

The following books discuss the period of U.S. Reconstruction as well as the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, and present day. These award-winning titles by authors and illustrators from diverse backgrounds will help support your teaching this complex, under-taught period of American history, with a special focus on historical accuracy, sensitivity, and cultural responsiveness. The books are divided into time periods to aid in your teaching about Reconstruction and the time periods before and after 1865-1877. These books can be found in the Lee & Low Reconstruction collection online at [leeandlow.com/collections/reconstruction-webinar-collection](https://www.leeandlow.com/collections/reconstruction-webinar-collection)

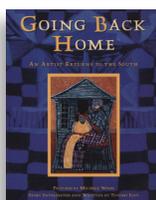
RECONSTRUCTION



Black Was the Ink • written by Michelle Coles

GRADES 9-12

Through the help of a ghostly ancestor, sixteen-year-old Malcolm is sent on a journey through Reconstruction-era America to find his place in modern-day Black progress.

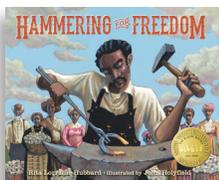


Going Back Home: An Artist Returns to the South • story interpreted and written by Toyomi Igus, pictures by Michele Wood

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

More than half a century after her family moved North to find a better life, artist Michele Wood returned to the South to see and experience where her ancestors lived, struggled, and thrived.



Hammering for Freedom: The William Lewis Story • written by Rita Lorraine Hubbard, illustrated by John Holyfield

GRADES 3-5

The inspirational story of William "Bill" Lewis, a hardworking blacksmith who slowly saved his money and bought the freedom of every member of his enslaved family.

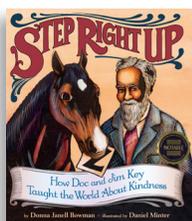


i see the rhythm • written by Toyomi Igus, illustrated by Michele Wood

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

This book explores African American music throughout history, starting with its roots in Africa.

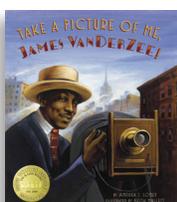


Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness • written by Donna Janell Bowman, illustrated by Daniel Minter

GRADES PreK-2

GRADES 3-5

A biography of William "Doc" Key, a formerly enslaved man and self-trained veterinarian who taught his horse, Jim, to read, write, and do math, and who together with Jim became a famous traveling performance act and proponent for the humane treatment of animals around the turn of the twentieth century.



Take a Picture of Me, James VanDerZee • written by Andrea Loney, illustrated by Keith Mallett

GRADES PreK-2

GRADES 3-5

A biography of James Van Der Zee, innovative and celebrated African American photographer of the Harlem Renaissance.

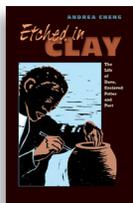


The Unstoppable Garrett Morgan • written by Joan DiCicco, illustrated by Ebony Glenn

GRADES PreK-2 GRADES 3-5

Garrett Morgan, a prolific African American inventor and entrepreneur, must test his latest invention in a daring rescue after an explosion at the Cleveland Waterworks.

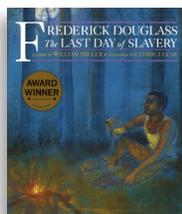
SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR



Etched in Clay: The Life of Dave, Enslaved Potter and Poet • written by Andrea Cheng

GRADES 3-5 GRADES 6-8

This biography in verse reveals the life of Dave, an enslaved potter who inscribed his works with sayings and short poems, in spite of the slave anti-literacy sentiment in the years leading up to the Civil War.



Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery • written by William Miller, illustrated by Cedric Lucas

GRADES 3-5 GRADES 6-8

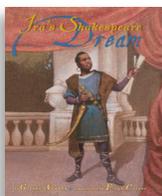
Young Frederick Douglass dreams of escape, so an overseer sets out to “break” him. Frederick’s response to the overseer’s brutality is an act of courage that frees forever what no person can hold captive: his spirit.



It Jes' Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw • written by Don Tate, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

GRADES 3-5

A biography of self-taught (outsider) artist Bill Traylor, a former slave who at the age of eight-five began to draw pictures based on his memories and observations of rural and urban life in Alabama.



Ira's Shakespeare Dream, The Story of Trailblazing Actor Ira Aldridge • written by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Floyd Cooper

GRADES 3-5

This biography chronicles the life of Ira Aldridge, an African American man who is considered to be one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of the nineteenth century.



