

A NEW NONFICTION SERIES FOR GRADES 5 & UP

RACE TO THE TRUTH



UNTIL NOW, YOU'VE ONLY HEARD ONE SIDE OF THE STORY.
HERE'S THE TRUE STORY OF AMERICAN HISTORY. THIS NEW HIGH-INTEREST, LOW-LEVEL MIDDLE GRADE
NONFICTION SERIES IS THE ONLY SERIES OF ITS KIND, WITH EACH BOOK WRITTEN BY
A MEMBER OF THE MARGINALIZED COMMUNITY WHOSE HISTORY IS EXPLORED WITHIN IT.

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

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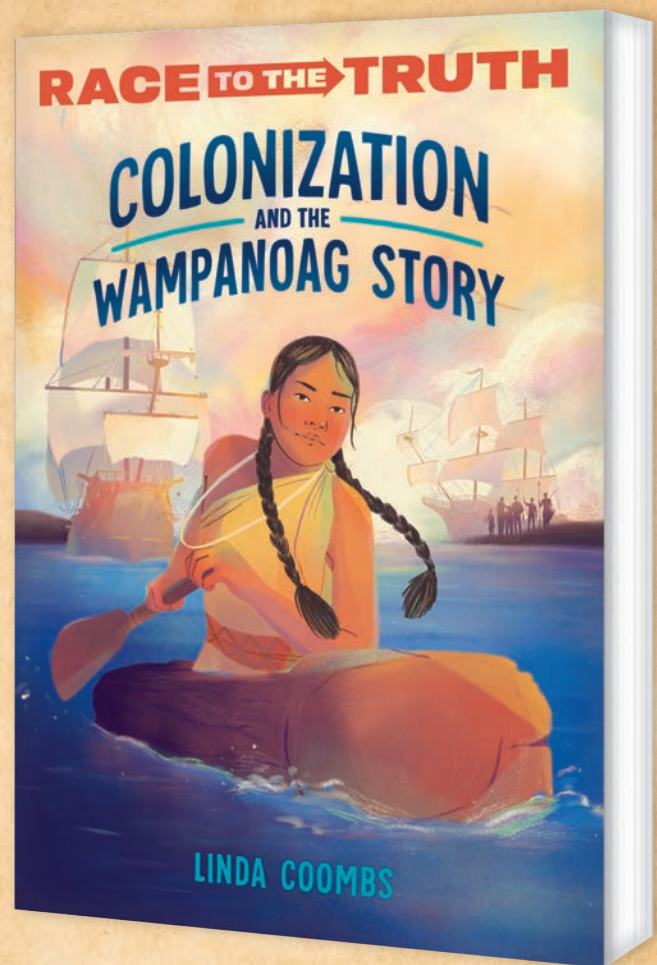


ABOUT THE BOOK

Until now, you've only heard one side of the story: the "discovery" of America as told by Christopher Columbus, the Pilgrims, and the colonists. Here's the true story of America from the Indigenous perspective.

When you think about the beginning of the American story, what comes to mind? Three ships in 1492, or perhaps buckled hats and shoes, white men stepping off the *Mayflower*, ready to start a new country. But the truth is, Christopher Columbus, the Pilgrims, and the colonists didn't arrive to a vast, empty land ready to be developed. They arrived to find people and communities living in harmony with the land they had inhabited for thousands of years, and they quickly disrupted everything.

From its "discovery" by Europeans to the first Thanksgiving, the story of America's earliest days has been carefully misrepresented. Told from the perspective of the New England Indigenous Nations that these outsiders found when they arrived, this is the true story of how America as we know it today began.



TP: 978-0-593-48043-4
GLB: 978-0-593-48047-2

THEMES:
United States History—
Colonial & Revolutionary
Periods, Native American
History, Prejudice & Racism



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LINDA COOMBS (Aquinnah Wampanoag) is an author and historian from the Wampanoag tribe of Aquinnah who lives in the Wampanoag community of Mashpee on Cape Cod, MA. Coombs began her career with an internship at the Boston Children's Museum, later working there in the Native American program. She and her colleague Paulla Dove Jennings (Narragansett) wrote children's books for a museum series highlighting aspects of southern New England's tribal cultures. Coombs also worked for thirty years in the Wampanoag Indigenous Program (WIP) of Plimoth Plantation, including fifteen years as WIP's associate director and nine years at the Aquinnah Cultural Center. At present, she does independent museum consulting and cultural presentations.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

TIMELINE

As a class, create a timeline of documented interactions between North, Central, and South American Indigenous Tribes and the European colonizers that injured their lands and denied their cultures. Begin where the book does in the 1400s and continue to present, using resources such as timelines of colonial interference, treaty negotiations, and displacement/relocation. Suggested resources are the Library of Congress, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, and the History Channel website. As they examine these resources and complete the timeline, students can make connections to prior knowledge regarding national history and current events and make inferences and create new understandings.

Students can use the following questions to reflect and discuss the final product.

- From whose perspective is the story of these interactions mostly told?
- How does not hearing the Indigenous perspective impact all of us?

