiarize students with the character-specific colored speech bubbles. Use colored construction paper to create large speech bubbles with simple words or phrases. Have students take turns standing under the speech bubbles to speak the dialogue. Have each color speech bubble be a different character and create special voices to go along with them. What might the flip flop's voice sound like as opposed to the boot?

Discussion: [RL. 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 1.7; RL. 2.2, 2.6; SL. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5; SL 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5]

- In this book the shoes become very upset when the girl chooses to wear one boot and one flip-flop. Have you ever tried wearing two different types of shoes at once? Why do you think the shoes became so upset? What would you do if you saw someone wearing shoes like the girl in the book?
- There are many puns in this story! Share some funny (punny!) jokes and discuss. Here are some examples:
 - How many tickles does it take to make an octopus laugh? *Ten tickles.*
 - How do you stop an astronaut's baby from crying? *You rocket!*
 - Why are teddy bears never hungry? *They are always stuffed!*
 - Why did the spider go to the computer? *To check his web site.*
 - What's purple and 5000 miles long? *The Grape Wall of China!*
- Collect some examples of first person and third person narration in the graphic novel section of your library. Speech/thought bubbles are first person narration and captions are third person narration. Discuss the difference in these points of view. Have students come up with speech bubbles and captions to go along with some interesting photos or illustrations that you display with the projector.

Activities:

- For a fun shoe tying activity, print off the template here:
<http://realpurdy.com/wp2012/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Shoe-Tying-Template.pdf>
You will need cardstock and/or poster board, glue, crayons/markers, and shoelaces/yarn cut into appropriate lengths. Have students glue to poster board, cut out the shoes, and practice lacing and tying them. Shoes can be also be colored to make a crazy mismatched pair.
- Use this fun math activity to sort students' shoes into different categories on a shower curtain graph: <http://pbskids.org/lab/activity/shoesorting/> You can sort by color, size, fastener-type or whatever you choose.
- This video has a section on lacing techniques (watch from the 2:00 minute mark to 4:30 minutes). You will need your school's AEA login and password to access the video.
<http://learn360.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=199030&xtid=60148&loid=276876>

Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me
Written by Daniel Beaty, Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Coretta Scott King Award Winner

Type of Literature: Realistic fiction

Characters:

Unnamed boy

Unnamed father

Setting: mostly at home in the city

Plot: A boy plays a game with his father each morning. His dad says, “Knock Knock” before going into his son’s bedroom where the boy pretends to be asleep. When he knows his dad is right next to the bed the son smiles and says, “Good morning, Papa!” One day, though, the dad is not there. The boy grows up throughout the story and misses his father’s presence, noting times when he needs his father’s guidance and help but also realizing his dad is still with him.

Point of view: First-person

Theme: A parent’s influence can be present even if the parent is not.

Pre-reading and background: “In the morning, some of our families might already be gone to work. At night, not all families are around. They might have activities at school or in sports or they might be working. But think about someone who means a lot to you. Are there any games you play with them whenever you see them?”

Share an example with the kids from your own life: “Every time my daughter sees her uncle Deric he gives her a big bear hug. He makes a chiming noise, and it gradually gets louder and louder and faster and faster until he makes a loud ding! Then he says, ‘You totally filled my love tank. It was getting pretty empty’” OR “I remember reading a book when I was young where the girl in the story would point her shoes in the direction where she was hiding. Her dad would look for her every day and would give her a big hug when he found her.”

Give the kids a little bit of time to share examples of these games from their own lives.

Discussion: [RL.1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 2.3, 2.7, SL.1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3]

- Read the book *Knock Knock* by Daniel Beaty.
- Ask the students, “What is happening in this book?” This can either be with a partner or whole group.
- Ask, “What do you think happened to the dad?” Accept any answer for why a parent might be absent. In fact, if they aren’t brought up encourage different answers: death, divorce, incarceration.
- “Why do you think the boy decided to write his dad a letter? Have you ever written a letter to someone you missed?”
- There seem to be different symbols on the page like the hat, the paper airplane, and the elephant (it is said that elephants never forget). What do you think these symbols mean? Can you find examples of other symbols?
- Feel free to ask about other lines that speak to you, but what do you think these lines mean?
 - “Dribble the page with the brilliance of your ballpoint pen.”
 - “Knock knock down the doors that I could not.”
- Why do you think the dad continues to say the words “knock knock?”

