

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 16 Word Count: 292

Book Summary

Ruby Bridges shares the story of the first African American child to attend an all-white elementary school in New Orleans, Louisiana. Despite protests and threats, Ruby continued going to school. Her courage opened the way for other African American children to attend schools previously closed to them. Use this inspiring story to also teach emergent readers about author's purpose and possessive nouns.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Retell

Objectives

- Retell to understand text
- Identify author's purpose
- Discriminate initial consonant *br*-blend
- Identify initial consonant *br*-blend
- Recognize and use possessive nouns
- Memorize and use the high-frequency words *her* and *she*

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*Ruby Bridges* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Author's purpose, initial consonant *br*-blends, possessive nouns worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](https://www.readinga-z.com/vocabulary).

- High-frequency words: *her*, *she*, *was*, *went*
- Content words:
Story critical: **brave** (*adj.*), **difference** (*n.*), **fair** (*adj.*), **laws** (*n.*), **separate** (*v.*), **South** (*n.*)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to think about a time when they had to be brave to face a scary challenge. Have students share their anecdote with a partner.
- Discuss with students the meaning of *brave*. Break students into groups, and assign each group a scenario where people must confront a challenge. Ask students to discuss in their groups how they would be brave in this situation. Invite groups to role play their scenario in front of the class.

- Explain to students that the story they are about to read is about a brave girl, Ruby Bridges, who faced a challenging situation and helped to make the world a better place through her actions. Write the words *Ruby Bridges* on the board and read them aloud with students.

Book Walk

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Retell**

- Explain to students that engaged readers stop now and then during reading to retell the events of the story in their mind. Retelling a story helps readers remember and understand what they are reading.
- Remind students that when retelling a story, they need to sequence the events in the correct order for the story to make sense. Also, point out that a retelling includes as many details from the story as they can remember, as opposed to a summary, which only uses the most important details.
- Model retelling using a tale familiar to the class, such as *The Gingerbread Man*.
Think-aloud: *When I retell The Gingerbread Man, I want to use as many details as I can remember, in the correct order. The story begins with an elderly couple making gingerbread cookies. They use raisins for his eyes, icing for his hair, and candy for his buttons. He is a fine looking gingerbread man. As soon as they take him out of the oven though, a surprising thing happens. The gingerbread man blinks his eyes, sits up, and jumps off the counter. He runs out the door, and as he runs, he sings: "Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!" How would you finish retelling this story?*
- Have students work in groups to continue retelling the story of *The Gingerbread Man*. Invite volunteers to share their retelling with the class. Point out that every retelling should be different as a retelling is told in the student's own words. Discuss with students each shared retelling, focusing on whether events are clearly organized in the correct sequence and if students used plenty of details.
- Have students place sticky notes on pages 6, 11, and 15. Explain to students that these notes are reminders. Whenever students come to a sticky note during their reading, they should stop and retell in their minds the events of the story up to that point.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Author's purpose**

- Explain to students that authors have a purpose, or a reason, for writing. Write the words *inform*, *entertain*, and *persuade* on the board. Explain that to *inform* means to give the reader information on a topic, to *entertain* means to amuse the reader, and to *persuade* means to try to convince the reader to think the same way as the author does.
- Model identifying author's purpose using a familiar book, such as *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*.
Think-aloud: *In the book Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, letters of the alphabet climb up a coconut tree. When I read this story, I am amused. The letters' adventures are fun and make me smile. The book also teaches me about the letters of the alphabet. Since the story gives me information on a topic and amuses me, I know the author had two purposes for writing, to inform and to entertain.*
- Explain to students they can figure out an author's purpose by the effect the book has on them. Point out that an author may have only one purpose or may have more than one purpose.

- Review with students a book the class has previously read. Have students work in groups to discuss the author's purpose for the book. Invite groups to share their interpretation of the author's purpose with the rest of the class.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- While previewing the book, reinforce the vocabulary words students will encounter. For example, while looking at the picture on page 5, you might say: *This page tells the reader that some laws were not fair in the South. What are some things that have made you say, "That's not fair!" What does it mean to be fair? Fair describes situations that are right or just.*
- Remind students they can use pictures and the context of the sentence to help them decode or understand unfamiliar words. Read aloud the last sentence on page 5. Ask students if they can figure out the meaning of the word *separate* from this sentence and the picture. For example, you could say: *The sentence tells me the laws kept white people and black people separate. In the picture, two men are drinking at different fountains. What does the word separate mean? From the sentence and the picture, I can guess the word separate means kept apart.*
- Point out that vocabulary words in this book are in boldface print. Ask students to work with a partner to find all of the vocabulary words in the book. Have partners read the sentences that contain each word and discuss if they can figure out the meaning of the word from the sentence and accompanying pictures.
- Explain to students that sometimes they will not be able to figure out the meaning of a word using context clues. Point out the glossary at the back of the story. Review or explain that a glossary contains a list of important words in the story and their definitions. Remind students that when a book has a glossary, it typically defines the words in boldface print from the story.
- Ask a volunteer to read the definition of the word *brave*. Compare the glossary definition with the sentence using that word on page 13. Have students work with a partner to repeat the process with the remaining vocabulary words.

