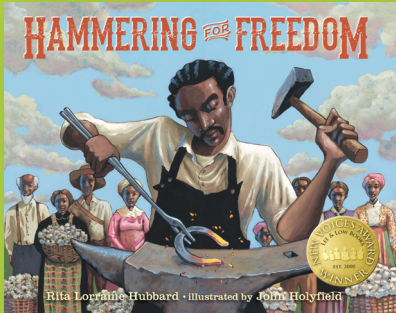


TEACHER'S GUIDE



Hammering for Freedom:

The William Lewis Story

written by Rita Lorraine Hubbard, illustrated by John Holyfield

About the Book

Genre: Biography

*Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 2–7

Guided Reading Level: U

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the
Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Biography/Memoir,
Identity/Self Esteem/
Confidence, Occupations,
Overcoming Obstacles,
Persistence/Grit, Slavery,
Dreams & Aspirations, Families,
History, Nonfiction, United
States History, African/African
American Interest

SYNOPSIS

Born into slavery in Chattanooga, Tennessee, William “Bill” Lewis learned the blacksmith trade as soon as he was old enough to grip a hammer. He proved to be an exceptional blacksmith and earned so much money fixing old tools and creating new ones that he was allowed to keep a little money for himself. With just a few coins in his pocket, Bill set a daring plan in motion: he was determined to free his family.

Winner of Lee & Low’s New Voices Award, *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* tells the true story of one man’s skill, hard work, and resolve to keep his family together.



BACKGROUND

Afterword from Rita Lorraine Hubbard

“William ‘Bill’ Lewis went by many names. As a child, he was known as ‘Little William, son of Jenny.’ As an adult, he was called Bill, or sometimes Uncle Bill, by white patrons. No one knows his age for sure; some documents say he was born in 1810 and some say 1815.

William’s biological father was Colonel James Lewis, a veteran of the Revolutionary War who was granted thousands of acres of land for his service. The US Census of 1840 states that Colonel James Lewis and members of his extended family owned thirty slaves—sixteen males and fourteen females.

Bill married Jane sometime in the 1830s. Their son Eldridge was born between 1835 and 1838. As an enslaved man, Bill was not permitted to travel alone or handle his own financial transactions, which is why he needed a white escort to pay Colonel Lewis for Jane’s freedom. In freeing Jane first, their children (after Eldridge) would be born free. It is known that their next child, Marion Isabel, was born free in 1842 or 1843.

Bill and Jane had ten children: Eldridge, Marion Isabel, Hugh, Mary, Jennie, Willianna, Elizabeth, James, Hickman, and Sueda. Although Bill and Jane never learned to read or write, they still managed to give their children a good education. Marion Isabel graduated from Oberlin College and married attorney John H. Cook, who later became dean of Howard University Law School. Sueda was a teacher in Washington, DC, and Hickman served as a mail carrier. Eldridge worked in Bill’s blacksmith shop for many years. James also worked in the blacksmith shop, but later moved on to other jobs. Hugh enlisted in the United States Colored Troops in 1864 to fight in the Civil War, but he died of a fever in Wilmington, North Carolina, the following year.

Bill earned a considerable fortune as a free blacksmith. According to a 1993 article in the *Chattanooga News-Free Press*, Bill paid \$2000 cash to Chattanooga pioneer Bill Crutchfield for the Market Street location where he would operate his blacksmith shop. His first job was working on the bell that summoned citizens to community gatherings in Chattanooga. Over the years, Bill’s assets increased from \$1500 in 1850 to \$7000 in 1860—the equivalent of \$200,000 today. During the Civil War, Bill was asked to use his blacksmithing skills to shackle Andrews’ Raiders, a group of Union spies. On April 12, 1862, the Raiders stole a Confederate train and drove it through northern Georgia, destroying railroad tracks and cutting telegraph wires along the way. They were captured and eventually imprisoned in Chattanooga. By this time, Bill had worked so hard he had injured himself, and he could only supervise while one of his sons created leg irons for the Raiders. It is not known how Bill felt about shackling them, but he did ask permission to send the Raiders lettuce from his family garden as a gesture of friendship.

