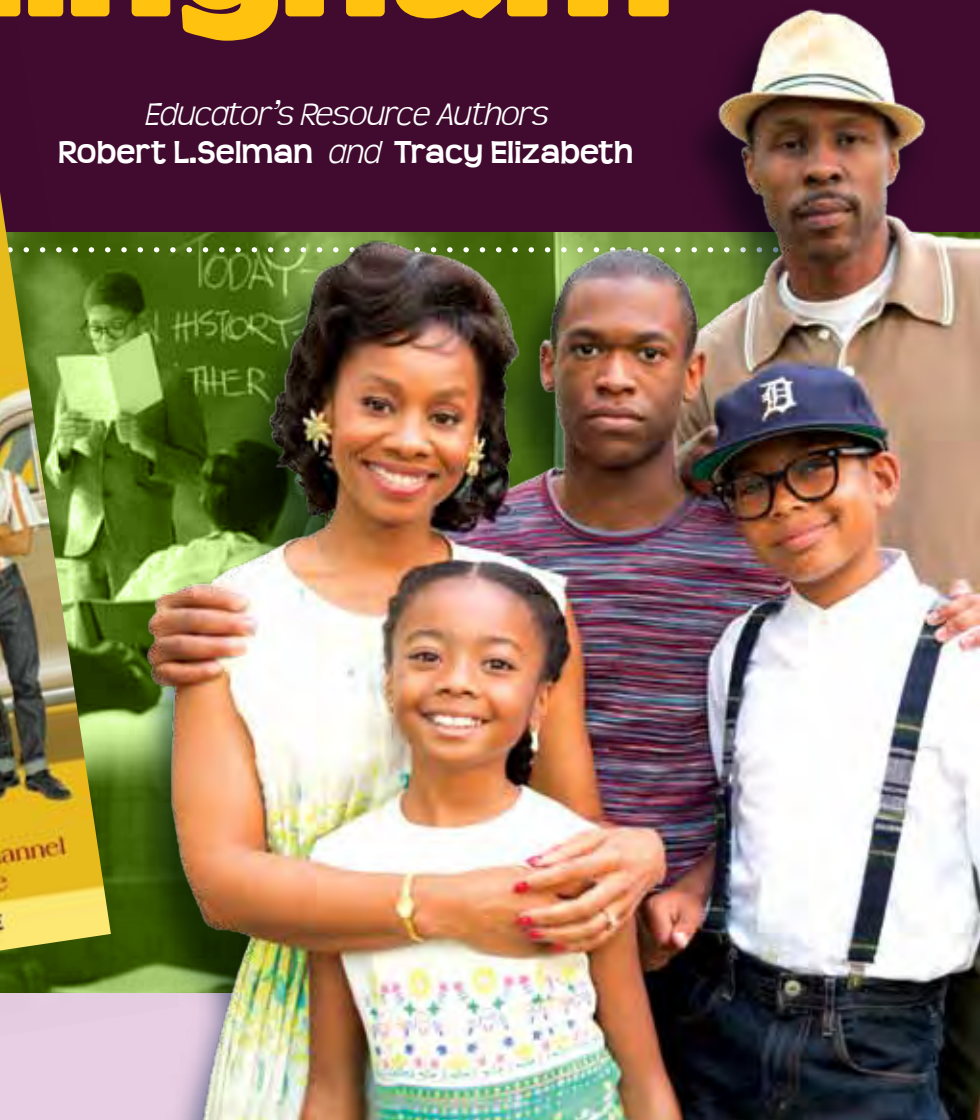
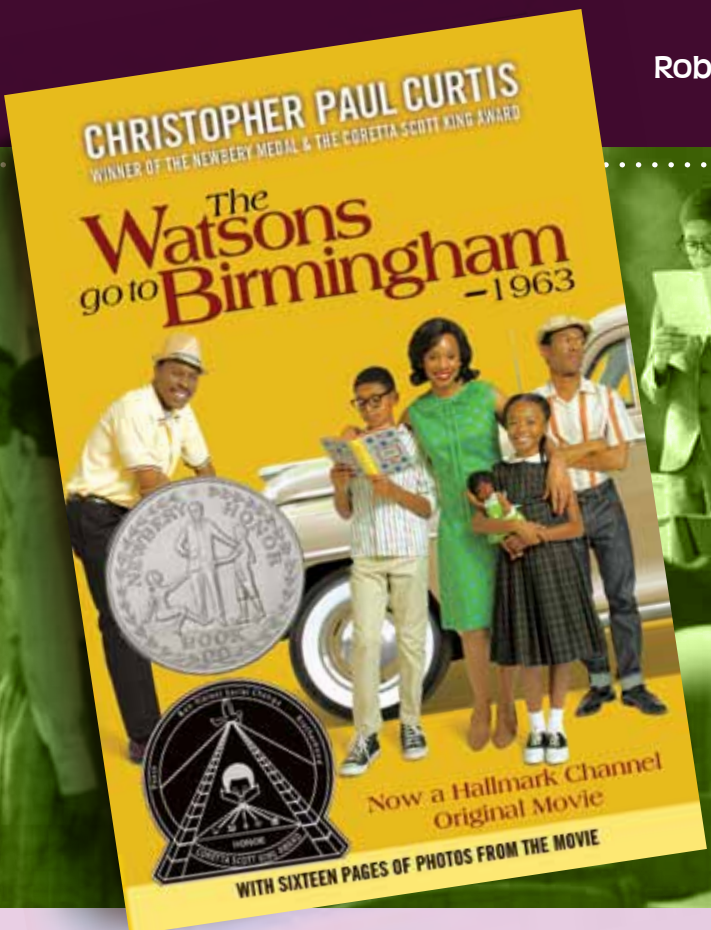




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FEATURE FILM
FROM **WALDEN MEDIA**

An Educator's Resource for
The Watsons go to Birmingham

Educator's Resource Authors
Robert L. Selman and Tracy Elizabeth





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Coming this fall from Walden Family Theater,
The Watsons Go to Birmingham
*is the tale of a summer journey that leaves a family—
and a nation—forever transformed.*

Starring Tony-winning and Grammy-nominated actress **Anika Noni Rose** and three-time Tony nominee **David Alan Grier**, the film is an adaptation of Christopher Paul Curtis' Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Honor Award winning book *The Watsons Go To Birmingham – 1963*. Skai Jackson, LaTanya Richardson, Wood Harris, Bryce Jenkins and Harrison Knight also star.

Watsons is faithfully adapted by acclaimed children's book author and screenwriter Tonya Lewis Lee. The film is produced by Ms. Lee and Nikki Silver and is directed by Tony Award nominee Kenny Leon.



Produced by Walden Media, ARC Entertainment and Tonik Productions, LLC, in association with Walmart and P&G, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* premieres **September 20, 2013** on the Hallmark Channel.



WALDEN MEDIA™

An Educator's Resource for
**The Watsons
go to
Birmingham**

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²This section is original material, copyright Elizabeth



About Voices
About the Book
About The Educator's Resource

About Voices

The Voices approach to the promotion of literacy, self and social awareness.

Voices uses theory and evidence based research (Selman, 2003³; Snow, 2009⁴) to develop resource guides for children's and young adult literature that encourages young people to develop their own voice. These innovative materials feature award-winning multicultural texts and comprehensive Educator Resources that integrate social and moral development, character education, violence prevention, social and emotional learning, literacy, reading comprehension, and writing.

Voices & Literacy

Reading Comprehension

In this guide, students learn, practice, and apply both simple and deep comprehension strategies that help deepen their understanding of the text. The instructional plan leads to the gradual transfer of responsibility from educator to student through these steps:

Writing

The Educator's Resource suggests writing activities that encourage students to express their thoughts, opinions, and ideas across a range of writing genres and to demonstrate their understanding of the social development themes within the book.

Academic Language & Literary Analysis

Students expand their vocabulary by relating vocabulary words to the mood, plot, characters, and setting of the story. This guide also features vocabulary words that give students a common understanding of academic language crucial for understanding and discussing the thematic social development concepts they encounter in the book.

³Selman, R. L. (2003). The promotion of social awareness: Powerful lessons from the partnership of developmental theory and classroom practice. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

⁴Snow, C., Lawrence, J., & White, C. (2009). Generating knowledge of academic language among urban middle school students. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 2(4), 325–344.

Oral Language, Listening, & Fluency

Oral language development, or oral literacy, involves fluency in speaking and listening, and both are related to improved text comprehension. Through activities such as partner sharing, paired reading, reader's theater, classroom discussion and debate, and others, students deepen their understanding of themselves, of others, and of the text.

Self and Social Development: Core Awareness, Skills, and Values

Six thematic concepts are embedded in this Special Edition Resource to help students develop self-understanding, enhance their social-emotional skills, value their family, friends, and community, and strengthen their understanding and appreciation of democracy.

Personal & Cultural Identity Awareness

Students explore who they are and how to integrate the various parts of their lives into a healthy self-concept within the culture in which they are growing up.

Perspective Taking & Coordination Skills

Students learn to express their own points of view and to take the perspectives of their peers and the characters from the literature they read.

Social Conflict Resolution Skills

Building on Perspective Taking, students learn ways to resolve conflicts with their peers and in society.

Family, Friends, & Community Values

Students gain insight into the nature of their relationships with friends, family members, and neighbors.

Social & Civic Awareness

Students develop their awareness of social and civic realities, cultural differences, and injustices that need to be righted.

Democracy: Freedom & Responsibility Values

Students reflect and act upon their social responsibilities in a democratic society.

The Voices Instructional Plan For *The Watsons*

This Educator’s Resource is organized around a Central Theme related to the primary themes of the book. Each of the following five Instructional Formats promote the Central Theme of the story, while also promoting literacy skills, social and emotional learning, and civic awareness. In the resource, specific methods to implement these Instructional Formats are provided for each of the fifteen lessons that are aligned with each of the fifteen chapters of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*.

Instructional Formats

Connect

This section suggests activities that introduce the students to the essential themes of the chapter, provides students with the social and historical context of the story, and gives students and the educator the opportunity to connect their own personal experiences to the issues raised in the book.

Read

This section of the lesson is critical to the students’ understanding of the story and how the story connects to their lives. It is up to the educator to determine the most appropriate reading format for the students. Appendix A offers a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.

Discuss

This section suggests open-ended critical thinking questions and discussion-based activities designed to deepen students’ comprehension of the content and broaden their perspectives about social issues addressed in the text. For more information, please see Appendices B & C.

Write

This section suggests writing prompts that deepen students’ reflections on critical issues in the story and how those issues may be resolved or contemplated using prosocial strategies like empathy, self-awareness, and perspective taking.

Reflect

Through a variety of oral prompts, this section encourages students to develop their own reflective capacity by likening complicated events in the text to their own lives and greater community. The exercises encourage students to reflect upon the personal and social meaning of what they have read, heard, and discussed with their peers.

Additional Resources in the Guide

Additional resources are available in the appendices of this guide. These include:

Appendix A:

A list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.

Appendix B:

Recommendations for possible discussion-based activities, with descriptions of how to conduct these discussions.

Appendix C:

A list of strategies for how the educator can effectively facilitate and promote healthy classroom dialogue.

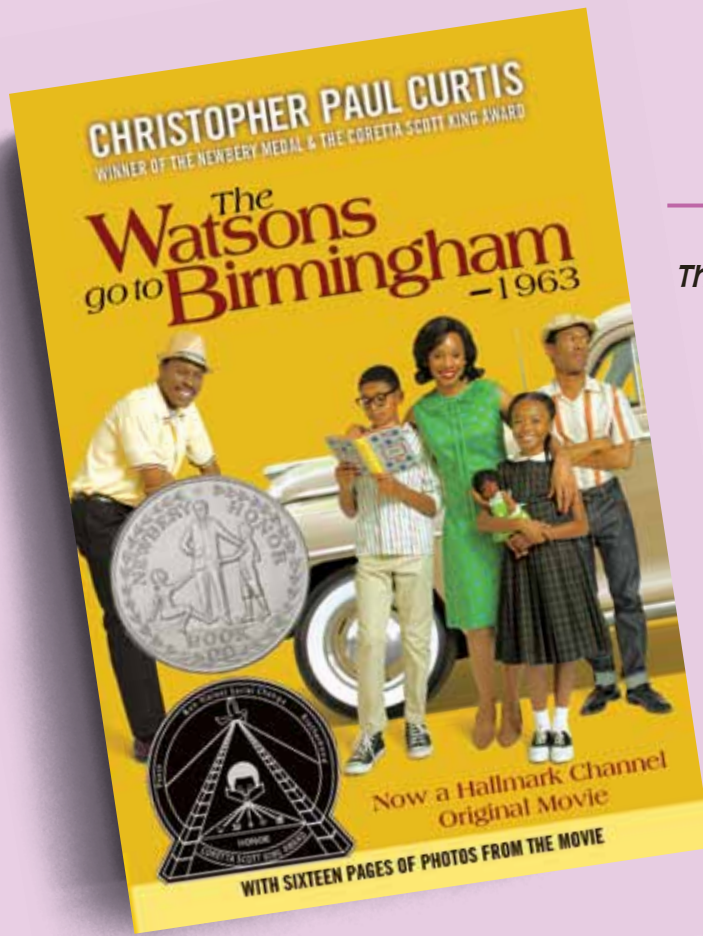
Appendix D:

Optional connection video activity for older students. *Four Little Girls*.

Appendix E:

A speech by Josephine Baker at the March on Washington, 1963.

About The Book



The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963

Author: Christopher Paul Curtis

Publisher: Random House
Children's Books

Date: 1995

Length: 210 pages

ISBN: 978-0-385-38294-6

Story Summary

The everyday routines and lifestyle of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are irrevocably changed after they decide to visit their grandma in Alabama in the sixties. The character of Kenny Watson, a smart, thoughtful and impressionable 10-year-old, tells the story. Kenny brings his family - Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, and Byron, his 13-year-old "official juvenile delinquent" brother - to life as he walks us through some of their hilarious escapades. The Watsons set out for Birmingham for the main reason of dropping off Byron for the summer at his Grandma's house so that she can put some sense into him. It's 1963 and things in Birmingham are nothing like they are in Flint. The Watsons soon find themselves embroiled in the ugliness, violence and hatred brewing in Alabama. Ultimately, the trip changes the lives of the Watsons, especially Kenny and Byron, forever. This powerful story is comical, yet tragic at the same time. In the end Kenny finally understands what he needs to do in order to develop the strength to deal with the challenges he and his family face, and where these strengths can be found. They are inside him.

About the Author

Christopher Paul Curtis won the Newbery Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award for his bestselling second novel, *Bud, Not Buddy*. His first novel, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*, was also singled out for many awards, among them a Newbery Honor and a Coretta Scott King Honor and is now a Hallmark Channel Original Movie. His most recent novels for Random House include *The Mighty Miss Malone*, *Mr. Chickee's Messy Mission*, *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*, and *Bucking the Sarge*.

Christopher Paul Curtis grew up in Flint, Michigan. After high school he began working on the assembly line at the Fisher Body Plant No. 1 while attending the Flint branch of the University of Michigan. He is now a full-time writer. He lives with his family in Detroit.

Historical Context

It is critical that educators thoroughly read and familiarize themselves with the historical context provided in this section. This section is designed to offer educators a deep understanding of the significance of this book and how to bolster students' background knowledge surround issues that led up to the 1963 Birmingham bombings. A familiarity with the Civil Rights movement will also prepare teachers to answer tough questions that will be asked by students and will offer support when making text-to-world connections for students. Much of this content echoes what is introduced in the Epilogue of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*; this information is important to consider *before* reading the book to the students.



Discriminatory signage typical in heavily segregated Birmingham, AL.

Although the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution ended slavery and extended the rights and protected the citizenship of blacks, these changes did little to change the attitudes and behaviors of white Americans, especially those living in the South. From the 1930s through the early 1960s, where black people could go and what they could do was severely limited by segregation - a series of laws and customs that kept blacks and whites apart in many ways. Segregation meant different things in different places. In the South, blacks and whites often lived near one another. In the North, blacks and whites lived in completely separate neighborhoods. Southern communities and states passed segregation laws that allowed for discrimination in schooling, housing, and career opportunities. Segregation was enforced by creating separate facilities for blacks and whites. The worst sections of public facilities and accommodations were for "Coloreds Only." Whatever the specific laws were, white people were treated better than black people. In order to just live, it seemed that black people were expected to just learn to make the best of situations that were meant to hurt and insult them.



March to Washington, D.C. for Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech, August 1963.

Beginning in the 1950s a number of organizations began to crop up that strove to put an end to segregation and discrimination. Some of these were the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Individuals such as Thurgood Marshall, Ralph Abernathy, and Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., along with many others worked along side these organizations to change the laws through nonviolent resistance. They adopted many of the nonviolent teachings and techniques that Mohandas K. Gandhi used to free the Indian people from the rule of the British.

In 1954 the first real step toward ending segregation in America happened in the form of the Supreme Court's ruling in the famous case called *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. In this ruling segregation in the public school system was deemed unconstitutional. *Brown* signaled to many people a hope that segregation might end soon. Southern lawmakers, who were all white because of Jim Crow laws that limited the number of black people eligible to vote, resisted desegregation. Jim Crow laws mandated racial segregation in all areas of public life. Blacks and whites had separate schools, trains, movie theaters, hotels, restaurants, parks, restrooms, and even water fountains. Public facilities for black people were often inferior and not as well maintained as those for white people.