Activities: [RL. 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, SL. 1.2, 2.2]

- Listen to this audio link about Bryan Collier telling us why and how he came to illustrate this book. You will need our GWAEA Online Resource username and login to listen: https://www.teachingbooks.net/book_reading.cgi?id=9559
- In the link above, Mr. Collier refers to listening to Daniel Beaty perform a monologue where he recites a poem that he wrote. There is more to the poem than there is to the book, but it is still appropriate for elementary school. However, in Beaty’s monologue, it is obvious that the boy’s father is in jail. It tells of the difficulties of seeing his father on visiting day. Create a Safeshare link of this video in which Daniel Beaty performs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eYH0AFx6yI>
 - How is the monologue different than the book?
 - What new insights do you have about the book?
 - Did you prefer your teacher reading the book or Beaty’s performance? Why?
- Write a letter to someone who is important to you and/or who is no longer with you. Imagine what the person would say in response.
- The father tells his son to “knock, knock” in different ways. What are ways in which you could “knock, knock” to reach your dreams, help your family, or help your community? This could be done in small groups or whole group.

Rosa
Written by Nikki Giovanni, Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Caldecott Honor
Coretta Scott King Award Winner

Type of Literature: Biography

Characters:

Rosa Parks, African-American woman who refused to give up her seat in the front of the bus

Setting: Montgomery, AL, 1955

Plot: After a long day at work on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks left her job as a seamstress, paid her fare and rode in the middle of the bus known as the neutral section because both African Americans and whites could sit there. When more whites entered the bus, the bus driver asked her to give up her seat so a white person could sit there and she said no. She was arrested, an act that was a pivotal point in civil rights history. That evening, a group of women made posters encouraging all bus-riders to boycott the buses and walk from now on. After boycotting the busses for nearly a year, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that segregation of buses was illegal.

Point of view: Third-person

Theme: The act of a single person can change history.

Pre-reading and background:

- Read the first paragraph of the inside book jacket introducing Rosa Parks. Explain what it means when it says the incident “...sparked a revolution”? Revolution definition: a sudden, radical or complete change.
- Vocabulary: Rosa is a [seamstress](#) in an [alterations](#) department. ‘Colored’ as slang, [NAACP](#)
- “Under segregation, blacks could not sit in front of whites - they had to sit in the back of the bus. Also, if a white person told a black person to move so they could sit down, the black person had to. African-Americans gathered and organized the [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#). They decided they would not ride on the buses again until they were treated the same as whites.”

Discussion: [RL. 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.3, SL 1.2, 2.2]

- Rosa lived in a time in the United States when she wanted something to change. Is there something you would like to see changed in your family? School? U.S.?
- Rosa Parks chose a nonviolent way to make a difference. The newspaper on page 1 shows ‘King’ in the headlines. Why?
- Montgomery is the capital of Alabama. Note the capital building in several images.
- The purple page shows a partial Rosa face and a large, full image of the bus driver. Why do you think Bryan Collier chose to do this?
- Pink page-strong hands shown. Why?
- Why did the the women want people to stop using busses?
- Note the beautiful fold-out page with peaceful faces, both face-on and sideways. Why?
- Last page.....how did her ‘no’ turn into a ‘yes for change’???
- How did Rosa Parks show courage?
- She was tired, not tired from work, but tired of putting white people first. Explain.
- Why did she think of her mother and grandmother at the time?

Activities:

- Bryan Collier used a lot of yellow to bring out the heat in Alabama and highlight the influence of Rosa Parks on the Civil Rights movement. An audio interview of his part of the book is [HERE](#).
- An overall video of Bryan Collier’s art methods of paint and collage is [HERE](#).
- Think of a time you stood up for something. Share with a partner. Why is it important?
- Do you know someone in your life who has shown courage or strength?
Share/draw/write.
- *Rosa and Rosa Parks, Rookie Biography*, available on Bookflix [HERE](#)

Sources:

- [African-American Civil Rights Movement Facts for Kids](#). *Kiddle Encyclopedia*.
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>
- TeachingBooks.net

Trombone Shorty
Written by Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews
Illustrated by Bryan Collier
Caldecott Honor
Coretta Scott King Award Winner

Type of Literature: Biography

Characters:

Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews
Troy’s brother, James
Troy’s mom
Bo Diddley

Setting: Tremé, a neighborhood in New Orleans

Summary: As a young boy, Troy loved living in New Orleans where music was everywhere every day. Though his community was not wealthy, they shared a love of music. Troy grew up admiring his brother James, who played the trumpet in his own band. Troy and his friends made instruments out of anything they could find, and experimented with making sounds on their homemade instruments. When Troy got his first trombone at age 4, he played constantly, beginning his journey to become a world-famous musician with a little help from his brother and rhythm & blues legend Bo Diddley.

Point of view: 1st person (autobiography)

Theme: With hard work and dedication, you can make your dreams come true. Also, do everything you can to help others follow their passion.

