

GRADES 3-5 LESSON PLAN

RUTH AND THE GREEN BOOK

Title: *Ruth and the Green Book*

Author: Calvin Alexander Ramsey with Gwen Stauss

Grade Level: 3-5

Standards*:

- **Common Core:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, 3.2, & 3.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1, 4.2, & 4.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1, 5.2, & 5.3*
- **Virginia Standards of Learning:** 3.5; 4.5; 5.5

Overarching Theme(s): Segregation, Fairness, Point of View, Empathy, Inferencing

Timeframe: (45-60 minutes)

Ruth and the Green Book

Summary: This story takes place in the 1960s during the heavy segregation in the United States. In this story (told from the perspective of Ruth), she and her family take a road trip from Chicago to Alabama in daddy's new car. They are going to visit Ruth's grandmother, and everyone is excited. Ruth's journey is a new experience, but she soon learns of unfair practices against African Americans throughout the country. Her family encounters racism and humiliating, scary experiences. But, along the way, the family encounters friendly African Americans who help, like Eddie and Alice, old friends of Ruth's dad. The family also received *The Greenbook*, a pamphlet filled with safe places for African Americans to eat, sleep and travel safely. The story talks about Ruth's feelings and experiences while traveling as an African American child during a turbulent time in American history.

Lesson Goals:

1. Identify feelings and motivations of characters.
2. Determine the fairness of segregation while traveling.

Key Terms:

- **Colored:** a word that was used to describe Black people; it was often used by White people in a derogatory way
- **Desegregation:** the process of ending the separation of people because of their race; it took years for some of the states in the United States to agree (e.g. some states and cities refused to let White children go to school with Black students); laws were later passed to integrate schools, restaurants, businesses, and allow interracial marriage
- **Jim Crow Laws:** laws and rules that discriminated against or enforced the segregation of Black people in the United States (i.e. Black people had to use separate drinking fountains, restrooms, medical facilities, theaters, restaurants, railroad cars, buses, and separate schools with old/used textbooks and equipment, etc.); the laws purposely created disadvantages for Black people; Jim Crow was not an actual person but was the name of a song and dance done by a white entertainer who wore Blackface

- **Negro:** a word that was used to describe Black people; it was often used by White people in a derogatory way
- **Racial Segregation:** separating people because of their race; it was legal to do this because of laws created by people who thought White people in America were the superior race; this led to “separate but equal” policies which implied people of different races had separate but equally good options for things like schools, restaurants, and hospitals; the reality was People of Color had poorer options compared to White people; legal from 1896 (*Plessy v. Ferguson*) to 1954 (*Brown v. Board*)
- **Racism:** the unfair treatment of people based on the opinion that one race is better than another race or races; a system of advantage based on race; racial prejudice plus social power; individual racism: actions and/or language toward a person that intentionally expresses prejudice, hate, or bias based on race; institutional racism: discriminatory treatment, unfair policies, and inequitable opportunities and impacts, based on race, that are produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, workplace, mass media, etc.); structural or systemic racism: normalization and legitimization of historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal dynamics that routinely advantage White people, while producing cumulative and long-lasting disadvantages for People of Color

Procedure:

*Important! Before the start of the lesson, students **must** engage in transactive discussion practice for the discussion to be meaningful. This does not have to take place before every lesson but students need to be familiar with this type of discussion for the lesson to be effective.*

Before Read Aloud:

The teacher should give a brief history on the different ways that Black people were discriminated against (sample language below):

“For a long time, there were laws in America that treated Black people unfairly. A set of laws often referred to as Jim Crow laws banned Black and White people from doing the same things as attending the same schools or eating at the same restaurants. African Americans often encountered segregated facilities while traveling. To combat this, they often packed their own food, stayed with family members, and used Victor Hugo Green’s “Greenbook.”

The teacher should read the story aloud to the whole group. During the read aloud process, teacher should stop and ask teacher-generated comprehension questions to assess/support student understanding, address misconceptions, and answer questions.

Following Read Aloud:*

Students, in groups of 3-5 people, should work together to respond to discussion questions.

- Teachers should remind students that they are working as a team to figure out the best answer/position for each question.
- Teacher should circulate among groups during the discussion process, probing students to practice communicative discussion practices, as outlined in transactive discussion guidelines. Teacher should not provide right or wrong statements to students regarding answer but rather probing questions.
- After small group discussions, students share out the conclusions of their small group with the whole class. Answers should reflect what the whole group determined, rather than individual responses of each group member.
- Immediately following small group and whole class discussions, teacher should have students *independently* respond to writing prompts or assign for homework.