In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to follow an Alabama law that required black passengers on city buses to give up their seats for white passengers. After she was arrested, Martin Luther King, Jr. helped to organize a boycott of city buses until they treated black and white passengers the same.

The sit-ins and boycotts that followed applied economic pressure where change was most needed. Freedom Riders - black and white Americans -



Bomb damage to Gaston Motel in Birmingham, AL, 1963. Birmingham was unofficially named "Bombingham" for the number of bombings taking place there.

took bus trips throughout the South to test federal laws that banned segregation. Black students enrolled in segregated schools. Protest marches and demonstrations continued to make headlines. Civil rights workers carried out programs for voter education and registrations. The goal to create tension and provoke confrontations peacefully in order to force the federal government to step in and enforce the laws was beginning to work. Inspired by these successes as well as others, more and more people believed the time was near when black Americans would be granted the civil rights they deserved as citizens of the United States, the rights other Americans took for granted. Even people who didn't agree had begun to pay attention to the growing numbers of those who were willing to protest against segregation.

Unfortunately, the goal of nonviolence was not always met. Gunshots, fires, and bombings often answered the trials and tribulations of the movement. These attacks were not only directed against the brave people who so heroically fought to achieve change. Despite the danger, the civil rights movement grew stronger, gaining support all over the country. On May 2, 1963, almost a thousand children joined what some called the Children's Crusade, a march from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church into the center of Birmingham. The entire city was shocked, even the police, who were too surprised to do anything. Inspired by the success of the demonstration, the marchers returned the next day, but this time the police were ready for them. They came with their dogs, and the fire department came with their hoses. As the rest of the country turned on their televisions that night, they watched the police and their dogs abusing the blacks, they watched the dogs bite and chase the children. They watched as the water knocked down men, women, and children.



Demonstrators marching in the street holding signs during the March on Washington, 1963.



Many people who had never thought about civil rights before began to think about them. On August 28, 1963, more than 250,000 people from all over the country marched on Washington, D.C. to pressure Congress to pass the Civil Rights Bill - to demand equal rights for black Americans. It was there, in front of the Lincoln Memorial, that Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech. However, the hatred and the evil continued. A few weeks later a black church in Birmingham was bombed and four little girls, ages eleven and fourteen, were killed. Then, finally, a little less than a year later, on July 2, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Bill.

Little Rock Nine- Elizabeth Eckford is being yelled at by segregationists as she walks to school, 1957.

The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 begins in January, 1963, nine years after the Supreme Court ruled that “segregation is inherently unequal.” Unfortunately, life for many black people was still very different from life for many white people. Because of the long history of segregation in the South, many Southern black people moved in the early 20th century to industrial areas of the North where there were more manufacturing jobs, particularly in the automobile industry, and somewhat better treatment. Flint, Michigan was a very important automobile-manufacturing center in 1963. Thus, as a result of migration patterns, there were many Michigan families like the Watsons who had close relatives in the South.



Civil rights march
to Washington, D.C.

Awards & Honors

- A Newbery Honor Book
- A Coretta Scott King Honor Book
- An ALA Top Ten Best Book/Quick Pick
- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- An ALA Notable Book for Children
- A Booklist Top 25 Black History Picks for Youth
- An IRA Young Adult Choice
- An NCSS—CBC Notable Children’s Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies
- A Bank Street Child Study Association Children’s Book Award
- A New York Times Book Review Best Book
- A Publishers Weekly Best Book
- A Horn Book Fanfare
- A Bulletin Blue Ribbon
- A Golden Kite Award for Fiction
- A Publishers Weekly Flying Start Author
- A Notable Book for a Global Society
- California Young Reader Medal Winner
- Hawaii Nene Award
- Illinois Rebecca Caudill Award
- Indiana Department of Education Read-Aloud List
- Indiana Young Hoosier Book Award
- Kansas William Allen White Children’s Book Award
- Maine Student Book Award
- Michigan Reading Association Children’s Choice Award
- Minnesota Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award
- Missouri Mark Twain Award
- Nebraska Golden Sower Award
- Nevada Young Readers Award
- New Hampshire Great Stoneface Book Award
- New Mexico Land of Enchantment Reading List
- Oklahoma Sequoyah Young Adult Book Award
- Pacific Northwest Young Reader’s Choice Award
- Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Award
- South Carolina Book Award
- Tennessee Volunteer State Award
- Texas Lone Star Reading List
- Vermont Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children’s Book Award
- Virginia Young Readers Program
- West Virginia Children’s Book Award
- Wisconsin Golden Archer Book Award

About The Educator's Resource

Exploring the Central Theme

There's a strength in all of us that gives us the courage to deal with our problems.

The Central Theme encourages children to explore conflict resolution by understanding themselves and others through multiple perspectives. By reading and discussing the book, students develop an understanding of why it is important to know yourself and to understand the points of view of others in order to successfully face and solve conflicts.

As students follow the growing sense of self-awareness, identity, and strength of character that Kenny realizes within himself, they gain insight into how they can look to themselves, their cultures and heritages, and others as a means to develop their own sense of self-awareness, identity, and inner strength. When the book begins, Kenny is involved in the more simplistic problems of his day-to-day existence. He feels as though he is a misfit who does not really fit in anywhere. However, when significant conflict surfaces, Kenny's simple life suddenly seems unimportant in the grand scheme of things. Kenny experiences a sort of breakdown when he is unable to come to terms with major trauma in his life. For a short while he chooses to withdraw, rather than deal with the terror he has encountered.

When Kenny realizes that inside of him there is a strength that affords him the courage to deal with the conflicts he has faced, he genuinely feels that he will be "alright." Kenny understands that if one looks deep enough inside, they will find the inner courage and strength necessary to face even the most insurmountable conflicts that arise in life.

Developing Literacy Skills

Literacy and Literature Appreciation Skills

- Making predictions and drawing inferences
- Understanding plot, character, setting, and theme
- Relating the message of the story to one's own life
- Identifying and understanding symbolism
- Using writing to express feelings
- Developing vocabulary and academic language skills
- Practicing exploratory and persuasive writing
- Using context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words

Promoting Self and Social Development

Identity Development and Emotional Competencies

- Understanding and coping with one's feelings
- Understanding and expressing one's individuality
- Appreciating the values and support systems of family and community

Perspective-Taking and Conflict Resolution Competencies

- Exploring characters' different points of view about a conflict
- Understanding cross-cultural relationships
- Understanding problems and coping with conflict
- Exploring resolution techniques

Cultural and Social Awareness Competencies

- Appreciating racial pride, identity, and multiculturalism
- Exploring how cultural and historical roots shape personal identity
- Learning about the history of the Civil Rights Movement

Unit Planner for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*

This Resource divides the book into fifteen lessons that align with each of the fifteen chapters of the book. Each lesson provides opportunities for connection, reading, discussion, writing, and reflection activities. Each activity within the lessons is estimated to take between 15 - 20 minutes. This format allows for the educators to pick and choose which activities they would like students to complete during any given lesson. Therefore, a lesson may range from one or two activities that take up 30 – 40 minutes of instructional time, or the lesson may include all six recommended activities for a full 90 – 120 literacy block.

Educators may want to consider the following factors when determining how to modify the lesson to best accommodate their students:

- The length of the class period or literacy block;
- The age or maturity of the students;
- The developmental competency of the students;
- The reading levels of the students; and
- Students' ability to complete reading and writing assignments as homework.

Unit Planner

The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963

Lesson 1	Chapter 1: Family Relationships
Lesson 2	Chapter 2: Accepting Differences
Lesson 3	Chapter 3: Friendship & Forgiving
Lesson 4	Chapter 4: Empathy & Conflict Resolution
Lesson 5	Chapter 5: Choices & Consequences
Lesson 6	Chapter 6: Empathy & Understanding
Lesson 7	Chapter 7: Choices & Consequences
Lesson 8	Chapter 8: Family Relationships
Lesson 9	Chapter 9: Culture & Conflict
Lesson 10	Chapter 10: Fears & Differences
Lesson 11	Chapter 11: Family Dynamics & Perspectives
Lesson 12	Chapter 12: Community & Culture
Lesson 13	Chapter 13: Risk & Identity
Lesson 14	Chapter 14: Acceptance & Adversity
Lesson 15	Chapter 15: Courage & Compromise

Reader's Movie Theater

The Watsons Go to Birmingham

Reader's Movie Theater 1	Text-to-Film Activity for Scene 11
Reader's Movie Theater 2	Text-to-Film Activity for Scenes 11-13
Reader's Movie Theater 3	Text-to-Film Activity for Scene 56
Reader's Movie Theater 4	Text-to-Film Activity for Scenes 58 & 59
Reader's Movie Theater 5	Text-to-Film Activity for Scene 66

Academic Language for *The Watsons*

This guide specifically recommends the promotion of *academic language* words that students can expect to encounter frequently during their academic careers, rather than content specific *vocabulary terms* that have little relevance outside of the specific reading of the text. Students will work with academic language in relation to the mood, plot, characters, and setting of the story. Ideally, educators will introduce the targeted terms *before* exposing students to the text to ensure greater comprehension during the reading. Another way to ensure that students become familiar with these terms is to include them with your weekly word list or word-study lessons. While there are many challenging words within the text, focusing on *academic language* terms that are commonly used across a range of content areas will be most applicable to the development of students' academic *and* personal lives.

Chapter 1

automatically
delinquent
hilarious

Chapter 2

numb
nervous
punctual

Chapter 3

desperate
jabbering
version

Chapter 4

orbiting
hypnotized
disappear

Chapter 5

glugging
traitor
parachute

Chapter 6

peon
mourning
conscience

Chapter 7

linoleum
executioner
tolerate

Chapter 8

civilization
vibrations
interpretation

Chapter 9

eavesdropped
peninsula
seniority

Chapter 10

sanitation
facilities
amount

Chapter 11

rabies
surrendered
pathetic

Chapter 12

desire
yakking
interrupt

Chapter 13

whirlpool
electrocuted
strange

Chapter 14

familiar
concrete
investigate

Chapter 15

automatically
wonder
embarrass



Unit Plan
for *The Watsons*



Mr. Robert (David Alan Grier, left) meets the Watsons (left to right: Anika Noni Rose, Skai Jackson, Harrison Knight, Bryce Clyde Jenkins, Wood Harris) after they arrive in Birmingham.

Lesson #1

Family Relationships

Lesson 1
Academic
Language

delinquent
hilarious
automatically

READ

Introduce the Central Theme

There's a strength in all of us that gives us the courage to deal with our problems.

Write the Central Theme on the board. Explain that you will be exploring this statement as you read and discuss the book *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963*. Tell the students that the story is told through the eyes of the main character, a ten-year-old boy named Kenny Watson, who faces several problems in his life that he has a very hard time dealing with.

Read Chapter 1, pages 1 – 19

Students should read Chapter 1 of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963*. It is up to the educator to determine the most appropriate reading format for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 1

In Chapter 1 we are introduced to the main characters in the book, the Watson family: Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, ten-year-old Kenny, and thirteen-year old Byron. The family is bundled up together trying to stay warm because of a faulty furnace. When they decide to spend the night at a relative's house, Byron and Kenny are elected to scrape off the ice from the Brown Bomber, the family car. Admiring and kissing his reflection, Byron manages to get his lips stuck to the mirror of the car. After considerable antics, Momma finally pulls Byron free and the family piles in the car headed to Aunt Cydney's house, where Kenny takes advantage of the opportunity to risk teasing his older brother.

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 1. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: The Watson family lives in a very cold town. Big brother Byron, who is at risk of becoming a juvenile delinquent, gets his lips stuck to the car when he kisses it. The family nicknames Byron the "Lipless Wonder.")



Instead of cleaning the car, Byron (Harrison Knight) kisses his reflection in the window, only to get his lips frozen to the glass. (In the novel, Byron kisses the rear-view mirror.) His father says, "This little knucklehead was kissing his reflection in the window and his lips got stuck!"

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

After reading Chapter 1, reinforce students' comprehension by asking these questions:

Identify Details

How does Byron earn the nickname "The Lipless Wonder?"

(Sample response: Because Byron got his mouth stuck to the frozen window.)

Characters' Perspectives

How does Momma feel about living in Flint, Michigan?

(Sample response: She doesn't like the cold. She would prefer the warm weather in Alabama.)

When Momma tells Dad that the people in Birmingham are friendlier than they are in Flint, Dad laughs and says, "Oh yeah, they're a laugh a minute down there. Let's see, where was that 'Coloreds Only' bathroom downtown?" What does Dad mean by this? What is the point he is trying to make?

(Sample response: Some people in Birmingham are not so nice. There are places that separate blacks and whites, and as a black woman, Momma would have been treated badly by some folks.)

Make Inferences

Hambone scared Momma into thinking there were no black people in Michigan. Why would this bother Momma?

(Sample response: Momma wanted to live near people that made her feel included and accepted. Maybe white folks did not always make her feel this way.)

Context Clues

When students do not know the meaning of a word in a sentence, they can use other words to find its meaning. Consider the following passage from Chapter 1 of *The Watsons* (p. 1 – 2):

*All of my family sat real close to each other on the couch under a blanket. Dad said this would **generate** a little heat but he didn't have to tell us this, it seemed like the cold **automatically** made us want to get together and huddle up.*

Ask students if they can use context clues to determine the meaning of the words *generate* and *automatically*. Tell them to first think about what is happening in the sentence, and then to find other words that may explain the meaning of these unfamiliar words.

Deepen Comprehension

Think-Pair-Share

In order to deepen students' comprehension, they need to discuss the book. Ask students to partner with a classmate sitting next to them to *discuss* the following questions:

In Chapter 1, Kenny plays along with Byron and Buphead's Surviving the Blizzard test. On page 11 he says, "I made up my mind that no matter how hard they threw me in that snow I was going to get up laughing." Why would Kenny do this? Do you agree with his choice?

Allow students 3-5 minutes to talk about these questions with their partner. Encourage them to take turns listening, and then sharing out their ideas. After the pairs have had a few minutes to talk, return to the whole group and ask for a few volunteers to share *their partner's* ideas. Ask if others in the room had similar thoughts or if they have different points of view.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

If you were Kenny Watson, how would you feel about your brother Byron's behavior? If you were Joetta, what would it mean to have your big brother be called a juvenile delinquent?

REFLECT

In this chapter, there are themes of peer pressure. Ask students to share their thoughts about this question:

Have you ever been in an uncomfortable situation where you felt pressured to act a certain way? Tell about a time that you went along with the crowd, despite feelings that you shouldn't.



Kenny (Bryce Clyde Jenkins, left) and Byron (Harrison Knight, right) are sent outside in the bitter cold of Flint, Michigan to brush off the Brown Bomber. Kenny yells over to Byron, "I'm telling you now, Byron, I'm not doing your part."

Lesson #2

Accepting Differences

Lesson 2
Academic
Language

numb
nervous
punctual

READ

Read Chapter 2, pages 20-31

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 Kenny explains how if it weren't for his big brother Byron, the "god" of Clark Elementary, he would have gotten picked on a lot more because basically he had two major things wrong with him. The first was that he was smart - he could even read upside down. The second was that he had a lazy eye. Byron showed Kenny how to squint and then look at people sideways so that the lazy eye wasn't so noticeable. He didn't get called Cockeye Kenny nearly as much after that. This chapter also introduces two new kids from down South - Rufus and Cody Fry. Kenny is really excited because he believes that Larry Dunn and the other bullies will have someone new to pick on and just may leave him alone!

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 2. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Larry Dunn is a bully at the school who picks on Kenny when Byron is not around. Kenny was asked to show off his reading skills to a class of fifth graders. Byron taught Kenny how to make his eyes look straight. Kenny is thankful because a new student might take his place as the underdog.)



Bio.com's Langston Hughes Biography:

<http://www.biography.com/people/langston-hughes-9346313>

Children's Rhymes Penned by Langston Hughes:

<http://www.crmvet.org/poetry/fhughes.htm#fcr>

DISCUSS

Check Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Cause and Effect

What caused teachers to treat Kenny differently than other kids in the school?

(Sample response: Kenny was very smart. He cared about learning.)

What effect did this special treatment have on Kenny?

(Sample response: Kids teased him.)

Make Inferences

Why would Kenny's smartness make him enemies of other students?

(Sample response: Because some kids may feel jealous that Kenny can read better.)

Why did Byron show Kenny how to squint and look at people sideways, but then sometimes called him Cockeye Kenny himself?

(Sample response: Byron doesn't want other people to pick on Kenny, but thinks it is okay for family to pick on family.)

Characters' Perspectives

How does Kenny feel when people call him Poindexter, egghead, or Cockeye Kenny? Explain.

(Sample response: He feels embarrassed and like an outcast.)

Mr. Alums, the fifth grade teacher, tells the class, "I've often told you that as Negroes the world is many times a hostile place for us." Why would he say this?

(Sample response: During the time that the story takes place, unfair laws were set in place that treated black people unkindly. He wants the students to learn to become good readers so that they can protect themselves from some injustice when they get older. Being literate gives you power.)

Using Evidence from the Text

Challenge students to support their claims with evidence from the text by asking the following questions:

What does the bus driver think of the way Larry Dunn treats the new boy on the bus?