Convinced that the South would lose the Civil War, Bill invested some of his money in tobacco, which he stored until it was worth much more than he had paid. He eventually sold it for a handsome profit. When Union soldiers took over Chattanooga during the war, Bill’s blacksmith shop was seized, and like so many wealthy Southerners, the bulk of his fortune quickly disappeared. By 1870, his net worth had dwindled to \$300 and he and Jane filed for a government pension. Still, their good reputation earned them a prized invitation to attend the wedding of Booker T. Washington in 1892. It is unclear whether they were able to attend.

Bill died on September 2, 1896, when he was about eighty-six years old. His obituary said he left behind



a ‘host of friends, both white and colored, and always bore an excellent record for thrift, honesty, and sobriety.’

A host of friends was not all he left behind. A building plaque in his memory is located in the heart of downtown Chattanooga on the corner of Market and Seventh Streets. There is a historical marker erected in his honor on Market Street too. Bill also left behind a devoted wife, nine children, and many descendants that would never have existed if he had not forged his daring plan to free his family.”

The Civil War

PBS has organized a list of resources from the Library of Congress that offer online collections featuring maps, photographs, speeches, and other primary source documents from the Civil War. Additionally, there are lesson plans and primary source sets for further information and Civil War exploration in the classroom (<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war/classroom/resources-library-congress/>).

The Zinn Education Project also offers a list of free resources, lesson plans, and activities to use with students on the Civil War. Lesson plans range from election role play, walking tours with maps, and other handouts that contain primary source documents for students to examine (<https://zinnedproject.org/teaching-materials/?period=1850>).

Teaching Tolerance provides lesson plans and articles about culturally responsive, historically accurate ways of teaching about the Civil War in the classroom (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2011/getting-the-civil-war-right>) (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/portfolio-activity-for-getting-the-civil-war-right>).

Slavery

Consult Teaching Tolerance’s “Tongue-Tied” guide (<https://historyexplorer.si.edu/sites/default/files/PrimarySources.pdf>) and “Teaching Hard History: A Framework for Teaching American Slavery” (<https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/TT-Teaching-Hard-History-Framework-WEB-February2018.pdf>) for terminology, key concepts, objectives, and appropriate timelines for teaching about slavery correctly, honestly, and accurately.

Additional LEE & LOW Biographies:

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by London Ladd

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/midnight-teacher>

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone written by Katheryn-Russell Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/little-melba-and-her-big-trombone>

How We Are Smart written by W. Nikola-Lisa, illustrated by Sean Qualls

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/how-we-are-smart>

Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by Duane Smith

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/seven-miles-to-freedom>

Love to Langston written by Tony Medina, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/love-to-langston>



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Content Specific

plantation, Winchester, Tennessee, blacksmith, hinge joints, forged, colonel, Chattanooga, Market Street, bell and clapper, scythes, mallets, water trough, Hallelujah

Academic

enslaved, grueling, exhausted, wilted, rickety, hauled, plump, squirming, proposal, rent, bustling, escort, depended, calloused, bone-weary, utensil, plunge, sizzling, worshipped, segregated, congregation, elderly, drenched, stunned, slinging

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What do you know about the Civil War? What was happening during the second half of the nineteenth century? What people and events do you know about that are associated with the Civil War?
2. What do you know about slavery in the United States? What were the social, political, or economic conditions of African Americans during the early 1800s? What do you know about slavery in the United States? What impact does it have on the United States today? What other texts have you read that discuss or involve slavery?
3. What does freedom mean to you? What do you think freedom meant during the Civil War? What does freedom mean now, in present-day? What does it mean to your family?
4. What is persistence? Share a time you demonstrated persistence. What was your goal? What challenges did you face? Who helped you along the way in achieving your goal? How did you stay motivated?
5. How do you show your family that you care about them? What are some things that you do to help your family? Why?
6. Why is hard work important? What does it mean to be a 'hard worker'? What are some personality traits and characteristics that make up a hard worker?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?