*Note: For questions occurring after specific page numbers, teacher can stop and have students discuss in small groups. If there are multiple copies of the book, students can also address the questions after reading.

Discussion Questions

During Read Aloud

(pg. 1-8):

1. How does the family feel about daddy's new automobile?
2. At a gas station, mama and Ruth are not allowed to use the restroom. It is for whites only. The family had to relieve themselves in the woods.
 - a. Why do you think Mama says it is the service station owners that should be ashamed, not their family?
3. Daddy is quite unhappy about something after he speaks to a hotel owner.
 - a. Why do you think he's so angry?
4. How would you describe Ruth's trip to the South so far?
 - a. What do you notice about their eating and sleeping routines?
5. Given the challenges they are facing, do you think that hey family should have just stayed home?
 - a. Why or why not?

(pg. 9-15)

6. When the family arrives in Tennessee, they encounter Eddie and Alice, friends of Ruth's dad. How did the family feel after meeting Eddie and Alice?
7. Eddie warns Ruth's parents about their safety as they travel further south to Alabama. Why do you think he stops once he notices Ruth listening?

- a. Do you think his reassurance helped Ruth not to be concerned? Why or why not?
- 8. How is Ruth feeling after learning what Jim Crow was?
- 9. How did the Greenbook change how Ruth and her family experienced traveling?
- 10. Why do you think mama and daddy gave Ruth the job of holding the Greenbook and finding places that served African Americans?

(pg. 16-20)

- 11. Why did Ruth give Brown bear to the little boy at the inn?
 - a. Would you have given your favorite bear away if you were Ruth? Why or why not?
- 12. Why did Ruth say she felt part of one big family because of the Greenbook?

After Read Aloud

- 13. Why do you think White business owners didn't want to serve Black customers?
 - a. What would they lose from this?

Writing Prompt

Do you think Black customers should have created a create a personal network to find places to eat and sleep while traveling, or should they have tried to stay in whites only places to protest unfair Jim Crow laws? Why or why not? Defend your answer using evidence from the book and/or class discussions.

Writing Prompt

Do you think Black customers should have created a create a personal network to find places to eat and sleep while traveling, or should they have tried to stay in whites only places to protest unfair Jim Crow laws? Why or why not? Defend your answer using evidence from the book and/or class discussions.

Writing Prompt

Do you think Black customers should have created a create a personal network to find places to eat and sleep while traveling, or should they have tried to stay in whites only places to protest unfair Jim Crow laws? Why or why not? Defend your answer using evidence from the book and/or class discussions.

I do/don't (circle one) think Black customers should have created a personal network to find places to eat and sleep while traveling because _____

The reason I believe this is because _____

Cut Here: - - - - -

Writing Prompt

Do you think it is fair for Black customers to have to create a personal network to find places to eat and sleep while traveling? Why or why not? Defend your answer using evidence from the book and/or class discussions.

I do/don't (circle one) think it is fair for Black customers should have created a personal network to find places to eat and sleep while traveling because

The reason I believe this is because _____

Standards*

Common Core Standards[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1](#)

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2](#)

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#)

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#)

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2](#)

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3](#)

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1](#)

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2](#)

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3](#)

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)

Reading: Demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts and use word analysis strategies

- **3.5** The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry: c) Make, confirm, and revise predictions; d) Compare and contrast settings, characters, and plot events; e) Summarize plot events; f) Identify the narrator of a story; g) Ask and answer questions about what is read; h) Draw conclusions using the text for support; i) Identify the conflict and resolution; j) Identify the theme; k) Use reading strategies to monitor comprehension throughout the reading process; l) Differentiate between fiction and nonfiction.
- **4.5** The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry: a) Describe how the choice of language, setting, and characters contributes to the development of plot; b) Identify the theme(s); c) Summarize events in the plot; d) Identify genres; e) Identify the narrator of a story and the speaker of a poem; f) Identify the conflict and resolution; g) Identify sensory words; h) Draw conclusions/make inferences about text using the text as support; i) Compare/contrast details in literary and informational nonfiction texts; j) Identify cause-and-effect relationships.

- **5.5** The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry: a) Summarize plot events using details from text; b) Discuss the impact of setting on plot development; c) Describe character development; d) Identify theme(s); e) Explain the resolution of conflict(s); f) Identify genres; g) Differentiate between first- and third-person point of view; i) Explain how an author's choice of vocabulary contributes to the author's style; j) Draw conclusions and make inferences with support from the text; k) Identify cause-and-effect relationships; l) Compare/contrast details in literary and informational nonfiction texts.