(Sample response: The bus driver is angry with Larry.)

How do you know that the bus driver was angry? On what page of the text does it tell you this? What are the words that give you this idea?

(Sample response: On page 30, it says, "The bus driver was really mad.")

Deepen Comprehension

Think-Pair-Share

In order to deepen students' comprehension, they need to *discuss* the book. Ask students to partner with a classmate sitting next to them to discuss the following questions:

On page 28, Kenny says a "miracle" happened: He was sent a savior. Why does Kenny view the new Southern boy as his savior? Do you agree with Kenny's judgment?

Allow students 3-5 minutes to talk about these questions with their partner. Encourage them to take turns listening, and then sharing out their ideas. After the pairs have had a few minutes to talk, return to the whole group and ask for a few volunteers to share *their partner's* ideas. Ask if others in the room had similar thoughts or if they have different points of view.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Even though Kenny gets called names like “Poindexter,” “egghead,” and “professor,” he continues to put the same effort into his reading and his schoolwork. Unlike Kenny, many people would not choose to ignore the teasing, but would instead stop the reading, studying, etc. so that the teasing might stop. Have you ever ignored being teased by your peers in order to do the right thing? Explain your situation and how it made you feel about yourself.

REFLECT

Invite students to share their writing prompt responses with the class. Encourage them to note ways in which their peers’ stories are similar to their own. Ask:

In the future, if you get teased or if you see someone else get teased, how do you think you will react?



Joetta (Skai Jackson) smiles at her brothers on the way to Birmingham.

Lesson #3

Friendship & Forgiving

Lesson 3
Academic
Language

**desperate
jabbering
version**

READ

Read Chapter 3, pages 32 – 46

It is up to the educator’s discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 we experience the demise of Kenny’s friendship with L.J. Jones, a sneaky friend who managed to trick Kenny, not only by stealing about 100 of his dinosaurs, but also by making him feel pretty foolish in the process. Although at first reluctant, Kenny finds a new friend in the new boy at school, Rufus Fry. A problem arises when Kenny hurts Rufus’ feelings by laughing at his raggedy clothes along with the other kids. With the help of Momma, the pair manages to patch things up. After a bit of contemplation, Kenny finds real value in his friendship with Rufus and comes to the conclusion that Rufus is right about him, Kenny “is different from the rest of them other people.”

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 3. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Kenny befriends Rufus Fry, a new student from Arkansas. Kenny shares his lunches with Rufus. LJ stole a bunch of Kenny’s dinosaurs. Kenny hurts Rufus’ feelings by laughing at him, but tries to make amends.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Context Clues

Consider the following passage from Chapter 3 of *The Watsons* (p. 33):

*This guy was real **desperate** for a friend because even though I wouldn't say much back to him he kept **jabbering** away at me all through class.*

Ask students if they can use context clues to determine the meaning of the words *desperate* and *jabbering*.

Identify Details

On the playground Kenny and Rufus have an interesting conversation about a squirrel. What does Rufus say to Kenny that is so surprising?

(Sample response: In Arkansas, it is normal for people to shoot squirrels and eat them for dinner.)

In this chapter, Kenny figures out that there are two things wrong with Rufus. What are those two things?

(Sample response: 1- Rufus has a funny accent and 2- Rufus wore the same clothes all the time.)

On what page of the book do we learn this?

(Page 42)

Make Inferences

Why did Rufus save half of the sandwich Kenny gave him for later?

(Sample response: To give to his little brother Cody.)

Why would Rufus save the half sandwich for his little brother?

(Sample response: Rufus and Cody are poor and do not have a lot of food to eat.)

Characters' Perspectives

On the bus, when Larry Dunn makes fun of Rufus' clothes, Kenny joins in the laughter. Why did Kenny do this?

(Sample response: Kenny was afraid Larry would pick on him, too.)

How did Kenny's choice make Rufus feel?

(Sample response: Rufus' feelings were hurt and he refused to talk to Kenny.)

When Kenny goes to Rufus' house to try to make amends, Rufus says to Kenny, "I didn't think you was like all them other people. I thought you was different." How does this make Kenny feel?

(Sample response: Kenny feels sad and ashamed.)

Deepen Comprehension

Fishbowl Discussion

In order to deepen students' comprehension, they need to *discuss* the book. Ask four students to volunteer to start the fishbowl. Provide them with the following prompt:

When Rufus tells Kenny that he thought Kenny was different, what did he mean by this? In what ways was Kenny "different" from others? Why was this important to Rufus?

Encourage students to take turns speaking, to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, and to support their claims with evidence from the text.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Sometimes, when things are difficult, we need to find the courage to do the right thing. When Kenny laughed at Rufus on the bus, he did not have the courage to stand up to Larry Dunn. Can you think of a time when you needed courage in order to make a good decision? Explain what happened and talk about how courage helped you.

REFLECT

Cultural Connection

We learn in Chapter 3 that there are significant regional differences in the way Kenny and Rufus regard squirrels. Rufus says it is normal for people to shoot and eat squirrels, but Kenny thinks this sounds crazy. Ask students:

Can you think of ways in which your family practices and beliefs are different from those in other neighborhoods, towns, or even countries?

Explain to students that differences among people are common and should be respected because that is what makes us special. Some of the causes of segregation were rooted in people's reluctance to value differences.



The Watson's cousins (Shameik Moore and Josephine Lawrence) talk to the Watson kids (left to right: Harrison Knight and Skai Jackson) about their involvement fighting for civil rights in the Birmingham Children's March.

Lesson #4

Empathy & Conflict Resolution

Lesson 4
Academic
Language

orbiting
hypnotized
disappear

READ

Read Chapter 4, pages 47 - 63

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 4

In Chapter 4 we get to know the characters of Kenny and Byron a little better. Born in Alabama and not really knowing much about the cold, Momma actually thought that her kids would freeze to death walking to school! This is probably why she insisted on dressing them in so many layers that they became known as "the Weird Watsons doing their mummy imitations." When Joey and Kenny complained about all the layers of clothing, Byron told them a tale about fake garbage trucks that picked up the frozen bodies of people who died on the streets. Although Kenny wasn't quite sure if Byron was telling the truth or not, it put an end to Joetta's whining about all the layers. When Larry Dunn steals Kenny's real leather gloves, Kenny turns to Byron for help. Byron gets revenge on Larry, but in a way that makes Kenny almost wish he hadn't snitched, for only "By and Buphead could make you feel sorry for someone as mean as Larry Dunn."

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 4. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Kenny has to help take Joetta's layers of clothes off at school just like Byron used to do for him. Larry Dunn picks on Kenny and Rufus and steals Kenny's gloves. Byron finds out that Larry has picked on Kenny, so he pressures Kenny into teaching Larry a lesson.)



In Chapter 4, we learn that Momma is overly concerned about how cold it can be in Flint. Challenge students to do a brief investigation into the climate differences between Flint, Michigan and Birmingham, Alabama.

Average Weather for Birmingham:

<http://www.weather.com/weather/wxclimatology/monthly/graph/USAL0054>

Average Weather for Flint, Michigan:

<http://www.weather.com/weather/wxclimatology/monthly/graph/USMI0295>

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Draw Conclusions

Why did some kids call Kenny and Joetta the “Weird Watsons?” (Sample response: Because they looked like mummies when they were all bundled up in their winter coats.)

Make Inferences

Why was Momma so concerned about her children getting cold?

(Sample response: Because she was from the south where the weather is much warmer—it is likely that the cold bothered Momma more than it did native northerners.)

The other kids only called Kenny and Joetta the “Weird Watsons” when Byron was not around. Why?

(Sample response: Because Byron intimidated other kids and would get revenge on anyone who picked on his siblings.)

Why did Byron tell Kenny and Joetta the story about the garbage truck that picked up frozen bodies?

(Sample response: To trick them into not complaining about wearing too many layers of winter clothes.)

Characters' Perspectives

When Kenny complains about having to help Joetta with her clothes, Byron says, “Who you think took all that stuff off your little behind all these years? What goes around goes around.” What does Byron mean by this?

(Sample response: Byron is telling Kenny that in the Watson family, the older sibling's job is to care for the younger sibling. Or, Kenny should stop complaining because he was also once a helpless baby like Joetta.)

Characters' Actions

Why does Kenny pretend to lose a pair of gloves?

(Sample response: He wanted to give his gloves to Rufus.)

Other than to be a bully, what reason would Larry have to steal Kenny's gloves?

(Sample response: It was freezing outside and he did not have a pair of his own gloves to keep him warm.)

Using Evidence from the Text

Challenge students to support their claims with evidence from the text by asking the following questions:

Rufus figures out that Larry Dunn stole Kenny's gloves. What evidence does he have to prove it?

(Sample response: On page 58, it says that after getting a Maytag Wash from Larry, Rufus finds snow in his pocket that is covered black from shoe polish.)

How does Kenny react when he realizes he only has one glove?

(Sample response: He is very upset. On page 58 it says that he "sat on the curb, sniffled a couple times, and finally cried.")

In this Chapter we learn that Larry Dunn is poor. What evidence supports this inference?

(Sample response: Page 56 tells us that Larry Dunn used to wear socks on his hands to keep warm, before he stole a pair of gloves. On page 61 we learn that Larry only wears a thin t-shirt under his windbreaker and that there are holes in the bottoms of his tennis shoes.)

Deepen Comprehension

Think-Pair-Share

Ask students to partner with a classmate sitting next to them to discuss the following questions:

When Byron punishes Larry for stealing Kenny's gloves, Kenny does not approve. On page 62, Kenny says, "I wished I hadn't told Byron about what happened, I wished I just could have gone the rest of the year with one glove. I couldn't stand to see how the movie was going to end, so me and Rufus left." What does it say about Kenny's personality that he feels sorry for Larry the bully?

Allow students 3-5 minutes to talk about these questions with their partner. Encourage them to take turns listening, and then sharing their ideas. After the pairs have had a few minutes to talk, return to the whole group and ask for a few volunteers to share *their partner's* ideas. Ask if others in the room had similar thoughts or if they have different points of view.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

In this Chapter, the Watson brothers encounter many dilemmas. Kenny and Byron have different ways of solving conflicts. Kenny is timid and allows himself to get bullied, yet he is empathetic and kind. On the other hand, Byron is confrontational and bullies others, yet is strong and never gets picked on. Think of a time that you –or someone you know— had the strength to choose empathy and kindness over revenge and meanness to solve a dilemma.

REFLECT

Invite students to share their writing prompt responses with the class. Encourage them to note ways in which their peers' stories are similar to their own. Discuss how having empathy and treating others kindly often makes us feel the best. Then, challenge the students to think of how acts of compassion can better their community. Ask:

We notice in this chapter that several of the characters cannot afford proper clothing for the winter. This is very true for many people in our country. Do you feel a responsibility to treat the needy with compassion? What are some ways that communities can help those who are unable to afford clothing and food?



Mr. Robert (David Alan Grier) sits with the Watson kids (left to right: Skai Jackson, Bryce Clyde Jenkins, Harrison Knight) in a movie theater, and Kenny asks why they have to sit in a separate section of the theater, way up in the balcony.

Lesson #5

Choices & Consequences

Lesson 5
Academic
Language

glugging
traitor
parachute

READ

Read Chapter 5, pages 64 - 74

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 5

In Chapter 5 Byron gets caught lighting matches—again! After numerous threats, Momma decides that she has to make good on her promise to burn Byron's finger in order to teach him a lesson that he won't forget. But after five unsuccessful tries, with Joetta blowing out the flame from her matches, Momma finally gives up and decides to turn Byron over to Dad instead.

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 5. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Byron gets caught playing with fire in the bathroom. Momma wants to punish Byron by burning his fingers, but Joetta saves him.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Context Clues

Consider the following sentence from Chapter 5 (p. 66):

*Byron was on **take seven** when Momma finally wondered why the toilet was being flushed so much and came upstairs to see what was going on. The whole upstairs smelled like a giant match and she knew something was **fishy** even before she got to the top step.*

Given the context of the sentences, what do "take seven" and "fishy" mean?

Make Predictions

Do you think Byron will ever play with fire again? Why?

(Sample responses: No, because he's terrified of Momma's punishment. OR - Yes, because this is not the first time he has been caught.)

Characters' Perspectives

What is Kenny's perspective on the punishment that Byron is to receive from Momma?

(Sample response: Kenny only feels a little sorry for Byron, but not too sorry because he believed Byron deserved the punishment and because Byron did not take his chance to run when he had it. Kenny is also curious to see if Momma will really burn Byron.)

On page 69, why is Kenny terrified when Momma tells him to go get the matches?

(Sample response: He knew if he disobeyed Momma, he would be in serious trouble. But if he obeyed her, Byron would kill him. Either way, he was going to anger someone.)

On page 73, Kenny notes that “Momma’s horrible snake woman voice came out again...” Why does this alarm Kenny? And why would Momma have such a voice?

(Sample response: Momma doesn’t usually talk like that, and so her change in tone signals to Kenny just how furious she is.)

Characters’ Actions

What was Momma’s reaction when she caught Byron playing with fire in the bathroom?

(Sample response: Momma was so angry, she decided to burn Byron as punishment.)

Why did Joetta keep blowing out the matches when Momma was trying to burn Byron’s finger?

(Sample response: Because she didn’t want to see her brother get hurt. She loves her big brother and was trying to protect him.)

Using Evidence from the Past

Challenge students to support their claims with evidence from the text by asking the following questions:

Momma knows first hand how dangerous fire can be. What happened when she was a little girl?

(Sample response: On page 64, it says that “her house caught on fire and for two years after that she and her brothers had to wear clothes that smelled like smoke.”)

What kind of reaction did this story get out of the different Watson family members?

(Sample response: On page 64 it says that Momma and Joey would get sad and cry, but that Kenny and Byron thought it was kind of funny.)

What evidence do we have that Byron did not take Momma’s fire warnings seriously?

(Sample response: On page 64, we learn that Byron calls her childhood story “Momma’s Smokey the Bear Story.” The same page tells us that this was not Byron’s first offence and that he’d been caught playing with fire before.)

Deepen Comprehension

Fishbowl

Ask four students to volunteer to start the fishbowl. Provide them with the following prompt:

Byron has a bad track record of playing with fire in the house and Momma strongly disapproves because she believes Byron's games put the whole family in danger. Discuss whether Momma's reaction when she discovers Byron burning tissue in the bathroom is extreme. Is Momma's decision to burn Byron as punishment a just choice? Why? Was it appropriate for Joetta to intervene to save Byron? Why?

Encourage students to take turns speaking, to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, and to support their claims with evidence from the text.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Sometimes people can laugh at things that other people think are very serious. For instance Byron makes fun of Momma's story of the fire she experienced when she was a young child. Write about why you think that is. Explain how people can tell the difference between something that is funny and something that is serious.

REFLECT

Invite students to share their writing prompt responses with the class. Discuss how the different characters' perspectives on the situation vary. Talk about how it can be difficult to know how to react during times of trouble. Ask:

In this Chapter, Kenny knows that Byron is playing a dangerous game, but he chooses not to snitch on his big brother. Think of a time that you knew a friend or sibling was doing something dangerous. How did you react? How did the situation unfold? If you could go back, what would you do differently?



With great curiosity, the Watsons (left to right: Anika Noni Rose, Bryce Clyde Jenkins, Skai Jackson, Wood Harris, Harrison Knight) peer inside the Brown Bomber to find out what is hiding under the sheet: a brand new record player for their long road trip! "I see you've chosen the top of the line, the cream of the crop, the True-Tone AB-700 model, the Ultra-Glide!"

Lesson #6

Empathy & Understanding

Lesson 6
Academic
Language

peon
mourning
conscience

READ

Read Chapter 6, pages 75 - 85

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 6

In Chapter 6 the boys are sent to the grocery store and told to sign for the purchases. Believing that this meant the family was on welfare, Byron is both angry and mortified. His attitude quickly changes, however, once he figures out that it's only a credit system and he can sign for "free food." Soon thereafter he goes back and signs for a bag full of junk food. Kenny finds out about this newest mischief when cookies come flying at him from the tree that Byron happens to be hanging from while eating green apples and munching down cookies. Byron throws a couple of the cookies at a mourning dove and ends up killing it! Kenny is perplexed by Byron's actions when Byron actually starts to cry! Byron's emotional display embarrasses him and he starts throwing green apples at Kenny until the "punk" leaves him alone. When Kenny returns to the scene of the crime, he discovers that Byron has not only buried the bird, but has put together a makeshift Popsicle stick cross as well. Byron sure was hard to understand these days!

Chapter 6 lets the reader know that it could be embarrassing for kids in the 1960s to admit when they were on welfare. Challenge students investigate what it meant to be on welfare in the 1960s.



Michigan League for Public Policy—Welfare in the 1960s:

<http://www.mlpp.org/about-us/league-history/the-1960s>

Food Stamp Act of 1964 – War on Poverty:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/Legislation/history/PL_88-525.htm

Also, Byron buys a box of Swedish Cremes to eat.

What exactly are Swedish Cremes, anyway?

http://thestir.cafemom.com/food_party/135954/swedish_cream_cookies_will_make

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 6. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Byron learns that he can sign for groceries at the store, so he buys himself some cookies. Byron accidentally kills a dove and feels badly about it. He makes a grave for the dove.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Cause and Effect

What caused the mourning dove to die?

