



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES

By Robert Coles

Teacher's Guide

By Barbara Ashby

Lesson Overview

The lesson is designed to integrate the concepts of civic education and civic responsibility across the curriculum using Robert Coles' book *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. For months, six-year-old Ruby Bridges must confront the hostility of white parents when she becomes the first African-American girl to integrate the public schools in New Orleans in 1960.

Through the lesson, students will explore how the actions of Ruby Bridges and her family shaped the history of the United States, examine how the U.S. Constitution protects individual rights to equality under the law, and consider how the book emphasizes the concepts of civic virtue and common good. Students will use photo analysis as a prompt to write about the characters and events in the story. The activities in this lesson plan support the *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* and *Foundations of Democracy* curricula.

Suggested Grade Level

Elementary grades 3–5

Estimated Time to Complete

Up to four class periods depending on selected activities

Lesson Objectives

Students will

- understand the meaning of equality and how it is protected by the U.S. Constitution;
- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts fundamental to politics and government by identifying characters in the book that embody authority, responsibility, justice, and privacy;
- gain knowledge of Ruby Bridges and the contribution she made to the civil rights movement in the United States;
- understand vocabulary associated with equality and civil rights.

Materials Needed

- Copy of *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles
- Class set of *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution*, Elementary Level
- Class sets of *Foundations of Democracy* text (Authority, Responsibility, Justice, Privacy)
- Easel and chart paper
- Copies of the *Photograph Analysis Guide* (follows)
- Copies of the images for analysis (link follows)
- Writing paper
- Pencils

Before the Lesson

1. The teacher should read *The Story of Ruby Bridges* several times to
 - become familiar with the text;
 - choose vocabulary words to be examined identify where you will stop and ask for predictions;
 - determine background knowledge required to fully understand the story;
 - develop questions for the read-aloud; and
 - anticipate student responses.

(Suggested vocabulary: courage, Federal Marshal, mob, judge, segregation, desegregate)

2. Before the read-aloud, conduct a “picture walk” through the book.
 - Cover: Ask children what comes to mind when they first look at the cover. Where do you think the girl is going? How old do you think the girl might be? What do you think the people are doing in the background? Look at the girl’s face. What do you suppose she is thinking?
 - Title Page: What do you think is happening in this illustration? Where do you think the people are going?
 - Continue the picture walk through the rest of the book.
 - Dedication Page: Ruby’s mother says, “Our Ruby taught us all a lot. She became someone who helped change our country. She was part of history.” At the end of the lesson, students should be able to discuss and explain what Ruby’s mother meant by these statements.

Lesson Procedures

1. Reading

- Conduct an interactive read-aloud of *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, stopping frequently to clarify what is happening in the story and asking students to make predictions, discuss new vocabulary, and make personal connections.
- Author study: Who was Robert Coles? What was his relationship to Ruby Bridges and her family?

2. Writing

- Students use photo analysis as a prompt for writing.

- Students use the district-wide writing process to complete the activity.
- Students select one of three images (ruby-bridges-mob.gif, rubybridges_rockwell.jpg and bridges0.jpg) found at http://www.google.com/images?q=ruby+bridges&hl=en&safe=active&prmd=ivnbo&source=lnms&tbs=isch:1&ei=4Zz-TMvxJ4TGsAOHiemvCw&sa=X&oi=mode_link&ct=mode&ved=0CBYQ_AU&biw=848&bih=469 and analyze it using the *Photo Analysis Guide* (found at the end of this lesson plan). Students should study their selected image for a minimum of two minutes. Students form an overall impression first and then examine the photograph for details. Suggest that students divide the photograph into four sections and study each area to see what additional details they notice.
- Remind students that good writers think about what they want to write before beginning.
- Students write about what they have observed in the photograph and then write from the point of view of one of the people in the image. What is the character thinking and feeling? What events happened before the picture was taken? What happened after the photograph was taken? Students could put themselves into the image and describe what they would be thinking and feeling.
- Students partner with a classmate to read, edit, and revise their writing.
- A sample writing rubric is at http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson261/sample.pdf

3. Social Studies

We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution, Level 1

Unit Four: How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?

Lesson 19: How does the Constitution protect your right to equal protection of the laws?

- Introduce important terms from Unit Four: assembly, expression, petition, press, speech, discrimination, tolerant, boycott, segregate, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Civil War Amendments, Equal Protection Clause, equal protection of the laws, and Fourteenth Amendment.
- Discuss with students how the terms are illustrated in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. Suggested questions for discussion include:
 1. Did the Fourteenth Amendment end discriminatory practices against African Americans?
 2. How were the constitutional rights of Ruby Bridges and other African- American children violated by the local government in New Orleans?
 3. How were freedom of speech and freedom of assembly shown in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*?

Foundations of Democracy

Authority

- What characters in the story used authority?
- What characters in the story used power with authority and where did they get their authority?
- What characters in the story used power without authority?
- The judge ordered Ruby Bridges and three other black girls to go to white elementary schools. What were some of the benefits and costs of his decision?

Responsibility

- The president ordered Federal Marshals to escort Ruby into the school building. What responsibilities did the Federal Marshals have?
- What characters in the story had responsibilities? Make a list of the characters, their responsibilities, and to whom they owed those responsibilities.
- Did some of the characters have competing responsibilities? What were the competing responsibilities?

Justice

- Do you think that Ruby Bridges was treated fairly in the story?
- Think about problems of distributive justice, problems of corrective justice, and problems of procedural justice. Discuss how each of these problems of justice was demonstrated in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*.
- Do you think any of the characters in the story should be punished for their actions?

Privacy

- Do you think that issues related to privacy are addressed in this book? Explain your answer.

Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts Standards, Anchor Standards for Reading, K–5

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style of a text.

English Language Arts Standards, Anchor Standards for Writing, K–5

Text Types and Purposes

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

English Language Arts Standards, Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening, K–5

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Correlations to SVPDP Curricula

SVPDP Curricula	Location	Lesson-Related Content
<i>We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution</i>	Elementary text Unit Four Lesson 19	United States Constitution and Protection of Basic Rights, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary
<i>Foundations of Democracy</i>	Authority, Responsibility, Justice, and Privacy text	Authority and Power, Competing Responsibilities, Problems of Justice, Privacy, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary

Photograph Analysis Guide

Observation	Knowledge	Interpretation
<p data-bbox="152 302 448 369">What do you see in the photograph?</p> <ul data-bbox="201 390 558 506" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="201 390 558 457">• Describe the people and objects that you see.<li data-bbox="201 474 558 506">• What is the setting?	<p data-bbox="597 302 1084 369">What background information do you have about this period or event?</p> <ul data-bbox="649 411 1071 516" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="649 411 1071 516">• Do you need to gather additional information before writing?	<p data-bbox="1091 302 1547 369">What can you conclude from what you see?</p> <ul data-bbox="1143 411 1547 516" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1143 411 1547 516">• What thoughts, ideas, and conclusions do you want to include in your writing?

Adapted from “Teaching With Primary Sources Lesson Plan”
http://aam.waynesburg.edu/TPS_LessonPlans/Dillow/index.doc