

The Historic New Orleans Collection
Rethinking Primary Sources – Lesson Plan

Ruby Bridges

Title of Unit:

Ruby Bridges - The Cost of Integration

Lesson Overview:

In this unit students will examine the process of how Ruby Bridges integrated William Frantz Elementary School, and write an argument to advise or dissuade others to participate in the process of desegregation.

Objectives:

The students will:

- Analyze a series of photographs related to the integration of William Frantz Elementary School to gain a greater understanding of the challenges of integration and desegregation from various perspectives.
- Construct content knowledge of an event through the guided process of analyzing primary sources.
- Identify elements in the photographs that contribute to the tone and mood.
- Summarize Ruby Bridges and her family's experience with integration.
- Write an argument essay to advise or dissuade others to participate in the process of desegregation.

Essential Questions:

- Are the benefits of progress worth the cost?
- Should people be allowed to express their opinions even when those opinions are racist?

- Can an individual make a difference in history?

Grade Level:

6

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.9

Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.A

Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.B

Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

Historical Background:

The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1865 and abolished slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment strengthened the legal rights of the newly freed slaves and established that citizens could not be denied equal protection of the laws. Unfortunately Plessy v. Ferguson legalized racial discrimination. The policy of "separate but equal" was lawful in

schools, parks, libraries, restaurants, and many other public facilities. In the early 1950's the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began to challenge segregation laws pertaining to public schools. The verdict of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled the policy of "separate but equal" was inherently unequal and declared legal segregation unconstitutional.

The school crisis in New Orleans began in the spring of 1960. Judge J. Skelly Wright ordered the Orleans Parish schools to desegregate. Despite protests and appeals, the official desegregation began on Nov. 14, 1960 when first grader Ruby Bridges entered William Frantz Elementary School. Ruby, born in Tylertown, MS is the daughter of Abon and Lucille. Her family moved to New Orleans, when she was four, in search of a better life. At the age of 6, Ruby was selected to take an intentionally difficult test, as the district searched for candidates to integrate the lower grades. Ruby's mother wanted to take advantage of integration, although her father felt this decision would lead to problems. Ruby began first grade on November 14, 1960 escorted by Federal marshals. Ruby's father was correct, her family encountered many problems throughout the year.

Materials:

- Oral History Interview (Historic New Orleans Collection)
- Ruby Bridges: A Marshal's Perspective (<https://youtu.be/hsCWpXx6ToY>)
- Color Barrier Breaking Student's Reunion (<https://youtu.be/Tenj6N5FiKQ>)
- My Story: Mrs. Lucille Bridges (<https://youtu.be/CoJ1NXclO4w>)
- Book: *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles and George Ford
- Book: *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges and Margo Lundell
- Photographs
- Analyzing photographs graphic organizer
- Cause and effect graphic organizer

Procedures:

Day 1 (45 minutes)

- Invite students to participate in a gallery walk.
- Divide class into five small groups.
- Each group will travel to the five stations and have 2 minutes to write down inferences, observations, questions, or comments.
- Whole group discussion and debriefing.
- The small groups will be assigned one photograph to analyze and record responses on the analyzing photographs graphic organizer.
- Exit Ticket: 3,2,1 Organizer (3 things you learned, 2 interesting facts, and one question)

Day 2 (45 minutes)

- Read aloud *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles to class.
- Invite students to complete the cause and effect organizer in small groups.
- Whole class discussion of essential questions.
 - (1) Are the benefits of progress worth the cost?
 - (2) Should people be allowed to express their opinions even when those opinions are racist?
 - (3) Can an individual make a difference in history?
- Exit ticket: Review 3,2,1 organizer from previous lesson. Did students find answers to their questions or add interesting facts or record new questions?

Day 3 (45 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups.
- Students will rotate through the following stations:
 - (1) Watch "Color Barrier Breaking Student's Reunion" video (one of the few white students who continued to go William Frantz Elementary School)
 - (2) Watch the video "My Story: Mrs. Lucille Bridges" (Ruby's mother discusses integration)
 - (3) Read the transcript of Ruby Bridges' Oral History Interview.
 - (4) Writing station - Begin brainstorming for the argument essay using the four square graphic organizer.
- Whole group discussion. What price did the Bridges family pay for their efforts to William Frantz Elementary School? What price did the Foreman family pay?

Day 4 (45 minutes)

- Mini-lesson: writing an effective thesis statement.
- Provide time for students to review resources: books, videos, articles
- Take notes/conduct research to write an argument essay on the topic:

It is 1960 and you live in an urban southern city. The school board has decided to integrate the local elementary school. You are asked to desegregate the school. Discuss your position and support your claim with text based evidence.

Day 5 (45 minutes)

- Allow students to read or create a multimedia presentation to share their essays.
- Culminating activity: Write a reflection - answering one of the essential questions.

Analyze a Photograph



Meet the photo.

What do you see?

Is the photo?

- BLACK AND WHITE COLOR

Is there a caption?

- YES NO

If so, what does the caption tell you?

Observe its parts.

Circle what you see in the photo.



PEOPLE OBJECTS BOTH

What are the people doing in the photo?

What are the objects used for in the photo?

Write two words that describe the photo.

Try to make sense of it.

Who do you think took this photo?

Where do you think this photo was taken?

List something that helps you prove where it was taken.

Why do you think the photo was taken?

How does this photo compare to modern times?



Use it as historical evidence.
Where do you think we could find out more information about the people or objects in the photo?



Cause and effect Organizer