(Sample response: Byron threw a cookie at it.)

What effect did the bird's death have on Byron?

(Sample response: Byron was so sad he threw up and then started to cry.)

What lesson, if any, do you believe Byron learned from the dove's death?

(Sample response: Hopefully Byron will think before he makes poor choices next time.)

Characters' Perspectives

On page 85, Kenny says, "I really wished I was as smart as people thought I was, 'cause some of the time it was real hard to understand what was going on with Byron." What made Kenny feel this way?

(Sample response: Kenny is confused because Byron felt so bad for hurting the bird, but never seemed to feel bad about picking on human kids.)

Kenny tries to comfort Byron after he gets sick, and in response Byron throws green apples at Kenny, calls him a “punk,” and tells him to leave. Why would Byron behave like this?

(Sample response: Byron is embarrassed for exposing his feelings.)

Making Predictions

How do you think Byron’s parents will react when they find out that he signed for “free food” in the form of cookies at the grocery store?

(Sample response: They will burn him. Or make him eat cookies until he pops.)

Using Evidence from the Text

Byron and Kenny are both bothered by the idea of being on welfare. What parts of the book let us know this?

(Sample response: On page 76, Kenny says, “If I found out I was going to be on welfare I was going to really have to get ready to be teased.” On page 78, he doesn’t want anyone to hear him tell Mr. Mitchell that the Watsons are on the welfare list. Byron, on page 76, complains that being on welfare is embarrassing and makes him seem like a peon.)

Deepen Comprehension

Whole Class Discussion

Pose the following prompt to the whole class:

Byron’s behavior is confusing and frustrating to his family. For example, Kenny felt that Byron was becoming hard to understand, especially after the peculiar way he acted after he killed the mourning dove. What are some of the behaviors that Byron has displayed that make his actions seem confusing? What could be causing Byron to act in these ways?

Encourage students to talk to *each other*, rather than to you. Remind them to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, to support their claims with justifications from the book, and to ask each other questions about their ideas.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Do you think Byron is a good person? Explain your reasoning.

REFLECT

Invite students to share their writing prompt responses with the class. Then talk about how good people can sometimes make poor choices or behave in unkind ways. Ask:

Do you know of someone who has made an unkind decision that you felt was wrong? Did the person apologize or try to make things right again? What is an example of a time that you have needed to forgive someone for something you thought was wrong?



Daniel Watson (Wood Harris) sits in the driver seat of the family car, the Brown Bomber.

Lesson #7

Choices & Consequences

Lesson 7
Academic
Language

linoleum
executioner
tolerate

READ

Read Chapter 7, pages 86 - 99

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 7

In Chapter 7 we find Byron once again in trouble. Somehow deciding that he wanted a change of hairstyle, Byron gets a new "conk," a "process," a "butter." Momma says he looks like a clown with his chemically straightened, now reddish-brown hair, all stiff and sticky looking! She sends him to his room to wait for Dad to come home. Dad takes care of things by shaving Byron's head completely bald! Byron was sent to his room and Joetta and Kenny were sent outside so that Momma and Dad could have one of their "adult-only" talks. The kids came back in the house just in time to hear Dad talking on the phone long distance to Grandma Sands in Alabama.

CONNECTION



In Chapter 7, Byron's hair causes quite the stir within the Watson household. As it turns out, Byron was not the only person in the 1960s to choose such a hairstyle. Interestingly, many popular Black musicians in the 1960s adopted these straightened hairstyles:

<http://newlynatural.com/blog/2009/08/its-just-hair-the-conk/>

Hair Straightening Products in the 1960s:

Conkoleen Hair Cream was a styling product marketed towards Black men who wanted straighter hair. In fact, the product's jingle was:

If your hair is short and nappy, Conkoleen will make you happy.

This was particularly controversial at the time because the Black community emphasized the importance of loving one's natural self—and for many, like Momma and Dad in this story, that meant not altering your naturally curly hair.

During the Civil Rights movement, the conk hairstyle was particularly criticized as detrimental to the entire Black race because it involved engaging in a dangerous chemical process all for the intent of eliminating Black features in order to look more White. Here is more information on the history of Black hair:

<http://www.jazma.com/black-hair-history>

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 7. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Byron straightens his hair and Momma gets angry about it. Joey doesn't understand why Byron keeps making poor decisions that get him into trouble.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Context Clues

Consider the following passage from Chapter 7 (p. 86):

*Byron had gotten a **conk!** A **process!** A **do!** A **butter!** A ton of trouble! His hair was reddish brown, straight, stiff and slick-looking.*

Kenny uses several terms to describe the same thing. Given the context of the sentences, what is Kenny talking about?

Characters' Motivations

Why would Byron straighten his hair? What do you think motivated him to do this?

(Sample response: During the 1960's, this was a popular hairstyle for hip black men. Byron thinks it is cool.)

Characters' Perspectives

Momma and Joetta are both upset by Byron's new hairstyle, but for different reasons. What are the different reasons?

(Sample response: Joetta is upset because she knows that the hairstyle will get Byron in trouble. Momma is upset because she and daddy do not approve of that type of hair and they did not give Byron permission to change his hair. OR – Momma and Dad view Byron's hairstyle as disrespecting Black culture.)

Dad ends up shaving Byron's head. Considering the fact that the story takes place in 1963, how do you think Byron felt about being bald-headed?

(Sample response: He probably felt very embarrassed and uncool. He might also have felt embarrassed because his big ears stick out.)

Making Predictions

What do you think might have been discussed during the "adult-only" talk between Momma and Dad?

(Sample response: Momma and Dad were talking about how to get Byron to behave.)

What do you think that Dad might have to get back to Grandma Sands about?

(Sample response: Maybe they wanted her advice on how to make Byron behave. Or maybe they want to plan a visit.)

Deepen Comprehension

Structured Debate

Organize the class into four groups. Explain to them that each group will adopt a different character's perspective to contemplate the following prompt:

On page 92, Joetta asks Byron, "Byron, why won't you behave? Why won't you think about what's going to happen to you when you do something wrong? Why do you always do stuff to get people mad at you?" Byron does not get a chance to answer because Dad has just walked in the door. If he had been able to respond, what do you think Byron would say? Would his response to Joetta be honest? Pretend you are a member of the Watson family and explain why you believe Byron has been behaving this way. What are solutions that could improve Byron's behavior?

Assign each team a different family member: Joetta, Kenny, Byron, and Momma & Dad. Give the teams 5 minutes to formulate their ideas. Next, allow each team to present an explanation for why Byron acts the way he does and offer solutions for how to amend his behavior. After each team has presented their case, allow the teams to take turns questioning each other and offering counter opinions. Encourage students to talk to *each other*, rather than to you. Remind them to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, to support their claims with justifications from the book, and to ask each other questions about their ideas. At the conclusion of the debate, help students make connections between how their arguments were similar or different and reiterate that it is normal for people to have different perspectives on the same situation.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Do you believe it was fair of Dad to shave Byron's head? Explain.

REFLECT

Invite students to share their writing prompt responses with the class. Then talk about how there are tricky situations where it is difficult to decide how to react fairly. Ask:

What does it mean to be fair and just? When troublesome situations happen, how can we be sure to treat all people fairly?



Daniel Watson (Wood Harris, left) excitedly leads the family (left to right: Bryce Clyde Jenkins, Harrison Knight, Skai Jackson, Anika Noni Rose) to see the surprise addition to the Brown Bomber for their trip to Birmingham.

Lesson #8

Family Relationships

Lesson 8
Academic
Language

civilization
vibrations
interpretation

READ

Read Chapter 8, pages 100 - 120

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 8

In Chapter 8 the kids can't help but suspect that something is brewing. Dad has been doing anything and everything to fix up the Brown Bomber - he even bought a record player that he had mounted on the dashboard. It was a "True-Tone Ab-700 Model, the Ultra-Glide." The Watsons had a lot of fun testing the Ultra-Glide out - Kenny played "Yakety Yak" all four of his turns! The mystery was solved when Momma told the kids they were going to drive to Alabama and that Grandma Sands was going to keep Byron for the whole summer, and possible the next school year! All the kids could think about were the stories about how strict Grandma Sands was.

Chapter 8 introduces the Ultra-Glide, a car record player. Challenge students to research what the Ultra-Glide was, how it really worked, and what 45s were.

Objects from the 1960s:

<http://thebrownbombergoestobirmingham.wikispaces.com/Objects+from+the+1960's>

Chapter 8 also introduces the reader to a collection of songs that were popular during the Watsons' time. Allow students time to listen to a few of these songs:

Momma's Favorite Song – "Under the Boardwalk" by The Drifters:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyzCccndc2w>

Kenny's Favorite Song – "Yakety-Yak" by The Coasters:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtTC3pGBjs4>



Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 8. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Dad got a neat new in-car record player and the family got to listen to their favorite songs. The kids learn that they will visit Grandma Sands that summer and that Byron may stay with her for longer.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Identify Details

What is Kenny's favorite song to play on the Ultra Glide?

(Sample response: Yakety Yak.)

Using Evidence from the Text

Momma and Dad had threatened to send Byron to Grandma Sands' house many times, but the kids never believed it would really happen. Where in the book does Kenny list the three good reasons to believe that his parents were bluffing? What are the reasons?

(Sample response: On page 119, Kenny says it was way too far for Byron to take a bus. On page 119, it says that Momma and Dad were always threatening Byron with punishment that never happened. And on page 120, it says they heard stories that Grandma Sands was unimaginably strict.)

Where in the book does Momma give reasons for why Byron had to stay with Grandma Sands? What are those reasons?

(Sample response: On page 118: cutting school, lighting fires, taking money out of Momma's purse, fighting, torturing animals, straightening his hair, joining a gang, etc.)

Characters' Perspectives

When Dad first surprised the family with the new Ultra-Glide, what was Momma's reaction? And why did she react this way?

(Sample response: Momma was angry. On page 109 it says that Momma gave Dad a dirty look, then went back into the house. She was angry because she worried about money and did not think the family could afford to buy a car record player.)

Eventually, Momma changes her attitude and joins the family fun outside with the Ultra-Glide. What made her change her tune?

(Sample response: She saw how much fun the family was having and didn't want to miss out.)

Characters' Motivations

On page 119, Grandma Sands tells Momma that stuff on TV isn't happening near her and that it's safe and quiet in her neighborhood. Why would Grandma say this?

(Sample response: Grandma Sands wants to reassure Momma that she is safe and that it will be okay for the family to visit. She also doesn't want Momma to worry about her.)

Why would this matter so much to Momma?

(Sample response: Momma wants to take Byron to a place that will be good for him. She hopes Birmingham will be a healthier environment than Flint for Byron.)

Making Predictions

How do you think the Watson children will like Birmingham?

(Sample response: Grandma Sands and all the scary things that are happening in the news will intimidate them. Or, they will have fun seeing Grandma Sands and Kenny will be glad to get rid of Byron for a while.)

Deepen Comprehension

Whole Class Discussion

Pose the following prompt to the class:

Given what we know is happening in Alabama during the time that the Watsons decide to visit Birmingham, do you recommend that the family go? What advice would you give them about the trip?

Encourage students to talk to *each other*, rather than to you. Remind them to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, to support their claims with justifications from the book, and to ask each other questions about their ideas.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Imagine you are Grandma Sands. Write a letter to Byron explaining how he will be expected to behave at her house in Birmingham. Describe how Birmingham will be different from Flint.

REFLECT

Talk about how Byron is facing serious personal problems, and at the same time the United States was facing tragic problems that affected lots of people. Encourage students to think about some of the problems that they have in their lives that they feel they have very little control over. Ask:

When you are faced with problems in your life, how does it make you feel? What do you do when you feel that you can't change your situation? Do you feel that there is anything that you are able to do to change your own situation, even if it is something small? Do you believe that there is any way that you, one person, could work to change some of the problems in your life? How?



In the movie, Kenny (Bryce Clyde Jenkins) reads Langston Hughes' poem, "Let America Be America Again" in front of a class of older kids. Kenny is so nervous that he's holding the book upside, and in doing so, the older kids suddenly realize in awe: Kenny's reciting the entire poem from memory.

Lesson #9

Culture & Conflict

Lesson 9
Academic
Language

eavesdrop
peninsula
seniority

READ

Read Chapter 9, pages 121 - 137

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 9

In Chapter 9 Kenny and Dad have a serious conversation about the way things are in the world. On television Kenny saw some white people being cruel to black children who were trying to go to school. He didn't really understand why or how the white people could hate some little kids so much. Dad told Kenny that, "a lot of times that's going to be the way of the world for you kids." He said that it was important for Byron to understand this and that spending some time down south would maybe open up Byron's eyes to the kind of place the world could be. When the family finally starts their trip, they discover that Momma has the whole trip planned in a notebook – including where and what they would eat, and where and for how long they would stop.

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 9. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Kenny and Dad talk about how worried the parents are about Byron and they hope Alabama will help him grow up. Joetta does not like the angel Mrs. Davidson gives her because it has a white face. Momma has the whole trip to Birmingham planned out.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Make Inferences

Why did Momma and Dad make Byron sleep in their room the night before the big trip?

(Sample response: Probably because they suspected Byron might try to run away in the night.)

What would have given Momma and Dad the impression that Byron may try to run away?

(Sample response: Joetta told on Byron. She didn't want Byron to get into worse trouble.)

Characters' Perspectives

How does Kenny really feel about sending Byron to Grandma Sands' house for the summer?

(Sample response: Kenny doesn't really want Byron to go. He wants to scare him into behaving by just pretending to drive to Alabama.)

Why doesn't Joetta like the angel that Mrs. Davidson gives her?

(Sample response: The angel has a white face.)

Why would the color of the angel's face be a problem for Joetta?

(Sample response: Joetta does not identify with the doll because she has a different color skin. Also, Joetta has been hearing a lot of upsetting things in the news about white people and may be holding resentment for people with white skin.)

Characters' Motivations

Why did Momma have the whole trip to Birmingham planned?

(Sample response: She wanted to have a tight schedule so that they would avoid spending too much money and she wanted to prevent Dad from trying to drive too far while exhausted.)

Why would Momma and Dad decide that sending Byron to Birmingham for the summer is a good idea?

(Sample response: They think that exposing Byron to a less privileged environment will encourage him to grow up and stop making such childish choices.)

Deepen Comprehension

Small-Group Discussion

Divide students into small groups of 3-4. Remind them that there are strong themes of racial conflict in this story, and particularly in this chapter. Encourage students to consider page 132 where the kids asked why Dad couldn't just drive until he was tired. Dad replied in his best Southern-style voice: "Cuz boy this is the deep south.... Y'all colored folks cain't be jes' pullin' up tuh any ol' way-uh and be 'spectin' tuh get no room uh no food, huh her, boy? ...You thank this he-uh is Uhmurica?" Give each group 5 minutes to discuss the following:

Pretend that you are Kenny and Byron and respond to what Dad said. What questions would you have about the south? How would you react to Dad's joke?

Next, reconvene with the whole class and invite groups to share their reflections. Encourage students to take turns speaking, to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, and to support their claims with evidence from the text.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Joetta put the angel that Mrs. Davidson gave her as a gift in her sock drawer because she didn't like it. Have you ever received a gift that you didn't like? How did you react and what did you do?

REFLECT

Invite students to share their writing prompt responses with the class. In this Chapter, we learn a lot more about how segregation in the 1960s affected both adults and children. Think about the idea of segregation. Ask:

How would you feel if you were separated from your peers or denied certain rights because of the way you looked or because of a set of beliefs you had? What are ways that diversity actually makes our lives better? Can you think of examples of how differences among people have improved a situation?



The Watsons travel in the Brown Bomber toward Birmingham.

Lesson #10

Fears & Differences

Lesson 10
Academic
Language

**sanitation
facilities
amount**

READ

Read Chapter 10, pages 138 - 148

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 10

In Chapter 10 we find out that Dad is going to upset Momma's notebook plans by driving straight through to Alabama from Ohio. When they finally stop at a rest area in Tennessee and see the Appalachian Mountains, the whole family gets affected by an eerie sort of feeling that may be caused by the higher altitude or just may have something to do with thinking about "crackers and rednecks...that ain't never seen no Negroes before."

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 10. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: The Watsons make it to Ohio where the children discover that the toilets are very different than what they're used to in Flint. Kenny slept through most of Kentucky and when he woke up they were in Tennessee. The sight of mountains frightened Kenny, and Byron scared his siblings by talking about "rednecks" and "hillbillies" who eat black people.)



Direct students to the map presented in the front of this resource. Show them Tennessee and point out the Appalachian Mountain Range. Challenge students to learn more about the Appalachian Mountains:

Map of the Appalachian Mountains:

<http://media.web.britannica.com/eb-media/43/89843-004-DBECEB58.gif>

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Drawing Conclusions

Kenny knows that once Momma falls asleep Dad plans to drive much further than her schedule would allow. How does Kenny figure this out?

(Sample response: Kenny remembers overhearing Dad ask the mechanic how many straight hours the Brown Bomber would be able to drive.)

Why are the Watson children frightened when the family stops in Tennessee?