MAP IT OUT

Have students work in groups or independently to create a map of the interactions from the timeline. Students need to consider where these interactions took place and reflect on what they know about the history of America. Students can respond to the following question with an extended written response (including claim, reasoning, and evidence).

- How and why did the interactions between the Indigenous people and the colonizers spread?

READING ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CREATE A MAP

As students read, have them create and add to a map of the summer village described in the “When Life Was Our Own” sections. Students should focus on:

- How the village is situated in the natural world
- How the people are situated within the village
- How the people interact with the natural world

VENN DIAGRAM

The text highlights the similarities and differences between the Indigenous People and the European colonizers. Students should compare and contrast specific social and cultural practices and beliefs to better understand the evolution of the relationship between the groups.

- Compare and contrast Little Bird’s family mealtime routine to your own. Consider why certain things are similar and why others seem so different. (pp. 4–8)
- Compare and contrast the legal systems of the European colonizers and the Wampanoags. Consider the positives and negatives both, as well as the potential reasoning behind each. (chapter 10)
- Compare and contrast the descriptions of the educational systems of the Wampanoag and other Indigenous communities to the approach of the European colonizers. Do aspects of these systems and approaches exist today? Which ones? How are they implemented? (chapter 12)

KEYHOLE BOOK SCENE

Have students reflect on each of the below sections of the book and respond to the prompts.

- Red Dawn’s revelation about hunting (p. 58)
What does Red Dawn understand about the importance of being intentional when hunting?

- Lessons for survival and self-confidence (pp. 59–60)
Compare these lessons (walking quietly in the woods, identifying animal calls) to the lessons you remember being taught. Are they the same? If not, why are they different? What do you think are the positives and negatives of these differences?
- Elders sharing generationally inherited stories and ancestral pasts (pp. 64)
Imagine yourself in the shoes of one of the children, listening to these stories as you walk through the woods with your grandparents. What do you believe is the impact on individuals and communities of having access to this ancestral knowledge, passed forward from elders to their children?
- Representations of Indigenous joy (pp. 68–70)
Why do you think it is uncommon to hear stories of Indigenous people joyfully living their lives? Why is it important when learning about the history of Indigenous people to see both the joy experienced as well as the pain and injustice inflicted upon them through colonization?
- The quarry and ancestral practices (pp. 76–79)
Reflect on how Columbus described the Guanahani people. Based on the description of the Wampanoag’s practices to respectfully quarry materials, what was Christopher Columbus ignorant of in his initial assumptions?

SAID, HEARD, LEARNED

This is a guided discussion using a three-column graphic organizer. Students are first given a prompt, question, or concept to respond to individually. Their response should go in the Said column. Then students will find a partner to discuss their answer. As their partner is sharing their response to the prompt, students will take notes in the Heard column. Once both have shared, students will individually reflect on their short conversation and use the Learned column to synthesize their understandings with new perspectives. Students can repeat this process as much as the teacher sees fit.

- How is life today different from the life led by the Wampanoags before colonization? What are the positives and negatives of these changes? Do you think there are practices that have died out that could be revitalized and used in your own community? Which? How could you implement them? What would the benefit be? (chapter 3)
- Based on the story of how Punkinseed got her name, explain the significance of the names of Indigenous people and the stories of how they got them. How is this reflected in their interactions and connections with the natural world? (p. 40)

VISUAL AIDS

Students can use images to evaluate the broader global context of colonization and how the Wampanoags' experiences were reflected and repeated across the world. For this activity, place images related to American colonization around the room. Images should have a small description including the time the image was created, its location, and what is being depicted. Have students silently wander the room and write a response to each picture. Students should work in pairs or small groups to share their responses and reflect on differences and similarities. The teacher can then lead a class discussion to debrief and find common themes.

- Use this activity to show the continuous history of colonization over Indigenous people and their lands. Prompt students to reflect on when these events happened in relation to one another, and how they may interact with, impact, and influence one another.

DOUBLE ENTRY JOURNALS

This is an activity students can complete throughout their reading as an annotation tool or in specific sections for

comprehension. Using two columns, students will use the lefthand column to write specific quotes from the text that support, extend, or challenge their prior knowledge and understanding. The right column will be for students to share their thoughts and opinions about the information in the quote. They should be encouraged to make connections to the past and present, to other classes, and to personal experiences. Scrutinize these passages to aid in understanding of overarching themes.

- “The men finally selected a white pine . . .” (pp. 73–75)
What does this passage emphasize about the use of natural resources and the knowledge used to harvest them?
- “Colonization is not a single activity that happened once in the past . . .” (p. 105)
What do you know about the past, present, and future of colonization? What are some of the “methods, processes, tools, and tactics” used to colonize? Are they the same everywhere? Discuss the power dynamic that exists between colonizers and the lands and people they colonize.
- “Within traditional societies . . .” (pp. 200–201)
What do you think about respect and humor being cornerstones of society? What would you say are the cornerstones of the society you live in? Compare them.