2. Read Rita Lorraine Hubbard's Biography: Read about Rita Lorraine Hubbard on the back cover as well as on her website at <http://ritahubbard.com/>. Rita has written several books for children. Encourage students to think about how she comes up with new ideas for her books, and what could have been her possible inspiration for writing *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*.
3. Read John Holyfield's Biography: Read about John Holyfield on the back cover as well as at his website <http://www.holyfieldstudio.com/>. Have students look into his other illustrations and compare and contrast across books. How are his illustrations similar? How are they different? Does the subject matter influence his illustrations?
4. Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
5. Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them to write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how William Lewis dedicated his life to his family
- why he needed to rent his freedom in order to accomplish his goals
- how William Lewis earned money as a blacksmith and what he did with his income
- how slavery prohibited basic rights for people and caused many to risk their lives for their families and livelihoods
- how William Lewis demonstrated hard work, dedication, and persistence, despite the obstacles and oppression he faced

Encourage students to consider why the author,

Rita Lorraine Hubbard, would want to share with young people this story about William Lewis and his lifelong commitment to his family and their freedom.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Where and when was William Lewis born?
2. What was William's nickname?
3. Where did Bill and his family work?
4. Who was Colonel Lewis?
5. What did Colonel Lewis decide Bill should do?
6. What were Bill's tasks as a blacksmith?
7. What did Bill decide to do once he was free?
8. How did the birth of Bill's son, Eldridge, change Bill's responsibilities?
9. How did Bill rent his freedom? On what condition, did Colonel Lewis grant Bill's freedom?
10. Where did Bill set up his blacksmith shop? Why was this a monumental event?
11. What was Bill's first job in his shop?
12. What was the first thing Bill did when he had money saved?
13. What happened after Bill returned to Winchester from his shop?



★ “Readers will root for Bill to the utterly satisfying end. Powerful and uplifting; William Lewis should be a household name.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

★ “**VERDICT:** A well-crafted picture book biography that belongs in every elementary nonfiction collection.”

—*School Library Journal*

★ “Winner of the publisher’s New Voices award, this tells the inspiring story of William Lewis, an enslaved Tennessee blacksmith who vowed to find freedom for himself and his family, despite the overwhelming barriers, managed to do just that.”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*

14. What kept Bill motivated to keep working, despite being away from his family?
15. Apart from his work, how was Bill involved in his community?
16. What members of his family was Bill able to free?
17. What did Bill realize his family needed after they had ten children and extended family living with them? What did he do as a result?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* mean to you after reading? Why do you think Rita Lorraine Hubbard chose this particular title?
2. What did Bill ultimately want for himself and his family? For what reason did he rent his freedom and work as blacksmith? What were his goals and why?
3. Why did Bill continue to work hard as a blacksmith? How did hard work, dedication, and persistence pay off for Bill and his family?
4. What did being a blacksmith represent for Bill? Even though he did not originally ask to be a blacksmith, how was this a life-changing event for him? How would his life have been different if he had not been a blacksmith? How

did Bill use his new duties as a blacksmith to accomplish his goals?

5. Think about the role geography played in Bill’s life and opportunities. How did Bill’s life differ in Winchester versus Chattanooga in Tennessee? How would Bill’s life have been different if he never went to Chattanooga to open up his shop? Why was this a necessary move for Bill?
6. What makes someone a hard worker? What are the different qualities that make up a hard worker? How do you continue to work hard on a task, even though it may be difficult or frustrating?
7. Why do you think white people during this time period made it so difficult for enslaved people to be free? Bill’s life and entire savings were dedicated to buying his family’s freedom. What does that say about our country’s history, and what have you learned about Bill’s efforts that you didn’t know about this time period before?