(Sample response: Joetta and Kenny think the mountains are scary looking and Byron believes that hillbillies that want to hang and eat black people are in the woods.)

Context Clues

On page 144, Momma takes out her notebook and announces:

This is the Appalachia Mountains. We're over six thousand feet above sea level, this is higher than we've ever been before.

What does "sea level" mean and how is it relevant to Momma's point?

Characters' Motivations

Why doesn't Dad want to stick with Momma's plan to take several days to drive to Birmingham?

(Sample response: He knows the family can save money if they do not stop overnight.)

Characters' Perspectives

Why is Momma angry that Dad has not followed the driving schedule?

(Sample response: Because the family lost their opportunity to stay at a motel and would have to either sleep in the car or keep driving. Momma also worries that it is unsafe for Dad to drive long distances if he is tired.)

Why do you think that Byron was so nervous about being near the Appalachian Mountains, especially in the dark?

(Sample response: Because Byron knew that the family was in a southern state and feared that white people who don't like blacks would approach them. The unpleasant things he has heard on the news haunt him.)

Deepen Comprehension

Think-Pair-Share

Ask students the following question:

At this point in the story, with which character do you most closely identify? Why? What makes you similar to that character?

Allow students 3-5 minutes to talk about these questions with their partner. Encourage them to take turns listening, and then sharing out their ideas. After the pairs have had a few minutes to talk, return to the whole group and ask for a few volunteers to share *their partner's* ideas. Ask if others in the room had similar thoughts or if they have different points of view.

WRITE

The Watson family seemed to get some pretty weird feelings when they were near the Appalachian Mountains. They couldn't wait to get back on the road again. Have students respond to this prompt:

Write about a time that you were someplace that gave you a "creepy" feeling and you just couldn't wait to get away.

REFLECT

In this book, there are many references to regional differences between the north and the south. Some of the contrasts are true (e.g. the weather is different, people talk with different accents, the water tastes different, and the terrain is different), but other contrasts are simply negative stereotypes (e.g. Southern people love hillbilly music, count cows for fun, and eat black people). Talk with students about how stereotypes are assumptions about groups of people that do not necessarily reflect reality. Ask:

What are some unfair stereotypes that you can think of? Have you ever been stereotyped? How did that make you feel? How do stereotypes affect others? What are ways that we can avoid making stereotypes?

Emphasize for students that assigning groups with negative labels is a way of perpetuating prejudice among people.



Grandma Sands (LaTanya Richardson) gives her daughter Wilona (Anika Noni Rose) a hug, excited to be reunited after so many years. Wilona Watson exclaims, "Babies, we home!"

Lesson #11

Family Dynamics & Perspectives

Lesson 11
Academic
Language

rabies
surrender
pathetic

READ

Read Chapter 11, pages 149 - 161

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 11

In Chapter 11 we discover that Dad has been driving now for 18 hours straight and as a result is acting a little weirder than normal. The Ultra-Glide wasn't working right, so Dad has started listening to "hillbilly" music. The Watsons arrive in Alabama a day early and surprise Grandma Sands, but not as much as she surprises Kenny. She is nothing like what he expected. Kenny was also expecting a big confrontation between Grandma Sands and Byron, but instead Byron's behavior confuses Kenny once again. Kenny thought that all the "fight was already out of him... and they'd just been in Birmingham for a couple of minutes."

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 11. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: The family's long drive was finally over, and they made it to Grandma Sands' house a day early. Grandma Sands was smaller and older than Kenny expected, and Byron surprised Kenny by treating her respectfully. Grandma Sands had a very happy, and tearful reunion with her family.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Identify Details

What was so surprising to Kenny when he first saw Grandma Sands?

(Sample response: She was just a teeny-weeny old woman.)

Using Evidence from the Text

Dad was acting strangely towards the end of the Watson's drive. What evidence from the text lets us know that?

(Sample response: On page 149, he let the record player skip the same lyrics of the song for a long time. Page 151 tells us that Dad was listening to country music on the radio. On page 153, it tells us that Dad must have been really tired because he never talked that much.)

Characters' Actions

How did Momma act when the family first pulled up to Grandma Sands' house? Why would she behave this way?

(Sample response: Momma was so excited, she honked the car horn like crazy. Then she cried and ran to the porch to hug Grandma Sands. This was a special time for Momma because she did not get to see her own mother very often and probably missed her quite a bit.)

When Byron meets Grandma Sands, all of his sass is gone. Instead he smiles and speaks politely to Grandma Sands. This seems out of character for Byron. Why would he behave this way?

(Sample response: Byron is genuinely happy to see a grandparent who he has not visited in a long time. OR - Maybe Byron is playing his cards right. He knows that provoking Grandma Sands will get him into serious trouble. Maybe Byron is starting to learn that a bad attitude does not get him very far.)

Characters' Perspectives

How does Kenny feel about the way Byron addresses Grandma Sands?

(Sample response: He is disappointed in Byron and thinks Byron surrendered to Grandma Sands too easily.)

Why would Kenny feel this way? Why wouldn't he just be happy that Byron is behaving?

(Sample response: Kenny looks up to his older brother and admires his toughness. Even though Kenny does not like to get picked on by Byron, he still believes that his brother is cool.)

Making Predictions

Do you believe that spending time with Grandma Sands will improve Byron's juvenile delinquent behavior?

(Sample response: Yes, because he is already being polite to her and is learning that a bad attitude will get him nowhere. OR – No, because Byron is just waiting for his parents to leave so that he can act out. He is not afraid of old Grandma Sands.)

Deepen Comprehension

Small Group Discussion

Divide students into small groups of 3-4. Pose the following prompt:

Do you believe that Byron's respect for Grandma Sands is sincere, or is it just an act? Is it possible that Byron has learned from his past actions and is changing for the better?

Allow students 5-10 minutes to discuss their ideas within their groups. Remind them to accompany their opinions with reasoning and evidence. Encourage students to ask each other questions about their respective ideas.

Next, reconvene with the whole class and invite groups to share their reflections. Encourage students to take turns speaking, to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, and to support their claims with evidence from the text.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Kenny was expecting Grandma Sands to look completely different from how she actually looked. Have you ever had a similar experience? How did that affect your impressions of that person? Explain.

REFLECT

In this chapter, Dad surprises the family by acting funny in the car, Grandma Sands surprises Kenny by seeming older and kinder than he had envisioned, and Byron surprises Kenny by treating Grandma Sands respectfully. Explain to students that:

Sometimes people surprise us. It is easy to make assumptions about people based on very little knowledge, or to cast judgments about people based on their prior actions... yet every now and then the ways people behave will surprise us. Is it possible for a bully to be kind, for a shy person to be confident, or for a goofy person to be serious? How have your assumptions of others been challenged and what did you learn from that experience?



Kenny, Byron and Joetta Watson (left to right: Bryce Clyde Jenkins, Harrison Knight, Skai Jackson) are shown around Birmingham by Mr. Robert (David Alan Grier, right).

Lesson #12

Community & Culture

Lesson 12
Academic
Language

desire
yakking
interrupt

READ

Read Chapter 12, pages 162 - 168

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 12

In Chapter 12 the Watson family gets acquainted and reacquainted with the town of Birmingham. The kids think that Birmingham is as hot as an oven! Grandma Sands' friend, Mr. Robert, tells an amazing story about saving his dog's life after the dog was drowned by a raccoon. Kenny becomes confused again by Byron's behavior when he finds him laughing and joking with Mr. Robert and Dad when they tell their "stupid" stories. It seemed to Kenny that Byron was actually having a good time! Momma and Grandma Sands just talked and talked, about everything!

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 12. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: The Watsons are not used to how hot it is in Alabama. Mr. Robert tells a story about saving his dog from a raccoon. Momma had a lot of questions for Grandma Sands about Birmingham, and she is not pleased that Mr. Robert lives with Grandma Sands.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Identify Details

After Mr. Robert tells his story about the raccoon that drowned his dog, what does Kenny think of him?

(Sample response: Kenny thinks Mr. Robert might be lying because it is improbable that an animal as small as a raccoon could drown a dog. Also, Kenny thinks it is cool that Mr. Robert would be willing to give a dog CPR.)

Making Inferences

Who is Mr. Robert in relation to Grandma Sands?

(Sample response: Mr. Robert is Grandma Sands' boyfriend.)

Context Clues

On page 162, Kenny says "Birmingham was *like an oven*. The first night I couldn't sleep at all, me and By had to share a bed and we were both *sweating like pigs*." What does Kenny mean by this?

(Sample response: The weather in Birmingham is very hot. It is warm enough to make the Watson brothers sweat a lot.)

Characters' Perspectives

Momma asks Grandma Sands lots of questions about Birmingham. Why is Momma feeling so curious?

(Sample response: Because that is the town that Momma was raised in, so small changes over time add up and seem especially huge to her. Also, Momma feels a connection to the town and the people in it, so she wants to learn about what has become of her old friends and neighbors.)

Why would Momma disapprove of Mr. Robert living with Grandma Sands?

(Sample response: Momma is suspicious of Mr. Robert because she has never met him before and does not know a lot about him.)

What do you think that Kenny thought about Byron when he heard him joking and laughing at Mr. Robert and Dad's jokes?

(Sample response: Kenny was jealous because he wanted Byron's attention and was not used to Byron getting positive attention from the adults. OR - Maybe he thought that Byron was putting on a show to be "good" because he wanted to fool the adults. OR - Maybe Byron was losing his edge and becoming less fun.)

Deepen Comprehension

Whole Class Discussion

Ask students to consider the following question:

Grandma Sands tells Momma that “things are different from what they were when you left. Nearly everything changes.” What does Grandma Sands mean by this? What has changed? How does this change affect the characters in the story?

Encourage them to take turns listening, and then sharing out their ideas. After the pairs have had a few minutes to talk, return to the whole group and ask for a few volunteers to share *their partner’s* ideas. Ask if others in the room had similar thoughts or if they have different points of view.

WRITE

The Watson family drove Byron to Birmingham as punishment for acting like a juvenile delinquent, but when they got there Byron acted happy and well behaved. This is surprising because only days before Byron was planning to run away so that he could avoid visiting Grandma Sands. Have students respond to this prompt:

Have you ever dreaded an experience so much that you wanted to run away, but when you got there it turned out to be fun? Write about a time that you expected the worst, but ended up having a good time.

REFLECT

In this chapter, we notice that Byron is acting more grown up and this confuses Kenny. Consider the idea of maturity. What does it mean to be mature? How can mature decisions affect circumstances both for ourselves and for others?



While Mr. Robert (David Alan Grier, standing) looks on, Kenny (Bryce Clyde Jenkins, left) and Byron (Harrison Knight, right) are shocked to discover that they cannot order food from the same lunch counter as everyone else. Byron exclaims, “He said to go round back? I want a hotdog right here, right now. What’s the problem?”

Lesson #13

Risk & Identity

Lesson 13
Academic
Language

whirlpool
strange
electrocuted

READ

Read Chapter 13, pages 169 - 179

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 13

In Chapter 13, when the kids decide to go swimming, they are warned about staying away from Collier's Landing because of a dangerous whirlpool that has already claimed the lives of several people. To steer his siblings away from the danger, Byron makes up a fantastic story about the Wool Pooh, Winnie's evil twin, who hides under the water so that he can snatch up "stupid" little kids. In spite of all the warnings, Kenny defiantly heads directly for Collier's Landing instead of the public swimming area. Although at first a little reluctant to actually go in the water, Kenny gets lured in by a big green turtle and ends up getting pulled into the deeper water by the whirlpool. Kenny nearly drowns and imagines that the Wool Pooh is pulling him under the water, but it is really Byron who has jumped in to save his life.

Chapter 13 makes slightly ambiguous references to a whirlpool. Challenge students to learn more about what a whirlpool is and the science behind how one works.

Whirlpool Myths and Facts:

<http://www.spiralwishingwells.com/guide/whirlpools.html>

Twin Whirlpools in Australian Floodwaters:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct_17xYGNz8

Scientist who swims into a whirlpool to share from under water what it looks like:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sU9JFUlfQ>



Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 10. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: The Watson children are warned not to swim in Collier's Landing, but Kenny disobeys and swims there anyway. While swimming, Kenny gets sucked into the deeper part of the water and starts to drown. Byron shows how much he loves Kenny by rescuing him from drowning, then by hugging and kissing him a lot.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Identify Details

What really is the Wool Pooh that the children are warned about?

(Sample response: It is a whirlpool - a place in the water where currents collide and a funnel forms that can suck things under.)

Characters' Actions

Why does Byron make up a story about Winnie the Pooh's evil twin brother, the Wool Pooh?

(Sample response: Byron is trying to frighten his siblings into avoiding Collier's Landing. He does not want them to get hurt by swimming there.)

Why would Byron choose to go to Collier's Landing to check on Kenny?

(Sample response: Byron was concerned that Kenny would make a foolish choice – like swim in the dangerous water – so he wanted to check to make sure that his little brother was safe. Byron felt that it was his job to protect his siblings. Deep down, Byron loves Kenny very much.)

Characters' Perspectives

Kenny said that Byron was passing up an opportunity for another "Fantastic Adventure" when he chose to listen to a grown-up instead of going to Collier's Landing. How do you think this made Kenny feel about Byron? How did Kenny feel about himself?

(Sample response: Kenny was probably confused by why Byron was not making his typical juvenile delinquent decisions. Kenny thought he would try to be brave and make daring choices the way Byron used to. Kenny probably thought he was acting cool and would impress Byron.)

When Kenny gets to Collier's Landing, he decides it can't be too dangerous. On page 173, Kenny says, "I figured if there really was anything dangerous Byron would have followed me here and stopped me from getting hurt, wouldn't he?" Why does Kenny say this?

(Sample response: Kenny is accustomed to having his brother protect him from harm. Despite the ways Byron bullies him, Kenny knows that he can count on his big brother in times of trouble. Kenny hesitates and says, "wouldn't he?" because Byron can be unpredictable and tough to read.)

Making Predictions

Now that Byron has shown Kenny how much he loves him (by saving his life and then crying over him), do you think the brothers' relationship will change? How will things be different, if at all?

(Sample response: Now Byron will be nicer to Kenny and stop picking on him. OR – Like when Byron killed the dove, he will become embarrassed by showing his emotions and lash out at Kenny angrily.)

Deepen Comprehension

Small Group Discussion

Divide students into small groups of 3-4. Pose the following prompt:

Was Kenny's choice to go to Collier's Landing, instead of the public swimming area, typical of his behavior? Why do you think that Kenny chose to go to Collier's landing even though he was warned about the danger?

Allow students 5-10 minutes to discuss their ideas within their groups. Remind them to accompany their opinions with reasoning and evidence. Encourage students to ask each other questions about their respective ideas.

Next, reconvene with the whole class and invite groups to share their reflections. Encourage students to take turns speaking, to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, and to support their claims with evidence from the text.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

When Kenny was under the water struggling against the motion of the whirlpool he imagined that he saw Joetta dressed as an angel. She told him to swim to the surface, and then Byron saw him and was able to save him from drowning. How does this relate to the Central Theme of the book about finding courage to deal with our problems?

REFLECT

In this chapter, Kenny said that when you get into trouble it seems like you do it in steps. He also said that it "seems like the worse the trouble is that you get into the more steps it takes to get there. Sort of like you're getting a bunch of little warnings on the way; sort of like if you really wanted to you could turn around."

Do you agree or disagree with Kenny's analysis of the stages of trouble? Explain your response using some examples from experiences that you have had getting into trouble. What are strategies you could use to avoid trouble?



The Watson's cousins (Shameik Moore, Josephine Lawrence) and their classmates await permission from their teacher to join the Children's March. Their teacher tells them, "Students! When I turn my back, for those of you who want to leave I won't stop you. And since I didn't see you walk out, I won't be able to mark you absent."

Lesson #14

Acceptance & Adversity

Lesson 14
Academic
Language

familiar
concrete
investigate

READ

Read Chapter 14, pages 180 - 190

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 14

In Chapter 14 a bomb explodes in the church where Joetta was attending Sunday School. Kenny goes into the church and finds a shoe that he believes is Joetta's and then assumes that she is dead. In another imaginary struggle with the Wool Pooh, he somehow manages to gain the shoe and then returns home to Grandma Sands' house in a daze. Joetta arrives home a little later asking him where he went so fast. When he looks confused she explains that she left the church when he waved at her and chased him down the street! When Kenny finally looks at her he sees that she has both of her shoes. Confused, but understanding that Joetta is fine, he leaves the house to find his parents.

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 14. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: Kenny has been exhausted and recovering from almost drowning at Collier's Landing. Byron did not tell on Kenny for swimming in the forbidden water. Someone set a bomb off in Joetta's church and Kenny goes into the demolished building. Kenny sees lots of people crying and yelling, but he doesn't hear any sounds. After he takes a little girl's shoe away from the Wool Pooh, Kenny goes home. At home he finds Joetta – who he thinks is a ghost, but it turns out she is alive and well.)

Chapter 14 introduces an impactful narrative about a particularly tragic bombing that took place in Birmingham in 1963. To prepare students, educators can direct them towards this informative website:

"The Ballad of Birmingham":

<http://www.balladofbirmingham.org/>

To hear the poem "The Battle of Birmingham" sung aloud:

<http://www.balladofbirmingham.org/Balladsong.mp3>



DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Cause and Effect

What caused Joetta to leave the church early?