HARKNESS DISCUSSION

This activity is a student-facilitated discussion. Encourage students to write down questions they have as you go through the book. Ask them to choose the question that interests them most, and group students with similar topics together. Have them work in groups to answer all their questions and present to the class. The rest of the class should be encouraged to ask any questions they have.

EXTENDED WRITING PROMPTS

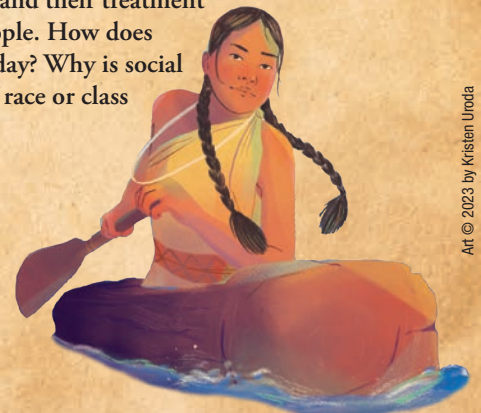
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

- Reflect on the descriptions of the families completing their fall practices and ceremonies in chapter 7. These actions and routines were the basis of their entire society and simply the way they and their families had lived for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Discuss the impacts of the Great Dying and the loss of many of these culturally relevant traditions. How has this impacted the living relatives of the Wampanoag and other Indigenous descendants? How does it influence the way they are treated or perceived by living relatives of European colonizers?

This guide was written by Kit Robinson, an Indigenous woman and high school language arts teacher in Colorado. She is currently pursuing her master of arts in English education, and is conducting research on the impacts of trauma on teachers and their instruction for her thesis. Kit is passionate about educational justice, and advocates for social change through her mentorship of emerging educators and by fighting to address systemic and institutional racism that public education is permeated by.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Write a factual description of the colonizers of America and their treatment of the land and its people. How does this story continue today? Why is social division along lines of race or class so dangerous?



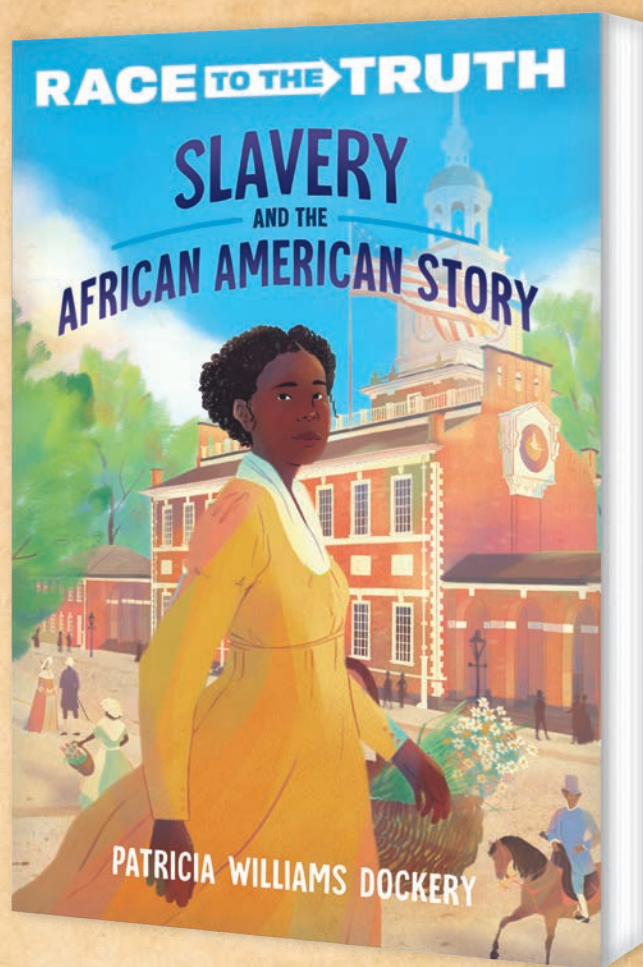
ABOUT THE BOOK

Until now, you've only heard one side of the story: how slavery began, and how America split itself in two to end it. Here's the true story of America from the African American perspective.

From the moment Africans were first brought to the shores of the United States, they had a hand in shaping the country. Their labor created a strong economy, built our halls of government, and defined American society in profound ways. And though the Emancipation Proclamation wasn't signed until 300 years after the first Africans arrived, the fight for freedom started the moment they set foot on American soil.

This book contains the true narrative of the first 300 years of Africans in America: the struggles, the triumphs, and the untold stories that are left out of textbooks. If you want to learn the truth about African American history in this country, start here.

Talking about slavery makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Let's face it: slavery is a difficult topic to tackle. *Slavery and the African American Story* explores the global leaders, economic shifts, and cultural ideologies responsible for the transatlantic slave trade between 1526 and 1867, and offers a thoughtful and honest examination of its legacy in the United States.