Reader’s Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about William Lewis’ dedication to his work as a blacksmith to raise money for his family’s freedom. What is your takeaway from this book? What would you tell a friend about this book?



2. What do you think author Rita Lorraine Hubbard's message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Rita Lorraine Hubbard's intentions to write the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
 3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Bill's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
 4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*? Why did you make those connections?
 5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?
 6. What does freedom mean to students after reading? After reading *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*, what does freedom mean to you? Why? How did your meaning of freedom change after reading *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*?
 7. How has a family member or close friend impacted your life? What are some memories that you have of someone doing something to help you in times of need? What did they do, and how was this meaningful?
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
 4. Have students give a short talk about what freedom means to them or share a time when they helped someone in need.
 5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book. Students can answer in partners, discussion groups or in writing.



1. How does William Lewis use hard work, grit, and perseverance throughout the book? Provide evidence from the text with different events that show how he used determination to get through difficult times.
2. Select an illustration and describe what emotions are being conveyed. How can you tell that particular emotion is being shown in the illustration? Why?
3. What inspired William Lewis to continue his pursuit of his family's freedom? How did he develop a positive self-esteem, even though he encountered many obstacles along the way? What kept him motivated, despite the fact that his family could be split up at any moment?
4. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, faith, hope, or perseverance. Discuss or write about what that emotion looks like in *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*.
5. Have students chart Bill's emotions over the course of the story. How does he feel when he asks Colonel Lewis to rent his freedom? How does he feel when he's handed his papers? Use the illustrations as a visual reference and way to tap into students' visual literacy skills.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present

Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Read *Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/seven-miles-to-freedom>), *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/frederick-douglass>), and *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/midnight-teacher>) along with *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*. Analyze the main characters' different actions in these texts and how they are similar. What risks did they take to achieve their goals? What did they have to do in order to overcome obstacles in their lives? How did they demonstrate persistence and hard work in the midst of experiencing the horrors of slavery? Provide students with a graphic organizer to differentiate the four titles, and then have students write an essay answering the previous questions.
2. Have students read and compare another portrait of a man who fought for his humanity, *Etched in Clay: The Life of Dave, Enslaved Potter and Poet* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/etched-in-clay>). Have students compare the lives of William Lewis and Dave the Potter in the parts below:
 - Part One: Using a Venn diagram, encourage students to explore how each man used his skills/training to express himself, the rights and privileges they had (in their states and in the United States in general), their level of education, and their ability to make choices about their lives and for their families.
 - Part Two: Create a timeline for this period with events and moments from William Lewis and Dave the Potter's lives and careers along with major national events such as the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln's election, and the Emancipation Proclamation.
 - Part Three: How are these men's experiences similar? How does a clear goal help each of them conquer hardships along the way? What character traits do they share that allow them



to overcome obstacles? What legacies have they left behind? Have students formalize in an essay presenting the similarities and differences.