(Sample response: She was feeling hot, so she left the building. Then she thought she saw Kenny, so she chased him.)

What effect did this choice have on Joetta? And on the entire Watson family?

(Sample response: Joetta was not harmed in the bombing. The Watsons were spared the tragedy of losing a loved one.)

Context Clues

Consider the following passage from page 182:

*If this had happened in Flint I would have **investigated** to find out what it was, but that horrible sun had sucked all the **curiosity** out of me.*

Ask students if they can use context clues to determine the meaning of the words *investigated* and *curiosity*.

Characters' Perspectives

When Kenny first learns that a bomb has exploded in the church where Joetta was supposed to be practicing her singing he just stands there looking stupid. Why would he react in this way?

(Sample response: The news was so scary and unimaginable that Kenny had difficulty believing it was true. It may have been hard for his mind to accept a truth so terrible. He was in shock.)

Why do you think that Kenny imagined that he was having a struggle with the Wool Pooh in the church when he was attempting to get the shiny black shoe?

(Sample response: Kenny viewed the Wool Pooh as something that brings tragedy, so he wanted to fight against the Wool Pooh because he did not want any harm to come on his little sister. It was important to Kenny to be brave and challenge the Wool Pooh so that he could protect Joetta.)

Characters' Motivations

What were some of the reasons that Kenny didn't want to look at Joetta when she came to him in his room after he returned from the church?

(Sample response: Kenny was frightened because he thought his sister was dead. He thought that the Wool Pooh was trying to trick him into looking at something that was not really Joetta.)

Making Inferences

Who was it that Joetta saw who waved to her and coaxed her away from the church by laughing and running and having her chase him?

(Sample response: It was a figment of Joetta's imagination—a fortunate one that saved her life. OR – It was an angel sent to save Joetta, OR - It also could have been somebody who looked a lot like Kenny.)

Making Predictions

Given the tragedy of the bombing, what do you think the Watson family will do next?

(Sample response: They will fight against the terrible people who planned the bombing. OR – They will leave town and go back to safe Flint.)

Deepen Comprehension

Whole Class Discussion

There are many references in the book to the racism, hatred and violence exhibited during the Civil Rights Movement in America. Specifically, Chapter 14 deals with a bombing at a church where several children are killed and others are hurt. Pose the following prompt to the class:

Imagine you are the president during the 1960's. How would you talk to the community as a whole about the terrible acts of violence and prejudice happening in the country? What would you say to the community? What are effective ways to eliminate violence and ensure peace?

Encourage students to talk to *each other*, rather than to you. Remind them to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, to support their claims with justifications from the book, and to ask each other questions about their ideas.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Do you think that there is any kind of connection between Kenny seeing Joetta when he was in danger of drowning and Joetta seeing Kenny when she was in danger of being killed by the bomb? What is the significance of these siblings seeing each other during times of danger? Explain.

REFLECT

Talk about how hate crimes –like bombings and other physical attacks— occur every day in our world today. Encourage students to think about the root of hate and intolerance. Push them to consider:

If hateful acts bring nothing but tragedy, why do they happen so often? How does hate formulate and what can we do to prevent those types of attitudes in our environment?



Protesters march for equal rights and integrated schools in Birmingham.

Lesson #15

Courage & Compromise

Lesson 15
Academic
Language

automatically
wonder
embarrass

READ

Read Chapter 15, pages 191 - 206

It is up to the educator's discretion to determine the most appropriate reading strategy for the students. (Please refer to Appendix A for a list of possible reading formats and their respective literacy benefits.)

Overview of Chapter 15

In Chapter 15 we find the Watsons back in Flint. The family is extremely concerned about Kenny's state of mind. He has been disappearing for longer and longer periods of time behind the couch in the World-Famous Watson Pet Hospital. He was trying to come to terms with his experiences in Birmingham. As the weeks pass Byron finally succeeds in getting Kenny to face his problems by helping Kenny realize that he must reach inside of himself to find his inner strength and courage. Kenny learns that there is strength in all of us that gives us the courage to cope with even the most insurmountable obstacles in our lives.

Journaling

In just a few sentences, pretend you are Kenny and summarize what happened in Chapter 15. Focus on the main parts of this chapter.

(Sample response: The Watsons family went back to Flint, and Kenny spent several weeks huddled behind the couch in the living room. Momma and Daddy were very worried about Kenny's strange behavior. Byron figured out that Kenny was hiding, so he started bringing Kenny snacks and turning on the television. Byron even slept on the couch to keep Kenny company! Byron and Kenny finally have an important talk in the bathroom, where Byron tells Kenny "life ain't fair" and that Kenny has nothing to be ashamed of.)

DISCUSS

Check for Comprehension

Reinforce students' comprehension by asking the following questions. Be sure to follow up on student responses by asking *why* they formulated certain opinions and *which pages* in the text support their claims.

Drawing Conclusions

Why does Kenny think the back of the couch would be a safe place for him to hide?

(Sample response: Kenny has always viewed that spot as a place where his pets go to become well, so he thinks it would be a good place for him to get better too.)

Why do Momma and Dad start being careful about what they say, and then start saying really nice things about Kenny?

(Sample response: Because they knew Kenny was hiding behind the couch and they were trying to make him feel better. They are caring parents who are worried about Kenny's psychological health.)

Characters' Motivations

After returning to Flint, Kenny began disappearing for longer and longer periods of time behind the couch in the World-Famous Watson Pet Hospital. Why do you think he behaved this way?

(Sample response: Kenny was traumatized by what he saw in Birmingham. He was also ashamed of himself for not being braver in the face of the Wool Pooh. The quiet security behind the couch probably gave him a chance to heal from shock.)

Why would Byron make Kenny come to the bathroom to check out his facial hair? This seems uncharacteristic of him.

(Sample response: Byron was looking for a good opportunity to have a heartfelt talk with Kenny. He was very worried about Kenny and wanted to pull his little brother out of depression.)

Characters' Perspectives

Byron told Kenny that it wasn't fair that even though the cops in Birmingham might know who was responsible for the bombing that most likely nothing would ever happen to the men. He said that things "ain't ever gonna be fair," but that Kenny had to understand that that was just the way it is and that you had to "keep on steppin'." Why would Byron feel this way, and why would he tell this to Kenny?

(Sample response: Byron has grown up a bit and has accepted that life sometimes brings injustices. He tells Kenny this because he wants to prepare his little brother for the realities of the world, much like Momma and Dad wanted to do for Byron by taking him to Birmingham.)

Making Predictions

Do you think the experiences the Watsons had in the summer of 1963 shaped the rest of their lives?

(Sample response: The Watsons will always carry a sadness with them for what happened that scary day in Birmingham, as well as for all of the other unjust events that took place during the Civil Rights movement. They will be thankful that their family went unharmed and will be more keenly aware of how precious life is.)

Deepen Comprehension

Whole Class Discussion

Pose the following prompt to the class:

Byron told Kenny that he didn't think that the men who bombed the church were sick at all (like Momma thought), but that he thought "they just let hate eat them up and turn them into monsters." Do you agree or disagree? What do you think Momma meant by the word "sick." Explain.

Encourage students to talk to *each other*, rather than to you. Remind them to explain why they agree or disagree with each other, to support their claims with justifications from the book, and to ask each other questions about their ideas.

WRITE

Have students respond to this prompt:

Byron told Kenny that there was no such thing as magic powers, but Kenny felt that Byron was wrong. Kenny believed that they were real and could be found in the kindnesses in life, like having understanding parents and supportive siblings. What do you think that the author was trying to symbolize by the use of the Wool Pooh, Angels, and other magic powers?

REFLECT

In the final chapter, we learn that Byron and Kenny have differences in opinion about what the Wool Pooh is and its significance. It is common for people to have differences in beliefs, and that is okay. Ask students to:

Talk about a belief of yours that is different from another family member or friend's belief. Next, talk about a time you found yourself in strong disagreement with family, friends, or community.

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Reader's Movie Theater for
The Watsons Go to Birmingham

Reader's Movie Theater for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*

This resource provides five powerful movie scenes from *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* for Reader's Movie Theater activities in which the dialogue reflects important trajectories in the characters' development. Embedded within these scenes are highly salient messages about the historical and social context in which the two Watson brothers learn more about themselves. These are crucial events that mark the growth of the boys' character. This Reader's Movie Theater, a text-to-film activity, invites youth to read the movie lines of the characters that populate *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* movie, and to consider the story as it unfolds from each of the characters' perspectives. The *FILM TO TEXT CONNECTION* segments are geared towards students who have read the book, but may or may not have seen the film. The *DISCUSS MOVIE* segments do **not** require that the students have read the book.

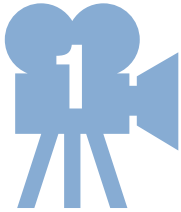
Why Use Reader's Theater to Connect Film and Text?

There are multiple values to the use of the Reader's Theater approach in this Educator's Resource. This resource provides methods to promote student development through healthy and socially relevant media in three overlapping opportunity zones –better known as *The Three-E Framework* (Selman and Kwok, 2013⁵)— which include opportunities for education, entertainment, and ethics. There are many opportunities for Educators to use this material to promote the three E's. Our approach favors focusing on the way the characters in the script make new personal and shared meaning of their experience in conversation with one another.



⁵ Selman, R.L. & Kwok, J. (2013) Counting Hearts and Eye Balls: How to Help Adolescents Make Better Decisions Using Entertainment and the New Media (and Know that You Have Succeeded) In, Winner, E. Festschrift in Honor of the 70th Birthday of Howard Gardner.

The Three-E Framework⁶ for using Reader's Theater in Media:



Educational Opportunities

This zone provides students with opportunities to practice oral language, gain fluency in reading and speaking, and deepen their comprehension of engaging text. *The Watsons* book and movie offer numerous educational opportunities across subject matter disciplines for students to learn about the steps leading up to the Civil Rights Movement, as well as develop understanding about the challenges the movement faced and still faces today. Beyond literacy, lessons pertaining to mathematics, geography, history, and social studies are replete in this historical fiction that is grounded in historical fact.



Entertainment Opportunities

This zone provides students with opportunities to appreciate enlightened and inspiring stories of courage and resilience. It also allows students to share with their peers the viewing of experiences of tragedy and disappointments— experiences all of us feel at one time or another. Entertainment opportunities in *The Watsons* book and movie include those that promote media literacy and those that promote an understanding of how the screenwriters use a variety of approaches to promote engagement with the story, the plot, the characters, and ethical and moral implications.



Ethical Opportunities

This zone provides students—either alone in reflection or together in discussion—to connect important ethical challenges of the past to those they face today. In particular, the movie scenes we have selected and the prompts we recommend are designed 1) to enhance students' self and social awareness, 2) to teach the range of strategies possible to resolve interpersonal and societal conflicts, and 3) to promote reflection upon the personal meaning of experiences, as well as the quality of one's character that is necessary to deal with social injustice in a fair way.

⁶ This framework has been used to analyze a number of creative arts productions, including episodes from *The Simpsons* and *Degrassi Junior High*.

A Note on a Developmental Difference in the Book and in the Film

In many ways, the film story of the Watsons is very true to the story told by the author of the book. However, like many novels that are made into movies, the writer of the story as told in the film, Tonya Lewis Lee, has chosen to make some changes that are more significant and some that are less so. For instance, one difference between movie and novel is that in the book, Byron is about 13, but in the movie Byron appears to be quite a bit older than 13, more like 16 or 17. In some ways this is important, in other ways it is not. For instance, in the book it is clear that Kenny and Byron go to the same school. An important scene involves Kenny being asked by the teacher in Byron's class to read a Langston Hughes poem out loud to the older students. How is this scene portrayed in the film? What might it mean in a story where Byron is well into high school. Another example, Byron's lighting fires in the bathroom has different meaning and implications for early and middle adolescents. For youth who have only viewed the movie, this may not be a significant issue, but for those who have read the book before viewing the movie, a discussion of why the author of the film made this change is worth having.

For the very significant parts of the film where historically accurate civil rights events are an important part of the story, for instance the way Wilona in the movie is always trying to protect the younger children from the painful realities of the resistance to desegregation, including for example the murder of civil rights hero, Medgar Evers, it makes sense that she does not feel the need to protect Byron as an older teenager from such unsettling news. Often, when young adult novels are made into movies, the actors who represent the characters are older than they, the characters, are portrayed in the book. In *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* film, no specific ages are given, but because this movie does such a good job of depicting the relationship of the older and the younger brother, we recommend a brief discussion of what our expectations might be for a 16 year-old Byron and a 13 or 14 year-old Byron.





Overview of Scene 11

In Scene 11, the Watson children are in the living room watching television while their mother, Wilona, is making a grocery list in the kitchen. During this time, a historically accurate news broadcast report about the **Children's Crusade in Birmingham** comes on the television. The news captures the attention of Byron and Wilona. A reporter tells us what is going on:

REPORTER

On Tuesday the Negroes gave vivid evidence that they would no longer accept the patterns of the last one hundred years... the crowd surged into downtown... And outside the south voices were roused to ask why the federal government was not involved...

Wilona and Byron stare at the television. Kenny and Joetta appear oblivious. Then she snaps the TV off.

WILONA

You shouldn't watch that in front of Kenny and Joetta.

Byron looks towards Kenny who is now paying attention to this conversation.

BYRON

Yeah, I understand. Grown-ups only.

WILONA

Byron, please don't start.

Film to Text Connection

Scene 11 is not in the book, but supplements the book's narrative with a strong link to historical events happening during the time of the story. In the movie script, the screenwriter lets us know that Momma does not want Kenny or Joey being exposed to the news.

Why would the scriptwriters include this scene? Why is the Children's Crusade in Birmingham significant for the Watsons?

Does the scene meaningfully support the overall plot of the book? In what ways?

DISCUSS MOVIE

Whole Class Discussion

This scene is an excellent opportunity for students to practice one of the most important competencies in the Voices approach, their perspective taking skills. It is also a good way to build students' background understanding of civil conflict in the 1960's.

Why doesn't Wilona want Kenny and Joetta to see what is reported on the news?

Why are Momma and Byron so interested in the news, yet Kenny and Joetta are so oblivious?

What do you think Byron's opinions are of the Children's Crusade?



Overview of Scenes 11 – 13

Scenes 11 – 13 focus on Byron, his behavior, and the consequently strong reactions of the other members of the Watson family. These scenes combine chapters 5 and 7 of the book. In the film we find Kenny watching Byron through the keyhole in the bathroom door while Byron plays a game he calls: *Nazi Parachutes Attack America and get shot down over the Flint River by Captain Byron Watson and the Flamethrower of Death*. Byron lights one of the newspaper parachutes on fire, then drops the flame into the toilet before it burns his fingers. Momma discovers Byron's dangerous game and is incensed. While he's getting punished, Wilona also discovers that Byron has used chemicals to straighten his hair. This further infuriates his mother, who then allows Dad to shave Byron's head. Scenes 11 – 13 can be viewed as an episode where the screenwriter combines the hair straightening and the fire setting chapters together:

At the Watson's house in Flint, Kenny kneels down at the bathroom door and peeks through the keyhole. He sees Byron inside with a hat on his head. On the top of the back of the toilet, we see a bunch of little newspaper parachutes. Byron stands over the toilet lighting a parachute on fire.

BYRON

Action!

OLDER KENNY (Narrating)

The day things really hit the fan, Byron was making a movie called:

BYRON

Nazi Parachutes Attack America and Get Shot Down Over Flint River by Captain Byron Watson and his Flamethrower of Death. Take 6.

cont'd...

Byron lights one of the newspaper parachutes. It flames up and pieces of burning paper fall to the floor which he quickly stamps out with his feet. He drops the lit parachute in his hand into the toilet just as his fingers are about to be burned.

CLOSE ON toilet as parachutes goes 'round.

BYRON (CONT'D)

Ya hold mine fewer, off we der same!

Kenny watches through the keyhole and sees Bryon salute the toilet.

BYRON

Such a brave soldier deserves our respect so we give him a burial at sea.

Byron goes to light another parachute.

OLDER KENNY (Narrating)

Byron was on take seven when Momma finally wondered why the toilet was being flushed so much.

Kenny, who is still looking through the keyhole suddenly looks up:

KENNY

Momma, I...

Wilona bangs the door open and slams it into the tub. Byron jumps back. Momma grabs Byron by the neck, picks up the matches and she drags him out of the bathroom. Momma throws Byron down on the sofa and stands over him enraged. Joey and Kenny are right behind her, watching the scene wide-eyed. Joey holds onto Kenny in fear for Byron. Momma opens her hand to reveal the matches she grabbed from the room.

WILONA

Didn't I tell you Byron? I told you. One more time... one more time...If I found you burning matches in this house one more time, putting this family in danger I was going to wear you out. And this time I am going to do it. You have left me no choice.

cont'd...

Joetta jumps in front of Byron as Wilona approaches him.

JOETTA

Please Momma, don't do it. He won't do it again will you Byron? Promise her. Promise Mommy you won't do it again!

Wilona has a different affect in her speech. She almost hisses and her southern accent is more pronounced.

WILONA

Joetta move. He needs to learn a very important lesson.

OLDER KENNY (Narrating)

The snake lady had spoken. Her slithering voice left Joey paralyzed and actually made me feel sorry for Byron.