Set the Purpose


- Have students read to find out more about Ruby Bridges. Remind them to retell the story in their mind as they read and to think about the author's purpose for writing about this extraordinary girl.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 4 to the end of page 6. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.
- **Model retelling.**
Think-aloud: *This story introduced Ruby Bridges as a little girl who made a big difference. She was born in 1954, in the South. At that time, unfair laws still kept white and black people separate. A United States law said all children had to go to the same school, but laws in the South still kept school children separate. People were working to make Southern schools follow the law passed by the United States. This is my retelling of events in beginning of the story, in my own words.*
- Have students retell to a partner the first three pages of the story. Remind students that a retelling is in the student's own words, so each retelling should be different. Invite volunteers to share their retelling with the rest of the class.
- Ask students to share with a partner details they read in these beginning pages. Encourage students to think about all the details they shared in the retelling. Invite volunteers to share a detail with the rest of the class and record it on the board, using key words and pictures.
- Review with students the three purposes an author may have for writing a story (to inform, entertain, or persuade). Ask students to look at the details on the board and to think about the effect those details had on them. Did the story entertain them or inform them? Did these details persuade them to think a certain way? Have students share with a partner what they think is the author's purpose for this story.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 11. Point out the sticky note on that page, and have students retell the story in their mind. Remind them to use as many details as they can remember.
- Invite volunteers to share new details from the story. Record these on the board using key words and pictures. Ask students to think about how these details affect them: Are they informed, entertained, or persuaded? Call on random students and have them share their opinion of the author's purpose.
- Guide students to an understanding that the author is using all these details to inform the reader about Ruby Bridge's brave decision to attend an all-white school for first grade. Circle the word *inform* on the board.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to retell as they read and to keep track of details that reveal the author's purpose for writing this story.

 Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be discussed in the section that follows.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *In the last section of the book, I learned that Mr. Coles helped Ruby express how she felt about her experience. Neighbors helped her, too. Ruby was a brave girl who didn't let anything stop her from going to school, and her courage showed people that even children could change the country. The following year, more black students went to school with Ruby. The story ended by telling us that Ruby still works to make the world fair for everyone.*
- Review with students the events recorded on the board. Ask students to think of events from the story that are not on the board, and invite volunteers to share them with the class.
- Have students retell the entire story to a partner. Remind them to use their own words to retell events in the correct sequence. Invite volunteers to share their retelling with the rest of the class.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Have students share with a partner the reason why the author's purpose is to inform the reader. Explain to students that the author had another purpose in this story, to persuade the reader. Ask students to discuss in groups what the author was persuading them to think or feel. Does the author try to make the reader feel a certain way about events or a person in the book? Point to the words *Ruby Bridges* on the board, and ask students if the author is trying to persuade the reader to think in a certain way about Ruby. Explain to students that the author is persuading the reader that Ruby was a brave girl who changed her country for the better.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [author's purpose worksheet](#). Discuss their answers aloud.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about the good change Ruby Bridges made by attending a school in the South. What are some things you think need to be changed? What can you do about those problems?

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: Initial consonant *br*-blends


- Say the word *brave* aloud to students, emphasizing the initial /br/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the /br/ sound.
- Say the nonsense word *bave* aloud to students, emphasizing the initial /b/ sound. Repeat both words, and ask students to listen closely to the initial sounds. Ask students to share with a partner the difference between the two words.

- Point out to students that the word *brave* does have the /b/ sound, but it is combined with a growling undertone, as opposed to a clean /b/ sound. Have students practice saying the two different sounds aloud.
- **Check for understanding:** Say the following words one at a time and have students clap their desk if the word begins with the /br/ sound: *brim, big, badge, brush, bead, braid, and brook*.