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GLB: 978-0-593-48044-1

THEMES:

United States History—
African American &
Black History, Civil War
Period (1850–1877),
Prejudice & Racism



Photo credit: P. A. Greene

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. PATRICIA WILLIAMS DOCKERY is a writer, playwright, scholar, activist, and international commentator who is consulted for her expertise in diversity, equity, and inclusion; social justice; and Black women's intersectional experiences. She has developed educational public programs for grades K to 12 and general audiences at the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the College of Charleston Avery Research Center for African

American History and Culture. She currently serves as associate vice president for academic affairs at Morgan State University. Dr. Dockery is a Fulbright Scholar and earned a PhD in anthropology from University of Illinois, Chicago. A transdisciplinary educator and artist, her play, "Septima!," about the life and work of civil rights organizing mastermind and revolutionary educator Septima Poinsette Clark, debuted at Charleston's PURE Theatre. She and her husband share a beautiful blended family of seven children and a loving boxer-hound mix named Sadie Mae.

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN BY READING THIS BOOK?

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN CHATTEL SLAVERY?

American chattel slavery was a legal system for selling and enslaving human beings and their biological offspring and forcing them to work without pay. In most instances, slavery was permanent. What made American chattel slavery so unique from slavery practiced throughout history and other parts of the world was that it was almost entirely based upon race. In America, only African, African Americans, and to a lesser degree Indigenous people were chattel slaves. Chattel slaves differed from indentured servants—most of whom were poor whites from parts of Europe—who were contracted to work for a specific period of time (often several years) but were eventually released from their obligation and provided a modest sum of money and a small parcel of land for their labor.

WHY IS LEARNING ABOUT SLAVERY IMPORTANT?

"A strong tree shall always grow from the roots and not the seeds."
—African proverb

This African adage is an analogy for the historical, cultural, political, and ideological roots—the real-life experiences and contributions of hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans and their American-born descendants—that shaped and continue to shape the United States. Truth be told, America's history with slavery is deeply ingrained and continues to shape American culture, including its language, food, medicine, demographics, and music. And it has fueled racial discrimination and systemic

injustices in education, employment, housing, and policing. That's why it's so important that we understand the truth about slavery in America. Learning how slavery impacts all our lives today reminds us how connected we are as Americans. Learning about devastating misdeeds of the past can help us avoid making the same mistakes today and in the future.

SLAVERY DID NOT START IN THE UNITED STATES

American chattel slavery was part of a sophisticated and violent system of capturing, buying, and selling African people beginning in the sixteenth century. But the enslavement of humans started as early as AD 650 when Arabs began capturing East African men and women and transporting them to the Middle East and India to work as slaves. By the early 1500s, Portugal was leading the way in the slave trading enterprise. Throughout the transatlantic slave trade, upward of 12 million African men, women, and children were forcibly sold and transported to places such as the Caribbean and South and North America, including what is now the continental United States, years before the Founding Fathers fought for and gained independence from Great Britain. Of that number, approximately 3 percent—roughly 400,000 of those captured Africans—lived as enslaved people in what is now the United States of America. Despite their loss of freedom, separation from family and friends, brutal treatment at the hands of slave traffickers and enslavers, and laws and systems created to enforce their subjugation, they persevered. Evidence of their collective contributions can be found in American architecture, food, language, music, dance, and religious expressions to this day.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

These suggested resources provide more historical context. All these resources can be reviewed before reading the book. We also encourage educators to revisit these resources as you read and relate them to specific moments in the book.

INTERACTIVE RESOURCES

1. [Virtual Learning Journey: Slavery and Freedom](#)
2. [Fugitive Slave Law TimeSnap Activity](#)
3. [Kentucky's Underground Railroad](#)
4. [Thirteen—Slavery and the Making of America](#)
5. [PBS Learning Media](#)

FURTHER READING FOR EDUCATORS

This is an extensive but not all-inclusive list of related books available for educators to read to learn more about African American history.

1. *The 1619 Project: A New Origins Story* by Nikole Hannah-Jones, *The New York Times Magazine*
2. *The Middle Passage: White Ships/Black Cargo* by Tom Feelings
3. *Being Brought from Africa to America* by Phillis Wheatley

4. *The Collected Poems of Phyllis Wheatley* by Phillis Wheatley
5. *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington
6. *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois
7. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass
8. *Black Patriots and Loyalists: Fighting for Emancipation in the War for Independence* by Alan Gilbert
9. *Amistad* by Joe Pesci and David Pesci
10. *The Brave Escape of William and Ellen Craft* by Donal Lemke
11. *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom or the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* by William and Ellen Craft



PRE-READING ACTIVITY

DRAW THE CONNECTIONS

Identify African influences on American culinary traditions. What is soul food? How has it evolved since the time of slavery? What impact does it have on American cuisine today?