Film to Text Connection

The events in these scenes parallel chapters 5 and 7 of the book. In chapter 5 of the book, Byron is in the bathroom pretending to play a Nazi battle that includes burning newspaper parachutes. Momma's solution for punishment is to burn Byron's fingers, but little sister Joey begs for mercy and saves Byron. In Chapter 7, Byron enters the house through the kitchen where the family discovers that Byron has straightened his hair. Again, Byron angers his parents and this time Dad shaves Byron's head. If students have both seen the movie and read the book, ask them:

**What are the differences between Scene 56 and what happens in the book?
What are the similarities?**

Why would the scriptwriter decide to put these two incidents together instead of at different times in different scenes?

DISCUSS MOVIE

Whole Class Discussion

Sometimes adolescents do things that cause their parents to ask: "What were you thinking?" In this film discussion, ask students:

What was Byron thinking when he made these choices that would obviously provoke his parents?

Why does Kenny call his mother "the snake lady?" What causes Wilona's voice to change?

Small Group Discussion

This discussion activity will allow students to delve more deeply into the characters' motivations and perspectives. It will also provide students with a platform to identify the author's purpose and to consider how the screenwriter motivates the movie viewer to make important connections between social and psychological issues experienced by the characters.

For the activity, divide students into small groups of 3-4. Pose the following prompt:

Why does Byron play with fire in the bathroom? Why does he straighten his hair? Are these acts of defiance, signals of inner turmoil, or simply normal teen behaviors?

Allow students 5-10 minutes to discuss their ideas within their groups. Remind them to accompany their opinions with reasoning and evidence. Encourage students to ask each other questions about their respective ideas. After students have talked in their small groups, reconvene the whole class and spend 10 -15 minutes allowing students to share their own and respectfully challenge each other's ideas.

(Possible responses: One position –likely the most sophisticated stance, not to be expected of younger students—is that the injustice Byron is exposed to by the media, like the Children's Crusade news report, causes him to be upset and fantasize about how to eliminate bad guys or bring justice to disadvantaged people. Another position is that Byron is testing boundaries and wants to assert his strength and independence as someone who is not a child anymore. A third possible position is that Byron is acting like a typical delinquent who disobeys his parents by playing dangerous games and gets a new hairstyle because it's hip for the times. He wants to be cool.)



Overview of Scene 56

In Scene 56, we have cousins Kenny, Byron, Jr., Sarah, and Naomi talking together in Grandma Sands' backyard. This scene follows several flashbacks to what happened to the children protesters during the historically important Children's March in the spring of 1963. Kenny is amazed by his cousins' stories and asks Sarah to explain more about what happened. The Watson children are astounded by the story, both the events and the parts played by their second cousins, and Kenny begins the following conversation:

KENNY

Weren't you scared?

JR.

Getting our freedom was more important than anything.

BYRON

You keep saying that. What do you mean?

JR.

We want to be equal. We want the same things white kids get. We get their old books, their old uniforms for our sports when they get everything new. They always gonna be ahead cause they get everything first.

BYRON

But they tried to hurt...they did hurt you.

JR.

Sometimes people get hurt in a fight, but you gotta do what you gotta do. And Sarah is fine.

SARAH

Yeah. I'm fine now. I just have a scar. It's okay. I'm kinda proud of it.

cont'd...

BYRON
Did you end up in jail?

JR.
For almost two weeks.

BYRON
Two weeks? What did your parents say?

KENNY
What about school?

JR.
Our parents supported us and were kind of proud of us. And so were our teachers.

KENNY
Proud of you for going to jail?

SARAH
Because of us, the Commissioner lost his job and they have to integrate West End and Ramsey High School and Graymont Elementary. And we're gonna get an equal education.

OLDER KENNY (Narrating)
I could see the wheels turning in Byron's head. If he could make Momma and Dad proud of him for going to jail he was gonna try.

BYRON
What's the story now? Are you all still marching?

JR.
We'll see. Some folks are still trying to keep us out of their schools.

SARAH
But the law now says they have to.

JR.
The law don't matter to some folks. If they don't let us in, we'll march again.

BYRON
Cool...I'd go out there with you guys.

Film to Text Connection

Scene 56 is in the movie, but was *not* in the original book.

**What are the differences between Scene 56 and what happens in the book?
What are the similarities?**

Why would the scriptwriters include this scene?

Does the scene meaningfully support the overall plot of the book? In what ways?

DISCUSS MOVIE

Whole Class Discussion

After they have read over this script excerpt, highlight portions and ask students questions such as:

JR.

Getting our freedom was more important than anything.

BYRON

You keep saying that. What do you mean?

What did Jr. mean by this? Why does Byron prompt Jr. to elaborate?

BYRON

What's the story now? Are you all still marching?

JR.

We'll see. Some folks are still trying to keep us out of their schools.

SARAH

But the law now says they have to.

JR.

The law don't matter to some folks. If they don't let us in, we'll march again.

Again, what does Jr. mean when he says, "The law don't matter to some folks?"

Other questions for discussion might include:

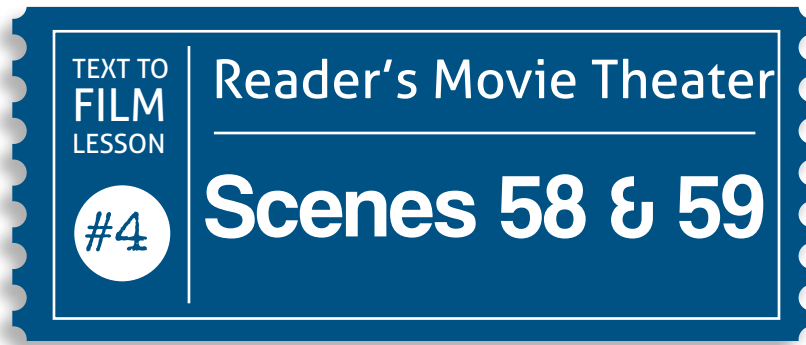
Why would parents and teachers be proud of the Birmingham children protesters when their actions landed them in jail and caused them to miss two weeks of school?

Historical (educational) questions might focus on asking students questions like:

What did it mean to miss two weeks of school back in 1963? What would it mean now?

What kind of non-violence is expressed by a march?

What kind of non-violence is expressed by a refusal to go to a school that is segregated, as well as less well equipped with quality educational materials?



Overview of Scenes 58 & 59

Scene 58 begins with Dad and Byron sitting together in Byron's bedroom at Grandma Sands' house in Birmingham. Daniel Watson is just about to return to Flint, Michigan. Kenny sits on a milk crate outside of the open window of the room he is sharing with Byron. He hears the following conversation between his father and his brother:

DANIEL (DAD)

By the time you wake up I'll be half-way home.

BYRON

Yup.

DANIEL

Byron, I need you to be the man of the house while I'm gone. Can you do that for me? I know you can, but will you?

BYRON

What do you mean?

DANIEL

I mean, I don't like leaving my family down here in the segregated south with bombs going off without me being here, but I've got no choice. I have to go to work and your mother is determined to spend some time with her mother.

BYRON

So what do you need from me?

DANIEL

I need you to think before you act because your actions have real consequences down here. You are the one I know I can count on.

cont'd...

Transition to Scene 59, where Kenny pays extra close attention when he hears his father mention his name to Byron. Daniel and Byron continue their conversation.

DANIEL

Your mother and I are hard on you because we know what potential you have. If you worked at it you could do as well as Kenny does in school. Kenny is still just a kid. Please keep an eye on him for me. I think Birmingham is hard on him.

OLDER KENNY (Narrating)

Hearing Dad tell Byron I was weak made me realize I needed to find a way to show them I wasn't really just Poindexter the punk.

Film to Text Connection

Scenes 58 and 59 are in the movie, but are *not* in the original book.

**What are the differences between these scenes and what happens in the book?
What are the similarities?**

Why would the scriptwriters include this scene?

Does the scene meaningfully support the overall plot of the book? In what ways?

DISCUSS MOVIE

Whole Class Discussion

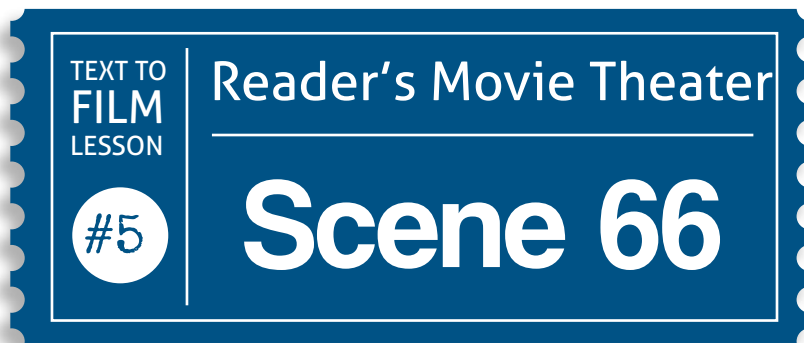
This scene is largely about family relations and the important ways in which children are encouraged to mature and take on new responsibilities. However, there are important and educationally highly relevant facts embedded in the dialogue between a father and his oldest son. Prompt students to consider:

What are Byron's responsibilities? What might they be today, as compared to the summer of 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama?

Consider when Daniel says to Byron:

“I need you to think before you act because your actions have real consequences down here. You are the one I know I can count on.”

What is the drama here? Do you think in Byron's case, Dad is right in saying: I know you *can* act responsibly, but you have to decide if you *will* act responsibly.



Overview of Scene 66

In Scene 66, Kenny and Byron are in their bedroom at Grandma Sands' house in Birmingham. Kenny thanks Byron for not telling on him for almost drowning at Collier's Landing. Kenny lays in the bed tossing and turning a bit. Byron who is half asleep on the floor hears him stir:

BYRON

How are you feeling?

KENNY

Tired.

KENNY

Hey, By? Thanks for not telling Momma and Daddy about Collier's Landing.

BYRON

No problem, baby bruh. You probably will be tired all day. I'd take it easy if I were you.

KENNY

Yeah.

BYRON

Don't worry. I'll cover for you. They would blame me anyway so it's in my best interest to help you out. If anyone asks, I'll tell them I tired you out running you around the lake. Now I'm going back to sleep myself. Those crickets kept me up all night.

KENNY

Hey, By? You ready to go home?

BYRON

I don't know. I might be able to do some good down here.

cont'd...

KENNY

What? You would stay even if you don't have to?

BYRON

I don't know.

KENNY

But, living here is much harder than living at home.

BYRON

But if this is your home you gotta make it work.

KENNY

I'm glad Momma left here and never came back. I hope it's a long time before we come back down here again.

KENNY (CONT'D)

You think you're coming home with us?

BYRON

We'll see.

Film to Text Connection

Scene 66 is not explicitly described in the book, but parts of it are implied in Chapter 14. The scene provides context for inferences that may have already been made by the reader. In the book, at the beginning of Chapter 14, Kenny describes himself as having all the energy knocked out of himself for a few days after his near tragic experience with the "Wool Pooh." He describes himself as sleeping under a tree that Sunday morning when the bombing occurs. In the movie script, the screenwriter adds an important discussion between Byron and Kenny on that Sunday morning.

**What are the differences between Scene 66 and what happens in the book?
What are the similarities?**

Why would the scriptwriters include this scene?

Does the scene meaningfully support the overall plot of the book? In what ways?

DISCUSS MOVIE

Whole Class Discussion

This scene is an excellent opportunity for students to practice one of the most important competencies in the *Voices* approach, their perspective taking skills.

BYRON

How are you feeling?

KENNY

Tired.

KENNY

Hey, By? Thanks for not telling Momma and Daddy about Collier's Landing.

BYRON

No problem, baby bruh. You probably will be tired all day. I'd take it easy if I were you.

KENNY

Yeah.

BYRON

Don't worry. I'll cover for you...

Why does Byron treat Kenny so kindly here? Why didn't he tell on Kenny for swimming at Collier's Landing?

How do you think Kenny feels about Byron's loyalty?

KENNY

Hey, By? You ready to go home?

BYRON

I don't know. I might be able to do some good down here.

Why does Kenny wonder if Byron is ready to go home? And – why is Byron's answer hesitant? For what reasons would Byron want to stay in Birmingham?

KENNY

What? You would stay even if you don't have to?

BYRON

I don't know.

KENNY

But, living here is much harder than living at home.

BYRON

But if this is your home you gotta make it work.

What does Kenny mean when he says living in Birmingham is harder than living in Flint? Why would he think this way?

If Birmingham life were so much more difficult than Flint, why would Byron want to stay?



Appendices

Reading Formats & Their Benefits

Shared Reading

During shared reading, a proficient reader—usually the educator—models effective reading strategies for less advanced readers. This activity creates a safe environment where the students are able to learn to read while listening. Ideally, the students follow along in their own text while the educator reads aloud. The group may pause at times to ask questions or highlight effective reading strategies. Shared reading is useful during whole class settings. The activity builds students' sight word knowledge and reading fluency. This activity also enables struggling readers to enjoy the same text as their more proficient peers.

Guided Reading

During Guided Reading, the educator works with a small group (3-6) of readers as they work through a book. Sometimes the teacher may read the text aloud, while other times the students read aloud. In some guided reading lessons, the teacher will ask the students to whisper read to themselves. During these sessions, the educator is able to provide specific guidance to students by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging certain reading strategies (context clues, letter and sound relationships, word structure, and so forth, plot development, etc.). This scaffolded reading format prepares students with the skills they need to eventually read on their own.

Independent Reading

Independent reading is the type of reading students do alone. This activity is usually done to gain information or to have fun! The most successful independent reading activity is when students engage in reading voluntarily; during the reading no one requires a report and no one checks on comprehension, as these strategies can disrupt the reader's concentration. Among many other benefits, independent reading has been found to build fluency, increase vocabulary, bolster background knowledge, and strengthen overall content comprehension.

Popcorn Reading

During popcorn reading lessons, the educator chooses one student to begin reading the chapter. After one page, the student or the educator randomly selects another student in class to continue reading. It is important to ask students to follow along in their own text while others read aloud. Some researchers say that popcorn reading helps students build fluency and pronunciation skills. We only recommend popcorn reading for groups of students who can confidently read on the level of the text assigned.

Recommendations for Discussion Activities⁷

What does a Classroom Discussion Look Like?

Classroom discussions can take place in many different participation structures. Discussion-based activities vary in the number of students present, the degree to which the educator's voice is present, and the amount of scaffolding necessary to prepare students for the activity. Listed below are five discussion-based activities that can be used to scaffold students' discussion skills. All of these activities are effective in bolstering students' comprehension of content and their prosocial capacities.

Think-Pair-Share

Pose a content-related question to the whole class and give students 30 seconds to reflect on their own thoughts. Next, allow students approximately two minutes to share their ideas with a partner. Following this brief exchange, reconvene the whole class and ask students to share aloud their partner's idea. This activity provides opportunities for students to practice reflection, listening, and perspective-taking skills. A think-pair-share typically takes a total of 5 minutes of class time.

Fishbowl

Ask a group of 3-5 students to sit in a circle in the center of the classroom. Be sure to include one empty seat in this inner circle (for observers who will want to join in). The rest of the class should form a standing ring around the outside of the inner circle. The educator will pose an open-ended, content related question to the inner group (e.g. Kenny learns a lot about friendship from Rufus who is kind and LJ Jones who's sneaky. What does it mean to be a good friend?). While students in the inside circle discuss the prompt, students in the outside circle should listen carefully to the ideas being generated. If a student in the outside circle has something to say, she may join the conversation by taking a seat in the available spot in the inner circle. When a new student joins the inner circle, another student must leave and join the outer circle. This activity allows students to practice directing their own conversational flow, maintain interpretive authority of the material, and sharpen general listening and reflecting skills required by discussions. A fishbowl can take anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes of class time.

⁷ As described in *The SAGE Handbook of Classroom Management's Managing Classroom Discussions* by S. Ronfard, T. Elizabeth, & J. Bempechat (2014).

Structured Debate

Depending on the size of the class, divide students into 2-4 groups. Introduce an open-ended topic in which more than one plausible solution or answer is evident (e.g. Kenny realizes that Larry Dunn stole his extra pair of leather gloves. What is the best way for Kenny to handle this situation?). Assign a stance to each group and let them know it will be their responsibility to 1) justify and defend that stance, and 2) rebut counterarguments. Give time for students to prepare their arguments and their rebuttal to the other team's argument. This activity provides students with opportunities to engage in complex reasoning about a shared text, as well as chances to formulate evidence-based arguments and practice strategies for respectfully disagreeing with others. A structured debate can take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes of class time.

Whole Class Discussion

Typically, whole class discussions are started when the educator poses an open-ended question to the group (e.g. Do you think Byron thought about the danger of fire when he played his Nazi parachute game?). Then, students are encouraged to share their ideas and to respond to each other's thinking. It is ideal to encourage students to simply speak out when they have something to say, rather than raising their hand to request permission from the educator. Over the course of the academic year, the management of the whole-class discussion can shift from being predominantly facilitated by the educator to being driven by students (who will feel more and more comfortable questioning each other and sharing ideas). This activity provides an opportunity for students to learn how to manage large multi-party conversations, while at the same time deepening their comprehension of content and exercising prosocial discussion skills. A whole-class discussion can take anywhere from 3 to 45 minutes of class time; the activity is exceedingly versatile and can be integrated into just about any other instructional format.