Phonics: Initial consonant *br*-blends

- Write the word *brave* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the /br/ sound aloud. Then, run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letters represent the /br/ sound in the word *brave*.
- Point out that adding the letter *r* is what makes the initial phoneme have a slightly different sound.
- Write the following words on the board: *bat, bag, and bow*. Have students read the words aloud. Ask students to transform each word by adding the letter *r* to the letter *b*, and have students call out the new word. Invite a volunteer to come to the board and add the letter *r*. Have students discuss with a partner how the words have changed in sound.
- Have students practice writing the letters *br* on a separate piece of paper while saying the /br/ sound.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board, leaving off the initial consonant *b* or initial consonant *br*-blend: *brick, brain, bear, breeze, bake, bride, boring, and bronco*. Say each word, one at a time, and have students listen closely to determine if the word begins with the *br*-blend. Have volunteers come to the board and add the initial *br*-blend to the appropriate words, while the other students trace the letters *br* in the air.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [initial consonant *br*-blends worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Possessive nouns

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Ruby's courage made a difference in her country*. Have students read the sentence aloud, and ask them to point to the word *courage*. Have students share with a partner whose courage the sentence is referring to (Ruby's). Invite a volunteer to share with the class how they know the courage is Ruby's.
 - Underline the word *Ruby's*. Ask students if they notice anything different about the word. Explain to students that *Ruby's* is a possessive noun, and we form possessive nouns by adding an 's to the end of a word. *Possessive nouns* are words that *show ownership, or possession*. Point out that *Ruby's* shows that Ruby is the one who owns the courage.
-  Have students work with a partner to search for the two possessive nouns in the book. Ask students to underline the possessive noun and circle the object that is owned. Call on random students to share an example they found, and have other students give a thumbs-up signal if they agree.
- Point out that a contraction using 's is not the same as a possessive. For example, *that's* is a contraction for *that is* and does not show ownership. Remind students to look at the context of the sentence to determine if the word is a possessive noun or a contraction.
 - **Check for understanding:** Write the following sentence on the board: *The family of Ruby was proud of her*. Discuss with students how to rewrite the sentence using a possessive noun. Ask students who possesses what in this sentence (Ruby possesses her family). Rewrite the sentence on the board. Write several more sentences similar to the first one on the board, and have students work with a partner to rewrite them, using a possessive noun in each one. Invite volunteers to share their sentences with the rest of the class.
 - **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [possessive nouns worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: High-frequency words *her* and *she*

- Write the words *her* and *she* on the board and read the words aloud. Have students read the words with you. Explain to students that these two words are ones they will often see in books, and they should memorize them so they can decode them right away.
- Write the following sentences on the board: *Ruby was brave. She was brave.* Read the sentences aloud with students. Ask students to give a thumbs-up signal if the sentences have the same meaning. Have students discuss with a partner what is different between the sentences. Explain to students that the word *she* is a pronoun that replaces a female noun.
- Write the following sentences on the board: *Ruby's neighbors helped. Her neighbors helped.* As before, ask students if the sentences have the same meaning, and then have students discuss with a partner the difference. Explain to students that the word *her* replaces a female possessive noun.
- Emphasize that both words refer to girls.
- Have students discuss with a partner the difference between the words *she* and *her*. Invite volunteers to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
- Have students practice tracing the word *she* on their desk with a finger while spelling it aloud. Then, have them work with a partner to orally quiz each other on the spelling. Repeat the process with the word *her*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to use the words *she* and *her* in oral sentences. Challenge them to think of as many sentences as they can. Invite volunteers to share their sentences with the class.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them discuss the author's purpose for writing this story with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Biographical Writing and Art Connection

Prepare a list of historic people that have made positive changes in their communities. Present the list to the class, with a brief introduction of each person, and have students choose the one they are most interested in. Provide picture books for the students to read on their chosen subject. Ask students to look for information on the person's background and what the person did that made a big difference. Have students write one paragraph about their person that gives a bit of background information, describes his or her most important action, and concludes with how their person influenced others. Have students draw a picture to accompany their paragraph, either a portrait of their subject or a scene depicting what they did.

Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on biographical writing.

Social Studies Connection

Explore diversity in the classroom. Have students ask their parents about where their ancestors come from, what languages they speak in the family, and any special traditions or celebrations they follow. Have students write a paragraph describing their family background, and invite volunteers to share it with the rest of the class. Invite a few parents to come to the class and share about their family's unique culture. On a map, mark the countries the students discussed in their backgrounds. Have students work in groups to learn more about the countries, including the primary language spoken, typical foods eaten, religions, holidays, and anything that stands out as unique or special. Have groups create a poster on their country that shows what they learned and present it to the class.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of retelling to understand text during discussion
- accurately identify the author's purpose during discussion and on a worksheet
- consistently discriminate initial consonant *br*-blend sound during discussion
- properly write the letter symbols that represent the initial consonant *br*-blend during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly use possessive nouns during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately use the high-frequency words *her* and *she* during discussion and in oral sentences

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)