Language and communication styles are important aspects of identity, fostering community and a sense of belonging. When kidnapped Africans were enslaved, they were forced to learn

the language of their captors. Over the years, enslaved Africans and African Americans created their own dialects, their native languages and creating new dialects. Their linguistic and oratory styles have influenced American literature, poetry, music, and religious expression. Pick one of the Sorrow Songs sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers and discuss the meaning for the enslaved people who sang them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what century was slavery first introduced to the Americas? When did Black people—free Blacks and captured Africans—arrive in the American colonies? How did free and enslaved Black people help early colonists?
2. Why did Europeans colonize Africa?
3. What conditions were stolen Africans subjected to on their voyage to the Americas? What was the Door of No Return, and what did it signify to many Africans? What are some differences between the slavery that existed in Africa before it was colonized and European slavery?
4. What was the relationship between the Indigenous people and the Europeans like when the Europeans first arrived? How did it change over time? What groups of people did European colonizers first turn to when looking for cheap labor, and why did it not work?
5. Who was John Punch? How is his story still significant today?
6. Which state was the first to codify slavery? What privileges did slave codes give to white people? Do you think the privilege that was created in the slave codes has lasting effects on society today? If so, what are they?
7. What are some of the tactics white people used to subjugate Black people?
8. How big of a role did religion play in enslaved people's daily lives? What parts of the Bible were preferred by many enslaved people, and why? Describe aspects of African spirituality that have intertwined with Christianity. Why does religion in America continue to be highly segregated?
9. What is the Three-Fifths Compromise? How did the Slave Trade Act of 1800 affect enslaved people's lives?
10. Why do you think we know so much more about white revolutionaries than Black ones?
11. What religious group has historically been affiliated with the abolitionist movement and why?
12. Who were William and Ellen Craft? Why is their story so important? What was Ellen's relationship to her enslaver? How were they able to use their privileged positions to aid in their eventual escape?
13. Describe the positive and negative impacts that newspapers had on the abolition movement. In your opinion, did they do more harm than good? List some of the outcomes of the publication of Walker's Appeal. What was *The North Star*? Who was its creator? Why is the name significant?
14. Why are excavations so important? What details of the day to day lives of enslaved people have been uncovered so far? What do these details reveal about the treatment and living conditions of enslaved people?

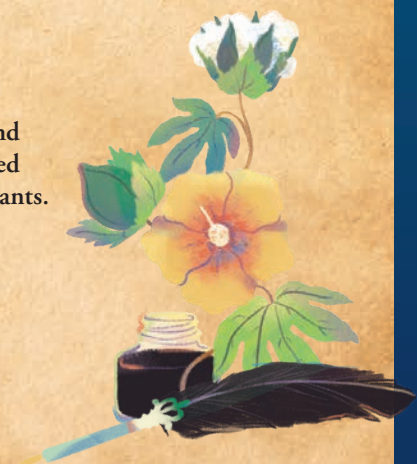
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR

Take a virtual tour of Monticello and George Washington's Mt. Vernon. Discuss the differences in living quarters for presidents and their families and those of the enslaved people they owned. How was cooking done? How did they keep warm? Write a paragraph about what a day in the life of a child slave was like.

WRITE A LETTER

Imagine that you are William and Ellen Craft, and you have decided to write a letter to your descendants. What would you tell them?

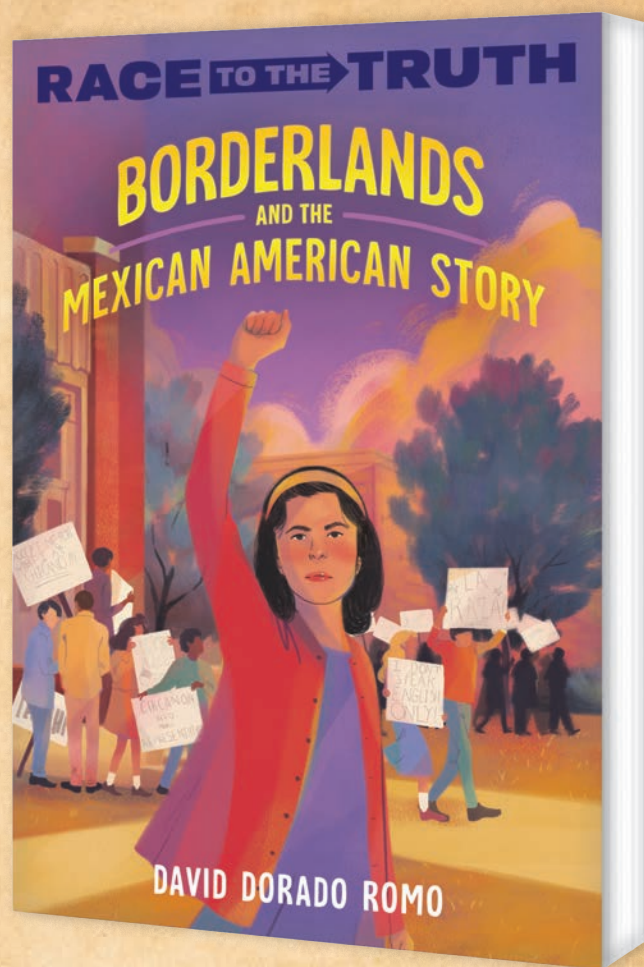


This guide was written by Dr. Patricia Williams Dockery, a writer, playwright, scholar-activist, and international commentator who is consulted for her expertise in diversity, equity, and inclusion; social justice; and Black women's intersectional experiences; Osayende Lessane who holds a BFA in drama from NYU Tisch School of the Arts; and Aniyah Ruth Lessane who is a second-year student at Bryn Mawr College.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Until now, you've only heard one side of the story about migrants crossing borders, drawn to the promise of a better life. In reality, Mexicans were on this land long before any borders existed. Here's the true story of America, from the Mexican American perspective. Their culture and practices shaped the Southwestern part of this country, despite relentless attempts by white colonizers and settlers to erase them.