In the Time of the Drums • written by Kim Siegelson, illustrated by Brian Pinkney

GRADES 3-5

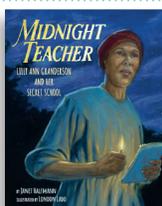
Mentu, an enslaved child, learns the stories, songs, and drum rhythms of his people from his grandmother, Twi, and then must find the strength to carry on this heritage after his grandmother leads the insurrection of enslaved people at Teakettle Creek.



Love Twelve Miles Long • written by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Colin Bootman

GRADES PreK-2 GRADES 3-5

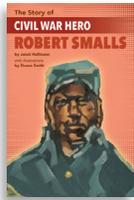
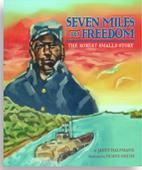
Set on a plantation in the 1820s in Maryland, this story based on the life of young Frederick Douglass shows the power of his mother’s love.



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

GRADES 3-5

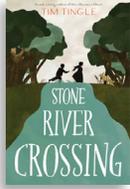
This historical fiction picture book reveals the unknown story of Lilly Ann Granderson, an African American teacher who risked her life to teach others during slavery.



Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story
The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls • written by Janet Halfmann,
 illustrated by Duane Smith

GRADES 3-5

The true story of Robert Smalls, a slave steamboat wheelman who commandeered a Confederate ship during the Civil War and escape with his family and crew to freedom.



Stone River Crossing • written by Tim Tingle

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

From the award-winning author of *How I Became a Ghost*, a tale of unlikely friendship and miracles. When Martha Tom helps Lil Mo and his family escape from the plantation across the river, it's just the beginning of a Choctaw adventure of a lifetime.

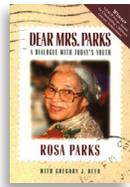
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT THROUGH PRESENT DAY



As Fast as Words Could Fly • written by Pamela Tuck, illustrated by Eric Velasquez

GRADES 3-5

The story of Mason Steele, an African American boy in 1960s Greenville, North Carolina, who relies on his inner strength and his typing skills to break racial barriers after he begins attending a “whites-only” high school.

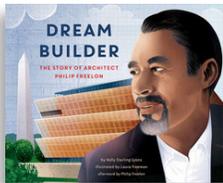


Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue with Today's Youth • written by Rosa Parks

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

On a December day in 1955, Rosa Parks changed the course of history when she was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus.



Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon • written by Kelly Starling Lyons,
 illustrated by Laura Freeman

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

You've seen the National Museum of African American History & Culture. Now meet the man whose life went into it.

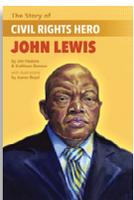
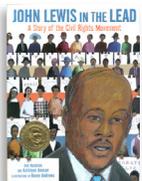


Game, Set, Match Tennis Champion Arthur Ashe
The Story of Tennis Champion Arthur Ashe • written by Crystal Hubbard,
 illustrated by Kevin Belford

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

Arthur Ashe began playing tennis on the segregated courts of Virginia – but he went on to conquer the world.



John Lewis in the Lead
The Story of Civil Rights Hero John Lewis • written by Kathleen Benson & Jim Haskins,
 illustrated by Aaron Boyd

GRADES 3-5

GRADES 6-8

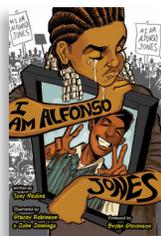
This biography focuses on John Lewis, a leader in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and a revered Congressman.



Juneteenth Jamboree • written by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Yvonne Buchanan

GRADES PreK-2 GRADES 3-5

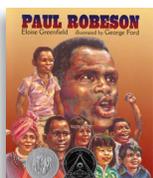
The story of a young girl who experiences the sights, sounds, and traditions of Juneteenth—a holiday that celebrates the emancipation of the last slaves in the United States.



I Am Alfonso Jones • written by Tony Medina, illustrated by Stacey Robinson and John Jennings

GRADES 6-8 GRADES 9-12

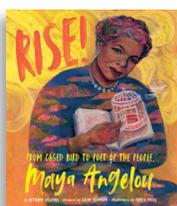
The Hate U Give meets *The Lovely Bones* in this unflinching graphic novel about the afterlife of a young man killed by an off-duty police officer, co-illustrated by *New York Times* bestselling artist John Jennings.



Paul Robeson • written by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by George Ford

GRADES 3-5 GRADES 6-8

An award-winning biography of Paul Robeson, who overcame racial discrimination to become an international entertainer and civil rights activist.



Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou • written by Bethany Hegedus, illustrated by Tonya Engel

GRADES 3-5 GRADES 6-8

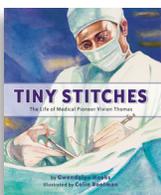
This beautiful biography of Maya Angelou describes how she rose above a childhood of trauma and emotional pain to become one of the most inspiring voices of modern times.



She Was the First! The Trailblazing Life of Shirley Chisholm • written by Katheryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Eric Velasquez

GRADES PreK-2 GRADES 3-5

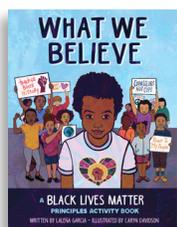
A timely, inspiring picture book biography of the dynamic twentieth-century educator, activist, and politician Shirley Chisholm.



Tiny Stitches: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas • written by Gwendolyn Hooks, illustrated by Colin Bootman

GRADES 3-5 GRADES 6-8

The life story of Vivien Thomas, an African American surgical technician who developed the first procedure used to perform open-heart surgery on children.



What We Believe: A Black Lives Matter Principles Activity Book • written by Laleña Garcia, illustrated by Caryn Davidson

GRADES PreK-2 GRADES 3-5

This powerful activity book will engage hands, hearts, and minds as it introduces children to the guiding principles of the Black Lives Matter movement.



Teaching About Reconstruction Through Children's Books: Book & Resource List

Listed below are resources and additional texts mentioned in the webinar to further ground and inform teaching about Reconstruction and other critical history associated with Reconstruction.

Additional Resources to teach U.S. Reconstruction

- **Library of Congress**
U.S. History Primary Source Timeline: Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877
<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/civil-war-and-reconstruction-1861-1877/>
- **Edsitement, a project from the National Endowment for the Humanities**
The Reconstruction Era
<https://edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/reconstruction-era>
- **Facing History, Facing Ourselves**
The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy
<https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/lessons>
- **Learning for Justice Resources**
 - **Teaching Hard History: Grades K - 5**
<https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/k-5-framework>
 - **Teaching Hard History: Grades 6 -12**
<https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/6-12-framework>
 - **Teaching Hard History: Professional Development** <https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/professional-development>
 - **Teaching Hard History: American Slavery Podcast**
<https://podcasts.apple.com/mu/podcast/teaching-hard-history-american-slavery/id1341785066>
- **Hasan Jeffries: Cult of Pedagogy Podcast:**
<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teaching-hard-history/>
- **Zinn Education Project: Teach Reconstruction Campaign**
<https://www.zinnedproject.org/campaigns/teach-reconstruction/>
- **Rethinking Schools: Why We Should Teach Reconstruction, Spring 2019**
<https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/why-we-should-teach-reconstruction/>
- **The Washington Post**
Forgotten in the classroom: The Reconstruction era
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/forgotten-in-the-classroom-the-reconstruction-era/2018/01/14/f39c5814-d2d8-11e7-b62d-d9345ced896d_story.html
- **The New York Times 1619 Project**
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>
- **National Education Justice Edjustice Correct(ed): Reconstruction**
<https://neaedjustice.org/social-justice-issues/racial-justice/corrected-reconstruction/>
- **iCivics: Civil War & Reconstruction**
<https://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/civil-war-reconstruction>
- **'13TH' Documentary: directed by Ava DuVernay**
<http://www.avaduvernay.com/13th>
- **Reconstruction: America After the Civil War Series on PBS**
<https://www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction/home-preview/>



Teaching About Reconstruction Through Children's Books: Book & Resource List

Additional Texts

- **Historian Eric Foner on the 'Unresolved Legacy of Reconstruction' on NPR's Fresh Air June 5, 2020**
<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/05/870459750/historian-eric-foner-on-the-unresolved-legacy-of-reconstruction>
- **Foner, E. (2014). Reconstruction (Updated Edition).** Harper Collins.
- **Gates, H.L. (2019). Dark Sky Rising: Reconstruction and the Dawn of Jim Crow.** Scholastic.
- **DuBois, W.E.B. (1998). Black Reconstruction in America.** The Free Press.
- **Foner, E. (2020). The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution.** W.W. Norton & Company.
- **Foner, E. (1996). Freedom's Lawmakers: A directory of Black officeholders during Reconstruction.** LSU Press.
- **Bolden, T. (2014). Cause: Reconstruction America, 1863-1877).** Random House Children's Books.
- **Blight, D. (2002). Race and Reunion.** Harvard University Press.
- **Doringo, R. (2017). We need the lesson of Reconstruction. Learning for Justice.**
<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/we-need-the-lessons-of-reconstruction>