Pre-reading and background:

- Show the [Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans](#) on Google Maps
- Listen to Trombone Shorty using one of these options. Be sure to help students understand that when the group is playing together, the music is written out ahead of time, and when the individual players take a solo, that is improvised (made up right in the moment) while the other people still playing are playing chords and rhythms to support the soloist.
 - Watch Trombone Shorty and his band playing “[Where Y’At](#)” live (about 3:45)

- Watch Trombone Shorty & his band play [On Your Way Down](#) (about 3:50)
- Watch this video of [13-year-old Trombone Shorty](#) performing with world famous musician Wynton Marsalis. Keep in mind that Trombone Shorty was only about a year or two older than our 6th grade students when he did this performance!
- Interview with [Trombone Shorty on PBS](#) He talks about his Foundation and helping students with their music, and you also witness a pick-up parade in Tremé where he and his band members are joined by some neighbors as they stroll along playing music.

Discussion: [RI.1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.6, 2.7; SL.1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2; RL.1.7, 2.7]

- One job of an author or illustrator is to give the reader a strong sense of the setting. New Orleans was a city that was largely settled by people who came from France to Canada, then south to Louisiana. The [fleur-de-lis](#) (flower of lily) is a symbol that was originally important to the French but has also become a symbol for places around the world with ties to France. In 2008, the governor of Louisiana made the fleur-de-lis the official symbol of Louisiana, and today it has become a symbol of efforts to support the recovery of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Bryan Collier uses the symbol of the fleur-de-lis on a few pages of this book. Can you find them?
- A big influence in Trombone Shorty’s life was Mardi Gras, an annual festival that is celebrated in grand fashion in New Orleans. Mardi is French for Tuesday, and gras is French for fat, so the meaning of Mardi Gras is “Fat Tuesday.” It falls the day before the Christian holiday Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of the liturgical season of Lent, leading up to Easter. This [video](#) (5:42) gives a quick idea of the clothing, floats, and music that are part of this celebration.
- Many of Bryan Collier’s illustrations in this book show something flowing out of Trombone Shorty’s trombone as he plays. Look for examples of each of these, listen to some of his music, and consider how these four very different things represent the music, the text, the setting, and the overall feeling of the illustrations. Explain your thinking.
 - A spiral that looks like a metal coil swirling out of his horn
 - Swirls that sweep through a kitchen where a woman is preparing gumbo
 - Faces that come out of Trombone Shorty’s horn and move up and away from him
 - A stream of fire that fills a hot air balloon
- In his illustrator’s note, Bryan Collier explains that he used balloons as a symbol to demonstrate the music floating all around throughout the book. How do the balloons on the second spread of the book compare to the balloons on the page when Bo Diddley calls Trombone Shorty up to the stage? What do you think Bryan Collier was trying to tell us by showing the balloons in different ways? Why?

- On the page where Trombone Shorty is sleeping with his trombone there are no balloons, but Bryan Collier still shows us that he’s dreaming about music. What symbol represents music in this illustration? Why do you think Bryan Collier didn’t just use balloons like he did on other pages?
- On one of the final pages, we see Trombone Shorty filling a hot air balloon with his music and soaring over three places: [St. Louis Cathedral](#) in New Orleans, the [Eiffel Tower](#) in Paris, and a statue of [Duke Ellington](#) (composer, pianist, and band leader in the 1900s) in New York City. Why do you think Bryan Collier chose these three locations? Give reasons for your thoughts.
- Since Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews wrote this book about himself, it is an autobiography. What do you think he wants us to think about by telling us his story? Give examples to support your answers.

Activities: [\[RI.1.9, 2.9\]](#)

- Gather up some plastic food containers, cereal boxes, toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, etc. and have the students make their own musical instruments. Allow them to perform for each other. (If it’s hard to get a variety of “junk,” you can use wax paper, a rubber band, and a toilet paper roll to make a kazoo.)
- View this [image of a trombone](#). See if you can figure out which part is the mouthpiece, the slide, and the bell. What evidence can you give in the picture to support your answers?
- Bryan Collier explains in his illustrations that he gave Trombone Shorty and his friends crowns in one illustration because they were so full of hope and were so dedicated to making music. Draw a picture of yourself in a crown, showing what you would be doing that would make you feel like a king or queen.
- Read about the [Trombone Shorty Foundation](#). What is a Foundation (an organization that has a goal and is funded to pursue that goal for many years to come)? Did you know the Iowa City Community School District has a Foundation? Look [here](#) to see what programs the Iowa City Community Schools Foundation supports. Do you see anything that might be of interest to you? (Visiting Author is a major program supported by the Foundation!)
- Trombone Shorty and his friends made their own instruments before they got real ones. For another true story about kids making their own instruments, read *Ada’s Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay* by Susan Hood (Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2016). How is this story similar to Trombone Shorty’s story? How is it different? Explain.