From missions and the Alamo to muralists, revolutionaries, and teen activists, this is the true story of the Mexican American experience.



TP: 978-0-593-56775-3

THEMES:

History & Social Studies,
Nonfiction, Cultural
Diversity, Human &
Civil Rights



Photo credit: Abel Rodriguez

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DAVID DORADO ROMO is a writer, translator, musician, and historian from the American Southwest. He is a *fronterizo*, a person who grew up and lived on the border between the United States and Mexico. Steeped in the *fronterizo* spirit that strongly defines the attitudes of the U.S.-Mexico border region, Romo conducted a four-year search to document the important history of the area. The book that resulted from his work, *Ringside Seat to a Revolution: An Underground Cultural History of El Paso and Juarez, 1893–1923*, “is a vital historical work for the Southwest,” commented Sergio Troncoso in the *El Paso Times*.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

★ “A **comprehensive** and **revelatory** volume.” —*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ “A **powerful must-read** for students of North American history.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“An **insightful overview** of Mexican American history.” —*Booklist*

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

TIMELINE

As a class or in small groups, create a timeline to document the history between the United States and Mexico. Begin with the earliest events, interactions, and/or historical figures you know to the present. Use the following as guiding questions:

- Whose viewpoint is expressed throughout these events?
- Whose voices are missing, silenced, or discounted?
- How might alternative perspectives be represented?

Historical narratives that include accounts or documents that might question inequality or an uneven contribution of groups of individuals are often subjected to omission or even erasure. Mexican and Mexican American voices, in the case of the history of Texas and the American Southwest, are no exception to the exclusion.

Before reading, discuss as a group how history shapes identity. Introduce the topic of cultural connections between Indigenous peoples and historical migrations in the Americas and the impact of this history on Mexican American heritage with the following prompts:

- Reflect on your own family's history and migrations.
- What do you already know about the history of migration in America?
- What are some common misconceptions or theories you have heard or read about in relation to immigrants and immigration?
- What can we learn from archaeological sites?

READING ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is Indigenous heritage still a part of the everyday life of Mexican Americans?
2. What was the significance of Oñate's expedition in the Southwest?
3. What was the relationship between Indigenous children and colonizers when they first arrived? How did this change over time?
4. What were some of the goals or ideals of the Mexican government 1821? What were some challenges they faced in reaching these goals?
5. What challenges did Mexican American workers face during the railroad construction?
6. How did the eugenics movement affect Mexican American communities? What is a modern-day issue related to eugenics or discrimination against minority groups?
7. Why were the Mexican American residents of Chavez Ravine forced out of their homes? Why were the residents not asked for input before their neighborhood was torn down?
8. What were some of the demands the students from Crystal City had to make their school better? How do these demands compare to your own schooling experience?
9. A common misconception is that border walls are only built for security reasons. How do border walls impact the communities on both sides, economically and socially?
10. Dominant narratives continue to silence and exclude stories, particularly the stories of people of color. Counternarratives can combat this while providing a different perspective. However, states such as Texas are passing laws against students learning about counternarratives in history. How do these laws do more harm than good? What are some questions you can ask when analyzing what you are being taught or what you read to help identify different perspectives?

READING ACTIVITIES & QUICK WRITES

COUNTERNARRATIVES

Juan Cortina was a Mexican American leader who white newspapers dismissed as a local bandit.

Read the [Cortina Digital History article](#). After reading, imagine that you are writing to the local newspaper to counter the narrative that Cortina was a Mexican bandito. Write a letter to the paper defending Cortina as a hero.

Teresa "Teresita" Urrea was influential in her role as a revolutionary figure and as a healer. Despite her large following, Díaz, the then President of Mexico called her "the most dangerous girl in Mexico." Read the [Teresa Urrea article](#). After reading, imagine that you writing to the local newspaper to counter this narrative and defend Teresita as a hero.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION

Why do you think different groups of people may have conflicting perspectives on historical events?

DRAW IT OUT

Draw a map of territorial changes before and after the Mexican American War. What changed?

WRITE A CORRIDO

Read “[How to Write a Mexican Corrido in 8 Steps](#).”
Choose a historical figure from the book and write a corrido about them.