Small-Group Discussion

In groups of 3 - 6, students are asked to contemplate academic content. They may be provided with an exploratory prompt (e.g. How are Flint and Birmingham similar? How are they different?); they may be requested to discuss a chapter from a text (e.g. In Chapter 4, what does it say about Kenny's personality that he shared his gloves with Rufus?); or students may be asked to solve a complex problem (e.g. How many miles did the Watsons drive when they traveled from Flint to Birmingham?). Typically, the entire class breaks into small groups at the same time, and then reconvenes at the same time to report their findings to the whole class. Small-group discussions offer students the most interpretive control over content, and are best suited for students who have had some modeling or practice engaging in discussion. The educator may circulate throughout the room to monitor that students are on task. This activity provides an opportunity for students to learn how to manage large multi-party conversations, while at the same time deepening their comprehension of content and exercising prosocial skills. A small-group discussion can take anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes of class time.

Strategies for Facilitating Healthy Discussions⁸

How Can Educators Promote Effective Classroom Discussions?

Establish Ground Rules

It is important for educators, together with their students, to set and enforce effective ground rules for classroom discussions very early on. Students will feel more dedicated to a set of rules if they have had a hand in creating them. The educator can start by asking students to reflect on positive conversations they have had with their friends or family members. The following are a few suggested prompts to get students thinking:

- ***What makes a good conversation partner?***
- ***What are the differences between a fight and a discussion?***
- ***How do you feel when others interrupt you when you are talking?***
- ***How does it make you feel when others laugh at your ideas?***
- ***How do you know when what is said in a discussion is a fact versus an opinion?***

The questions listed above will get students thinking about the importance of empathy and perspective taking during discussions, as well as the need for logic- and evidence- based contributions. After challenging students to visualize what constitutes a friendly and productive discussion, ask them to think of a few rules that would ensure respectful talk. Listed below are recommended ground rules. Having just a few rules is more effective than having a long list.

- ***Actively listen to your peers' ideas.***
- ***Wait for an appropriate moment in the discussion to speak.***
- ***Use evidence or reason to support your ideas.***
- ***Ask for clarification when you are confused.***
- ***Don't speak too much - give others a chance!***
- ***Use kind words, not insults.***

The purposes of student-generated ground rules are that 1) they are more likely to be adhered to and respected by students and therefore will reduce the likelihood of misbehavior and 2) introducing respectful standards will contribute to the overall harmony of the classroom climate and naturally create an atmosphere that is conducive to collaborative learning.

⁸ As described in *The SAGE Handbook of Classroom Management's Managing Classroom Discussions* by S. Ronfard, T. Elizabeth, & J. Bempechat (2014).

Instructional Techniques

During any type of discussion activity, the educator has the important job of making sure the talk remains academically focused and productive. While students should be allowed considerable interpretive authority, the educator may intervene when necessary. Listed below are ways the educator may gently get students back on track:

- ***Question how statements are related to the academic content or topic.***
- ***Review or repeat central points when students seem confused.***
- ***Remind students that differing opinions are okay.***

Talk Moves for Productive Classroom Discussion

No matter the structure, there are both student and educator “talk moves” that are conducive to productive classroom discussions. Talk moves, whether used by educators or students, help to improve the quality of conversations by helping to clarify, link, invite, and extend contributions. These moves promote both *academic* and *social* understanding at the same time because they repair and extend the discussion in an inclusive and respectful manner. Therefore, students who are engaged in a discussion about an academic topic will be practicing prosocial behavioral tendencies while also deepening their comprehension of subject matter.

Educator Moves⁹

Educator moves encourage students to externalize their thoughts and press students to deepen their reasoning. These educator moves can be used during any discussion format. These talk moves help the educator to:

- ***Ensure that students can hear one another:***
“Say that louder.” or “Can you say that again so that everyone can hear?”
- ***Prompt students to support contributions with evidence from the text:***
“What evidence in the book supports that position?” or “Where in the text does it say...?”
- ***Prompt students to provide general reasons for their contributions:***
“Why do you think that?” or “Can you explain your reasoning to us a little more?”
- ***Encourage students to clarify their contributions:***
“Can you say more about that?” or “What do you mean when you say...?”

⁹ Elizabeth, T., LaRusso, M., O’Connor, C., Selman, R. and Snow, C. (2014). *LIDO: A Low-Inference Discourse Observation Tool for Researchers and Practitioners.*

- **Prompt students to respond to other students' reasoning:**
"Who agrees or disagrees with X?" or "Who can add on to what Y just said?"

The educator moves listed above are subtle ways for the educator to hold students accountable for maintaining quality dialogue that promotes content understanding. Sometimes the educator will need to use more direct moves to:

- **Ensure that students pay attention to one another:**
"Who can put that into their own words?" or
"You need to listen to Alice."
- **Guide students back on topic:**
"How does that relate to X?" or "Let's remember that our topic is X..."
- **Remind students of the classroom rules for discussion:**
"Jeremy, please rephrase that using kind words." or "Don't interrupt your classmate."

Student Moves

Desirable student moves involve extended talk in which students provide evidence or reasoning for their ideas. Respectful disagreements, requests for peer elaboration, interrogation of sources, and attempts to gain clarity are key indicators that the discussion is going well. Students' use of these moves should be highlighted and encouraged:

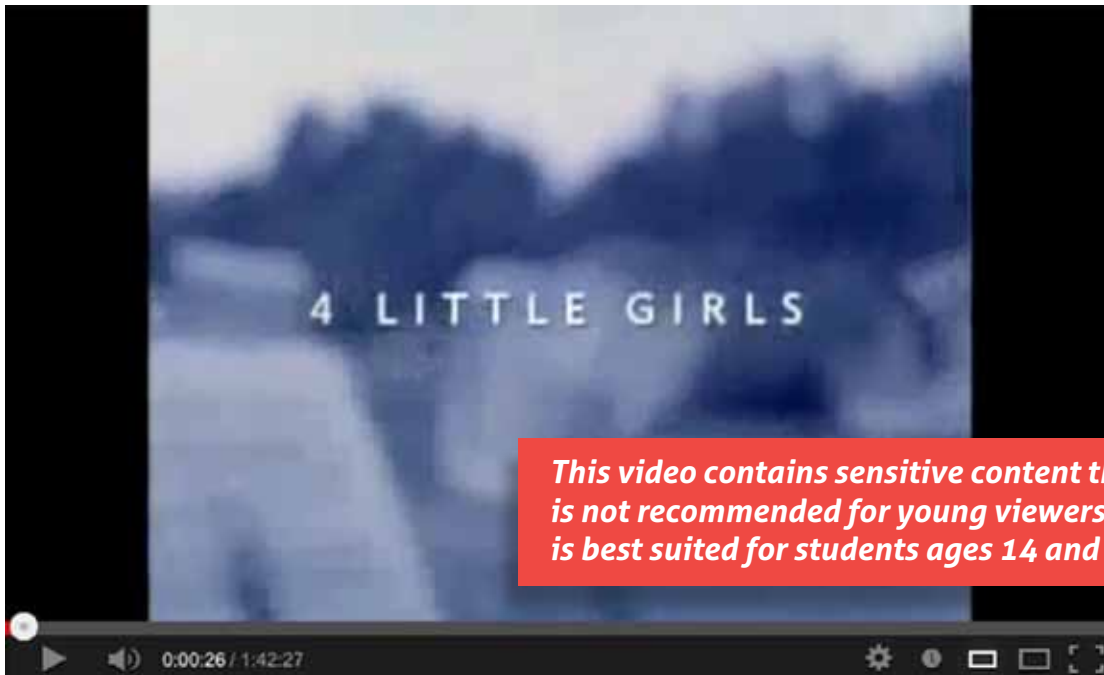
- ***Provide general reasons to support a contribution:***
 "I think the sum is nine **because** when you put four with five..."
- ***Refer to specific evidence from the text to support a contribution:***
 "On page 7, it says that water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit."
- ***State that they agree or disagree with another student:***
 "I disagree with Eglantine. I do not think copper sticks to magnets."
- ***Acknowledge multiple perspectives in the discussion:***
 "Robbie thinks that the Pharaohs were kind, but Jeremy thinks they were oppressive."
- ***Ask another student a question about their contribution or the topic:***
 "Eglantine, what makes you think that the copper will stick to the magnet?"
- ***State that he/she has changed his/her mind:***
 "I used to think that we shouldn't use two languages at school, but now I think it's okay."

Not *all* educator and student talk moves need to happen during a single discussion in order to view the activity as a success. Rather, these moves will fluctuate depending on the activity structure and how advanced students are in their discussion skills. As students' discussion skills become more sophisticated, they can be expected to adopt educator moves to manage and extend discussions. Similarly, the educator can borrow student moves to model effective discussion techniques. Sharing with students why and how a particular talk move is important will help students understand the social and communicative purposes of each move and will help them learn to use talk moves effectively and independently.

4 Little Girls

Video Connection Activity

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGoP6TGa7ig>



Videotape: *4 Little Girls*

There are many references in the book to the racism, hatred and violence exhibited during the Civil Rights Movement in America. The subject matter of this 102 minute film somewhat mirrors the bombing episode in Chapter 14 and will enable the students to gain a better understanding of the effects crimes of this nature had not only the people personally involved, but also on the greater Civil Rights Movement.

4 Little Girls, directed by Spike Lee, is an extremely powerful documentary that takes an in-depth look at the crime that forever altered the lives of many Americans. It tells the story of a bomb tearing through a basement of a church taking the lives of four young girls: Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley and Addie Mae Collins. The film features comments by surviving family members, as well as interviews with some notable personalities including Bill Cosby, Jesse Jackson, and Coretta Scott King.

Following the viewing of the videotape of *4 Little Girls*, the whole class should be involved in a discussion where they are allowed to voice their feelings and comments about the film. The discussion should be steered toward the main reason why the Civil Rights Movement came into being in the first place — black Americans were being treated unfairly in many respects. Then talk about the effects that this particular crime probably had on the progress of the Movement.

Historical Resources

Online Video

Excerpt, Report to the American People on Civil Rights, 11 June 1963

CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) motion picture excerpt containing President John F. Kennedy's full radio and television report to the American people on civil rights.



<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/TNC-262-EX.aspx>

Birmingham and the Children's March

Video of Children's March



<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2013/04/26/april-26-2013-birmingham-and-the-childrens-march/16051/>

Online Video (Cont'd)

PBS NewsHour: Freedom Riders Discuss 50th Anniversary of Protest Movement

Interview of two women Freedom Riders discussing their experiences.



<http://video.pbs.org/video/1922856991>

Finding Your Roots: Growing up under Jim Crow in Birmingham, Alabama

Growing up under Jim Crow Birmingham, Alabama.



<http://video.pbs.org/video/2227535292>

Online Video (Cont'd)

Civil Rights March

Civil Rights March on Washington.



<http://archive.org/details/CivilRightsMarch>

Segregation Now, Segregation Tomorrow, Segregation Forever

One-minute video with George Wallace saying, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."



<http://www.wyzant.com/help/history/hpol/wallace/segregation>

Online Video (Cont'd)

The 1963 March on Washington civil rights rally

MLK, John Lewis and clergymen exemplify the diversity of the march, indicating the importance of community, support and collective action.



<http://www.dvarchive.com/stock-footage/000-3946/themarchonwashingtoncivillightsrallymartinlutherkingarrives>

Birmingham, Alabama in 1963

Children's march, protesting, courageously being arrested, attack dogs being used against patrons, all to the backdrop of MLK's speech.



<http://fastimages.net/films/movie.jsp?id=205794>

Online Video (Cont'd)

Martin Luther King

Extended clip of MAJOR moments of Civil Rights Movement, incorporating all major moments.



http://www.myfootage.com/search.php?search=bull+connor&match_type=all

1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Singing "we shall overcome" with the newscast V.O, and MLK's speech.



<http://fastimages.net/films/movie.jsp?id=88586>

Online Speech

Josephine Baker

“Speech at the March on Washington,” 1963

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=1963-josephine-baker-speech-march-washington>

Friends and family...you know I have lived a long time and I have come a long way. And you must know now that what I did, I did originally for myself. Then later, as these things began happening to me, I wondered if they were happening to you, and then I knew they must be. And I knew that you had no way to defend yourselves, as I had.

And as I continued to do the things I did, and to say the things I said, they began to beat me. Not beat me, mind you, with a club—but you know, I have seen that done too—but they beat me with their pens, with their writings. And friends, that is much worse.

When I was a child and they burned me out of my home, I was frightened and I ran away. Eventually I ran far away. It was to a place called France. Many of you have been there, and many have not. But I must tell you, ladies and gentlemen, in that country I never feared. It was like a fairyland place.

And I need not tell you that wonderful things happened to me there. Now I know that all you children don't know who Josephine Baker is, but you ask Grandma and Grandpa and they will tell you. You know what they will say. “Why, she was a devil.” And you know something...why, they are right. I was too. I was a devil in other countries, and I was a little devil in America too.

But I must tell you, when I was young in Paris, strange things happened to me. And these things had never happened to me before. When I left St. Louis a long time ago, the conductor directed me to the last car. And you all know what that means.

But when I ran away, yes, when I ran away to another country, I didn't have to do that. I could go into any restaurant I wanted to, and I could drink water anyplace I wanted to, and I didn't have to go to a colored toilet either, and I have to tell you it was nice, and I got used to it, and I liked it, and I wasn't afraid anymore that someone would shout at me and say, “Nigger, go to the end of the line.” But you know, I rarely ever used that word. You also know that it has been shouted at me many times.

So over there, far away, I was happy, and because I was happy I had some success, and you know that too.

Then after a long time, I came to America to be in a great show for Mr. Ziegfeld, and you know Josephine was happy. You know that. Because I wanted to tell everyone in my country about myself. I wanted to let everyone know that I made good, and you know too that that is only natural.

But on that great big beautiful ship, I had a bad experience. A very important star was to sit with me for dinner, and at the last moment I discovered she didn't want to eat with a colored woman. I can tell you it was some blow.

And I won't bother to mention her name, because it is not important, and anyway, now she is dead.

And when I got to New York way back then, I had other blows—when they would not let me check into the good hotels because I was colored, or eat in certain restaurants. And then I went to Atlanta, and it was a horror to me. And I said to myself, My God, I am Josephine, and if they do this to me, what do they do to the other people in America?



Josephine Baker

You know, friends, that I do not lie to you when I tell you I have walked into the palaces of kings and queens and into the houses of presidents. And much more. But I could not walk into a hotel in America and get a cup of coffee, and that made me mad. And when I get mad, you know that I open my big mouth. And then look out, 'cause when Josephine opens her mouth, they hear it all over the world.

So I did open my mouth, and you know I did scream, and when I demanded what I was supposed to have and what I was entitled to, they still would not give it to me.

So then they thought they could smear me, and the best way to do that was to call me a communist. And you know, too, what that meant. Those were dreaded words in those days,

and I want to tell you also that I was hounded by the government agencies in America, and there was never one ounce of proof that I was a communist. But they were mad. They were mad because I told the truth. And the truth was that all I wanted was a cup of coffee. But I wanted that cup of coffee where I wanted to drink it, and I had the money to pay for it, so why shouldn't I have it where I wanted it?

Friends and brothers and sisters, that is how it went. And when I screamed loud enough, they started to open that door just a little bit, and we all started to be able to squeeze through it. Not just the colored people, but the others as well, the other minorities too, the Orientals, and the Mexicans, and the Indians, both those here in the United States and those from India.

Now I am not going to stand in front of all of you today and take credit for what is happening now. I cannot do that. But I want to take credit for telling you how to do the same thing, and when you scream, friends, I know you will be heard. And you will be heard now.

But you young people must do one thing, and I know you have heard this story a thousand times from your mothers and fathers, like I did from my mama. I didn't take her advice. But I accomplished the same in another fashion. You must get an education. You must go to school, and you must learn to protect yourself. And you must learn to protect yourself with the pen, and not the gun. Then you can answer them, and I can tell you—and I don't want to sound corny—but friends, the pen really is mightier than the sword.

I am not a young woman now, friends. My life is behind me. There is not too much fire burning inside me. And before it goes out, I want you to use what is left to light that fire in you. So that you can carry on, and so that you can do those things that I have done. Then, when my fires have burned out, and I go where we all go someday, I can be happy.

You know I have always taken the rocky path. I never took the easy one, but as I get older, and as I knew I had the power and the strength, I took that rocky path, and I tried to smooth it out a little. I wanted to make it easier for you. I want you to have a chance at what I had. But I do not want you to have to run away to get it. And mothers and fathers, if it is too late for you, think of your children. Make it safe here so they do not have to run away, for I want for you and your children what I had.

Ladies and gentlemen, my friends and family, I have just been handed a little note, as you probably say. It is an invitation to visit the President of the United States in his home, the White House.

I am greatly honored. But I must tell you that a colored woman—or, as you say it here in America, a black woman—is not going there. It is a woman. It is Josephine Baker.

This is a great honor for me. Someday I want you children out there to have that great honor too. And we know that that time is not someday. We know that that time is now.

I thank you, and may god bless you. And may He continue to bless you long after I am gone.