3. Show the illustration where the white escort and Colonel Lewis are handing Bill and Jane freedom papers. Have students write about what Bill and Jane could have possibly been thinking. Then, have students write a reflection on what were Bill's thoughts and feelings. What do you think is going on in her mind in this scene? Why do you think he is having those thoughts? What evidence in the text influenced you to write what he was thinking?
4. Provide students with a copy of Rita Lorraine Hubbard's article from her organization, the Black History Channel (<http://theblackhistorychannel.com/2018/he-persevered-how-william-lewis-of-hammering-for-freedom-inspired-me-to-keep-moving-forward/>) and the article about writing a picture book biography (<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2018/09/26/interview-new-voices-award-winner-rita-lorraine-hubbard-on-writing-a-picture-book-biography/>). What did students learn about *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* from the articles that they hadn't learned from engaging with the picture book? Have students discuss in small groups about the difference between reading an article about a person versus a picture book, and then write their reactions in a format of their choosing.
5. After reading the articles, have students brainstorm more questions to ask author Rita Lorraine Hubbard. What left them thinking about the story? What would they want to know, both about Rita's career, writing process, and Bill Lewis? Consider reaching out to Rita for an author visit at your school (<http://ritahubbard.com/>).
6. Track William Lewis's obstacles throughout the book and list them in a chart. Next to the obstacle, have students explain what Bill's solution was to that particular problem. At the end of compiling all of the obstacles, have students come up with a claim about Bill Lewis as a person. Why was it important to look at all of Bill's obstacles over the course of the book, and how did that help students to understand Bill's life? Have students discuss in small groups what this process was like for them in thinking about Bill as a person and his historical impact.
7. Consider using *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* as an anchor text to teach students about biography writing. The "Our Journey Westward" blog has tips and step-by-step instructions on how to ease students into writing biography and the different techniques and strategies that are used to make engaging and informative stories (<https://ourjourneywestward.com/picture-books-teach-biography-writing/>). Although his tips are geared toward adult authors, Alan Schroeder also offers up tips on how to create compelling picture book biographies that can be adapted for students (<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2012/05/09/writing-a-life-how-to-write-a-biography-for-children/>). Students can select a person of their choosing, and using Rita Lorraine Hubbard's writing style in *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* as a guide, they can develop and write a picture book biography and present it in small groups, to the class, or as part of a writing celebration.
8. Write and design a commemorative plaque for William Lewis. What would you want to say about Bill Lewis in a paragraph? What were the most important parts of his life, and what would you want to share with visitors to Chattanooga? After completion, students can look at the photograph of the real plaque that's located in front of Bill's blacksmith shop and compare their own to the actual plaque. What were some similarities, and what were some differences? (<https://www.cityscopemag.com/city-scope/ask-hamilton-17/>).
9. Inspire students to think about what hard work means to them after reading *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*. Consult Angela Duckworth's playbook on "Grit" for more ideas on how to inspire students to



think about what it means to demonstrate grit and to work hard on something. Have students think about their values and how their values inspire them to persist on a particular project, or achieve a specific goal (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5980a22e9de4bb9ca8bce449/t/5bbe5c56652dea11f261f1ca/1539202135034/grit_fullcompiled_v2.pdf).

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Have students read *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* along with *John Lewis in the Lead: A Story of the Civil Rights Movement* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/john-lewis-in-the-lead>). Encourage students to think about the following questions: What do both Bill Lewis and John Lewis have in common, despite living during different time periods? How were Bill and John’s actions incredibly important to African Americans during the time before the Civil War and during the Civil Rights movement? How did they use their hard work and dedication to help others? Consider having students conduct a larger research study on the parallels between the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement. Look at Teaching Tolerance’s “Civil Rights Civil War, Done Right: A Tool for Teaching the Movement” (<http://arhistoryhub.com/hub/lrchs-lp-civil-war.pdf>) and “Getting the Civil War Right” (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/portfolio-activity-for-getting-the-civil-war-right>) as well as the National Park Service’s “Civil War to Civil Rights” curricular unit (<http://arhistoryhub.com/hub/lrchs-lp-civil-war.pdf>).
 2. Conduct additional research projects about the historical events that affected William Lewis from the Afterword. Under Bill’s supervision, his son actually created shackles for the Andrews’ Raiders. Bill had to shut down his shop as a result of Union soldiers taking over Chattanooga during the Civil War.
- Andrews’ Raiders: Students can conduct online research and present their findings about the Andrews Raiders, who they were, what their mission was, and how they ended up in Chattanooga, Tennessee (<https://ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/AndrewsRaiders.pdf>).
 - The Battle of Chattanooga: Students can read more about the Battle of Chattanooga, the key players, when it began, and the results at several different sites and present their findings to the class (<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/battle-of-chattanooga>) (<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/chattanooga>).
3. Have students read about other slaves who bought their freedom from their personal narratives (<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/emancipation/text1/buyingfreedom.pdf>) (<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/emancipation/text1/text1read.htm>). To prepare students, consult the Smithsonian National Museum of American History’s “Engaging Students with Primary Sources” (<https://historyexplorer.si.edu/sites/default/files/PrimarySources.pdf>). What did students learn from reading first-hand accounts of slaves who purchased their freedom? Have students write a comparative essay about the different ways that slaves purchased their freedom and compare and contrast their experiences to those of Bill Lewis. Additionally, students can write about engaging with primary sources as compared to reading a picture book: what were the different experiences like? What did students learn from reading both?