SOURCES

digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/mexican_songs/cortina.cfm

kids.kiddle.co/Teresa_Urrea

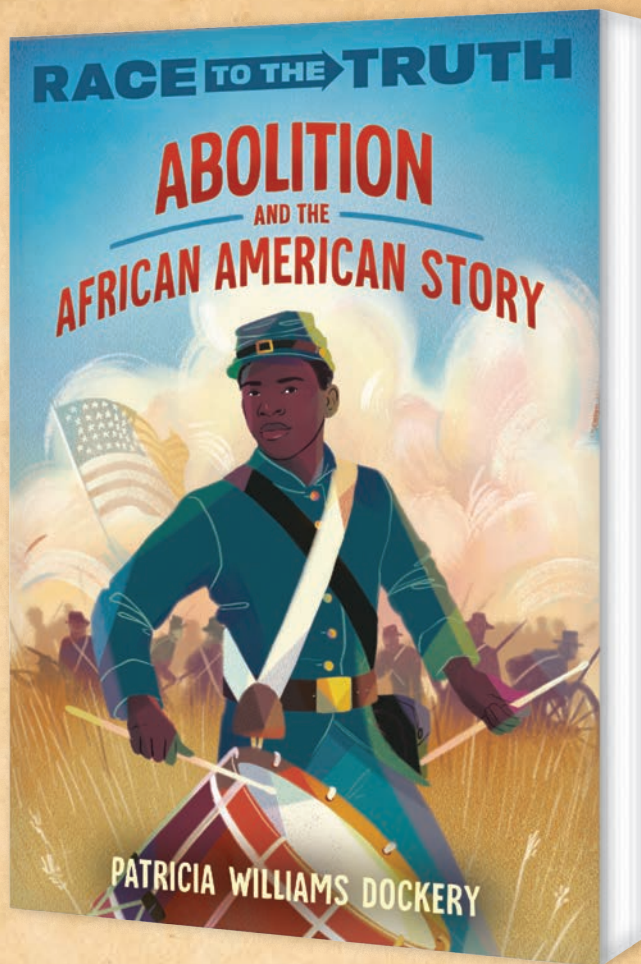
This guide was written by Dr. Crystal Doucette, PhD, a dual language Librarian at Bagdad Elementary in Austin, TX.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Until now, you've only heard one side of the story: how Abraham Lincoln defeated the Confederacy to end slavery, but the truth involves a vast network of abolitionists who would keep fighting for freedom long after the end of the war. Here's the true story of the Civil War and Reconstruction, from the African American perspective.

By 1850, Africans had already been in the United States for nearly three hundred years. Their labor created a strong economy and defined American society in profound ways, but the battle over their rights nearly tore the country apart, a century after its founding.

The start of the Civil War marked a turning point: the beginning of a public fight to recognize African Americans as Americans. Though much of this played out on the battlefield, the real fight was going on in every corner of the country: North and South, both in free households and among those who were enslaved, in the halls of government and secret meetings. That fight didn't end when the South surrendered, and young people were central to the way abolitionists envisioned the future. From soldiers to public speakers to the Underground Railroad, this is the true story of the African American experience of the Civil War and Reconstruction.



TP: 978-0-593-81136-8

THEMES:

African/African American Interest, History & Social Studies, Cultural Diversity, Freedom, Human & Civil

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. PATRICIA WILLIAMS DOCKERY is a writer, a playwright, a scholar-activist, and an international commentator who is consulted for her expertise on diversity, equity, and inclusion; social justice; and Black women's intersectional experiences. She has developed educational public programs for grades K–12 and general audiences at the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the College of Charleston Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. She currently serves as associate vice president for academic affairs at Morgan State University. Dr. Dockery is a Fulbright Scholar and earned a PhD in anthropology from the University of Illinois Chicago. A transdisciplinary educator and artist, her play, *Septima!*, about the life and work of civil rights organizing mastermind and revolutionary educator Septima Poinsette Clark, debuted at Charleston's PURE Theatre. She and her husband share a beautiful blended family of seven children and a loving boxer-hound mix named Sadie Mae.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"This volume is a **valuable resource** that helps push back against problematic erasure. Fleshes out an often-oversimplified era with a **nuanced web of historical information.**" —*Kirkus Reviews*

"**Substantial, crucial** curriculum support." —*Booklist*





GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

Educators are encouraged to consider the following guiding questions:

- Whose contributions are highlighted in the story of freedom from enslavement, and whose contributions are overlooked or minimized?
- What stories does this text encourage us to further explore, wonder and discover?
- What did “freedom” look, sound, and feel like from the African American perspective during Reconstruction? How does this compare to the challenges and freedoms experienced by African Americans today?
- How can understanding the struggles and strategies of the past shape the way we think about justice and activism in the present and future?

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

FOOTSTEPS TO FREEDOM

Part I: Famous Footsteps

As a class, use your prior knowledge to brainstorm a list of well-known figures connected to the abolition movement. Write each name on an individual “footstep” to represent a step in the struggle for freedom.

Part II: Forgotten Footsteps

In small groups, consider who might be missing from our collage of “footsteps.” Discuss who might have supported these more well-known figures in order for their efforts for freedom to succeed. What kinds of everyday people (spouses, parents, teachers, church leaders, neighbors, allies) were likely involved behind the scenes?

Part III: Found Footsteps

Come together as a class to share each group’s findings and add new names to the collage of “footsteps.”

Reflection Questions:

- What did our original list of famous “footsteps” reveal about whose contributions are commonly recognized in history?
- Why do you think these names became famous while others were forgotten?
- What does our collection of “footsteps” show about how change happens?
- How can we honor the contributions of the forgotten “footsteps”?

Let students know they will continue adding to the collage as they read the text. Encourage them to keep track of any people they encounter in the book who should be included.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which American monuments and historic buildings carry the lasting presence of enslaved labor? Why is it important to acknowledge and highlight the contributions of the enslaved people who built them?
2. What was the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and how did it affect the lives of enslaved and free African Americans? Despite the risks, what strategies did these groups use to avoid capture or escape slavery?
3. How did spiritual spaces like churches and hush harbors help enslaved people survive, resist, and find strength in the face of oppression?
4. What made slavery such a central issue for both the North and South that they saw no room for compromise? In your response, explain the economic, social, and political forces that shaped each side’s position.
5. Describe the changes in Abraham Lincoln’s position on slavery, race, and equality during his presidency. How do Lincoln’s changing views help illustrate the range of perspectives between abolitionists anti-slavery advocates?
6. What were the immediate effects of the Emancipation Proclamation? Who did it actually free, and why were so many left in bondage after it was signed? In what ways did it move the nation closer to freedom, and in what ways did it fall short?
7. What is the significance of Juneteenth, which occurred on June 19, 1865? Why did it take more than two years for freedom to reach all enslaved people in the United States and over 150 years for it to be recognized as a national holiday?
8. Consider the examples of Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. How did their families support their work and help shape their impact on the abolitionist movement?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

9. What was the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, and why was it significant? Despite the limits placed on women in society, how did they find ways to organize, speak out, and lead in the abolitionist movement?
10. Why did Congress create the Freedmen's Bureau? What challenges did newly freed people face during Reconstruction? What kind of support did the Bureau provide, and what resistance did it encounter?
11. How did President Andrew Johnson's policies make it difficult for African Americans to keep land and build new lives? How did those policies limit their ability to achieve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?
12. What rights did the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments guarantee to African Americans? How were these protections undermined or circumvented in the years that followed? What does the struggle to enforce these amendments reveal about the nature of change and progress in the United States?

EXTENDED READING ACTIVITIES

GETTYSBURG RESPONSE

After reading Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, consider how its message of sacrifice and national unity might have been interpreted by an African American soldier in the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment or another all-Black unit. Drawing on what you know about their service, experiences in battle, and their unfair treatment both on and off the battlefield, write a response letter to President Lincoln from the perspective of an African American soldier.

Helpful Resources:

- [Gettysburg Address \(Library of Congress\)](#)
- [Bottom Rail On Top \(PBS Learning Media\)](#)
- [A Brave Black Regiment: The 54th Massachusetts \(National Park Service\)](#)
- [The 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment during the Civil War \(C-Span Classroom\)](#)

NEW YEAR'S DAY

New Year's Day is celebrated around the world as a time of change and new beginnings. However, in Black history, it is more than a celebration of the calendar. It is a celebration of liberation and an opportunity to honor freedom once denied. During the Civil War, enslaved people in the United States gathered on Watch Night to await the arrival of January 1, 1863, known as Jubilee Day, the day the Emancipation Proclamation took effect and began to free enslaved African Americans. Almost sixty years earlier, in Haiti, January 1 marked Independence Day, celebrating the victorious slave revolt in 1804 that ended French rule.

In this activity, you will learn the stories behind these New Year milestones. As you read and watch the materials, consider the following:

- Why is the Haitian Revolution considered a major turning point in the history of Black liberation?
- In what ways did Haiti's independence inspire and influence African Americans in the nineteenth century?
- How are the histories of Haitian Independence Day and Jubilee Day similar, and how are they different?
- How might learning about these events change the way we understand the meaning of freedom in the Black community?

Extension Activity: Explore the story of soup joumou, a dish once forbidden to the enslaved in Haiti and later claimed as a powerful symbol of liberation. Instead of cooking the soup, you will create your own Freedom Soup on paper. On a large sheet, draw or design a bowl of your own version of soup joumou. Inside the bowl, fill the space with words, short phrases, or images that represent your understanding of freedom after engaging with this text.

Helpful Resources:

- [The Historical Legacy of Watch Night \(Smithsonian\)](#)
- [The Haitian Revolution and Its Causes \(OER Project\)](#)
- [Frederick Douglass and Haiti \(Library of Congress\)](#)
- [What The Haitian Revolution Tells Us About the U.S. Movement For Racial Equality \(NPR\)](#)
- *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* by Matthew J. Clavin
- [Why Does This Soup Symbolize Freedom for Haitians?](#)

Victoria Dumas is a PhD student in the English Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. With a passion for empowering students and teachers to capitalize on the liberating powers of literacy, she specializes in creating culturally sustaining curricula grounded in anti-racist pedagogy. Throughout her career, she has fervently advocated for English curricula that reflect and uplift the lived experiences of BIPOC students. Her research interests center on integrating curriculum design and storytelling to position students as protagonists in their educational journeys.



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