Math

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(CCSS.2.OA.A.1 Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction; CCSS.3.OA.A.1 Represent and solve problems involving multiplication and division)

1. Analyze and track the cost of William’s tools and how long it would take him to save money for each of his family members. Colonel Lewis allowed William to pay him three hundred fifty dollars a year to rent his freedom, and then keep the rest. Consider having students experiment with different calculations with the following numbers provided in *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*, including how much William sold his tools for, and how much each family member’s freedom cost. How much did William have to make in order to purchase each family member’s freedom in addition to paying Colonel Lewis’s fee? Track William’s earnings and the cost of freedom over time in *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story* and present findings in a graph of students’ choice.

Arts/Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Come up with questions to interview the illustrator, John Holyfield. What was his process behind creating the illustrations for *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*? Why did he choose a particular medium (oil painting) to create the illustrations? What was his inspiration to depict William Lewis in the way that he did in the book?
2. Afterwards, have students create a piece of art inspired by a particular profession. Illustrator John Holyfield spoke to a blacksmith for additional insight about the job to inform his art. What is a profession that students do not know much about and how could they

illustrate it? What resources would they have to consult in order to better inform their artistic piece? Have students share with the class the profession they chose to learn more about and how they depicted it through their art.

3. Encourage students to select an illustration that resonated with them the most from *Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story*. Have students write a reflection about the illustration. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about?

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Have students ask caregivers if there was ever a time they had to do something difficult for their family. William Lewis left his family behind to start his blacksmith business in Chattanooga. Have students engage in a discussion about times that family members had to sacrifice something for the greater good of the family.
2. Provide students with Rita Lorraine Hubbard’s website for The Black History Channel (<http://theblackhistorychannel.com/>). If possible, have students and family members look at the different videos and resources on Rita’s website. What was something exciting or novel that they learned from looking at The Black History Channel?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rita Lorraine Hubbard is the author of a number of nonfiction books for young adults. She also runs the children’s book review site Picture Book Depot and the historical site The Black History Channel. Hubbard discovered William “Bill” Lewis’s story while researching her book *African Americans of Chattanooga: A History of Unsung Heroes*. She was greatly moved by Lewis’s love of his family and determination to overcome the odds. This is her picture book debut. Hubbard lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee. You can find her online at ritahubbard.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

John Holyfield is a fine artist who has illustrated several children’s books, including *Belle, the Last Mule at Gee’s Bend: A Civil Rights Story* and *Mahalia Jackson: Walking with Kings and Queens*. In creating this book, Holyfield spoke to a blacksmith for additional insight about the craft. Holyfield lives in West Virginia. His website is johnholyfield.com.

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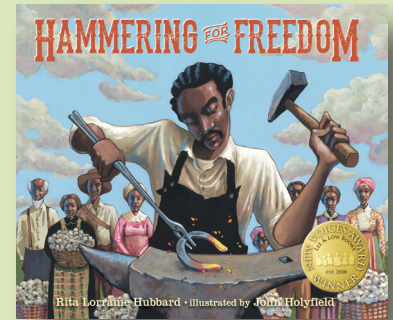
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*Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 2–6

Guided Reading Level: U

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: Biography/
Memoir, Identity/Self Esteem/
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RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

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