

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 16 Word Count: 1,335

Book Summary

After the Civil War ended, the U.S. Army formed the regiments that would come to be known as the **Buffalo Soldiers**. Despite discrimination and hardship, the Buffalo Soldiers served until the Korean War, becoming an important chapter in the history of the United States. Historic photographs and detailed text features support engaging text.

Book and lesson are also available for levels Q and T.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Sequence events in the text
- Recognize subject-verb agreement
- Identify and understand compound words

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—**The Buffalo Soldiers** (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- **KWLS / ask and answer questions, sequence events, subject-verb agreement, compound words 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.

- **Content words:**

Story critical: **buffalo** (n.), **discrimination** (n.), **frontier** (n.), **opportunities** (n.), **regiments** (n.), **service** (n.)

Enrichment: *desert* (v.), **expansion** (n.), *integrated* (v.), *racism* (n.), **reservations** (n.), **stationed** (v.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to share what they know about the history of slavery and the Civil War in the United States. Write the word *discrimination* on the board and read it aloud to students. Invite them to share what they know about the meaning of the word *discrimination* as it relates to slavery and the Civil War.

- Create a KWLS chart on the board and hand out the [KWLS / ask and answer questions worksheet](#). Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. As various topics are discussed, fill in the first section (*K*) on the board with information students know about the topic. Have students complete the same section of their worksheet.

Preview the Book

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, photograph on the cover).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Discuss with students how having prior knowledge about the topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and remember the information in a book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of the information in a book and how it is organized. After previewing the table of contents, use it to model asking questions.
- Model how to ask questions.
Think-aloud: From what I see on the covers and title page, it appears as though this book is about soldiers. I'm curious to know what I will read about soldiers. When I look at the title, I see that it is The Buffalo Soldiers. This makes me wonder who were the Buffalo Soldiers. I also wonder why these soldiers were given this unusual name. As I view the table of contents, I see that I will be reading about the history of the Buffalo Soldiers. I notice that one section is titled "Out West." I wonder if the Buffalo Soldiers were sent out west and if so, why? I will write these questions in the W section of my chart, where I will record all the information I want to learn while reading this book.
- Have students look at other section titles. Have them write any questions they have on the basis of the covers and the table of contents in the *W* section of their KWLS chart.
- Have students preview the rest of the book. Encourage them to look at maps, diagrams, and photographs. Invite students to read through the glossary. Have them add any additional questions they might have on their KWLS chart. Invite students to share their questions aloud. Write shared questions in the class chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Sequence events**

- Review or explain that events from history are told in order from beginning to end, or in *sequence*.
- Model sequencing the main events of your life. Write key words about each event in order on a timeline on the board as you describe them to students.
Think-aloud: If I want to tell the story of my life, I need to include certain events in order to tell it correctly. The first event that happened is that I was born. Next, I started school. Then, I moved to a new town. (Continuing telling events as applicable to your life.)
- Explain that certain words are often used to tell a sequence of events. Read the list of events on the board to students in order, using words such as *first*, *next*, *then*, and *last*. Ask students to identify these as sequencing words from the example.
- Have a volunteer use the key words on the board to sequence the events out of order. Ask students to explain why the order of the events is important (the sequence does not make sense out of order).

- Point out the difference between the sequence of events listed on the board and a retelling (a retelling contains more details and descriptions; the list shows only the events that are most important).
- Explain to students that this book follows a sequence, or tells about events in the order in which they happened, and they will be using a graphic organizer later to help them recall the sequence of events in the text.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the photographs, maps, and diagrams. Reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.
- Explain to students that sometimes they will not find any context clues that help them define an unfamiliar word. Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *regiments* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 4 as you read the sentence in which the word *regiments* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Ask students to locate other content vocabulary words in the glossary and text. Read and discuss their definitions as a class. Point out that not all content vocabulary words are defined in the glossary. Have students locate those words in the dictionary and text. Read and discuss their definitions as time permits.

Set the Purpose


- Have students think about what they already know about Buffalo Soldiers as they read the book to find answers to their questions and write what they have learned in the L section of their KWLS chart.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Remind them to look for information about the Buffalo Soldiers that will answer questions on their KWLS chart. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
- When students have finished reading, have them circle any questions on their KWLS chart that were answered and write any new questions that were generated.
- Model answering a question and filling in the L section of the KWLS chart.
Think-aloud: *I wanted to know who the Buffalo Soldiers were and how they received such an unusual name. I learned that in 1865, after the Civil War ended, the U.S. Army formed the first peacetime regiments of black soldiers who would later become known as the Buffalo Soldiers. I have not yet learned why these soldiers were called Buffalo Soldiers, but I will keep reading to find out. I also wanted to know if the soldiers were sent out west and if so, why. I learned that many of these men were sent to the Great Plains, the desert, and the mountains west of the Mississippi. As I look at the next section titled "Out West," I think I will learn even more about why the Buffalo Soldiers were sent out west. I will record what I have learned so far about the Buffalo Soldiers in the L section of my chart.*
- Have students write answers to the questions they circled in the L section of the KWLS chart. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Write shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
- Discuss the events that are the most important to correctly tell the story. (The Civil War ended in 1865, and the peacetime black regiments were established. Many former soldiers, slaves, and other black men joined the army. In 1866, black soldiers were given the same pay as white soldiers, although they were still treated unfairly in many other ways. Many of these men were sent out west. The 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments were created in 1866. Colonel Benjamin Grierson led the 10th Cavalry.)

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 11. Have them write answers they found while reading in the *L* section of their KWLS chart and additional questions they raised in the *W* section. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read pages 8 through 11. Write shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
- Ask students to share additional important events as a class, and write them on a timeline in order. (In the late 1800s, more settlers were moving out west, and the U.S. government was taking land from many Native American tribes, forcing them onto reservations. Black soldiers were ordered to protect settlers, towns, and supplies from outlaws and Native Americans. Between 1866 and 1875 the 10th Cavalry was stationed in Kansas and Indian Territory. While there, they earned the name Buffalo Soldiers.)
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their KWLS chart questions, as well as to look for important events to record. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their chart as they read.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

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

- Ask students to share questions they added to their KWLS charts while reading and ask them what questions were answered (or not answered) in the text. Have students write answers they found while reading in the *L* section of their KWLS worksheet.
- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and enjoy what have read.
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text.
- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know why the Buffalo Soldiers were given this name. I learned the name came from the Native Americans. No one is exactly sure why the name came to be, but some historians think it came from the buffalo coats the soldiers sometimes wore. Other historians think the name was given to them because the soldiers fought as fiercely as a trapped buffalo. I will write this information in the L section of my chart. I also wanted to know why the Buffalo Soldiers were sent out west. I learned that during the late 1800s, the U.S. government was removing Native Americans from their land and forcing them onto poorer land called reservations. This angered many of the tribes, so they fought to get their land back. Many of the Buffalo Soldiers were sent out west to defend the settlers, towns, and supplies from these attacks. I will record this information in the L section of my KWLS chart. In the final section of the book, I learned that black and white soldiers were kept separate until the Korean War in 1950. I would like to know more about why this change occurred and how it affected the Buffalo Soldiers. I will write this in the S section of my chart because it is information I would still like to know.*
- Discuss with students other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions that were not answered in the text. Invite students to fill in the *S* section of the KWLS chart with information they would still like to know about the Buffalo Soldiers.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the sequence of events that was identified and written on the board. Practice restating these events using sequencing words (*first, next, then, after that*, and so on). Point out how it is important for students to use their own words to write about each event.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [sequence events worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about the history of the Buffalo Soldiers. The author writes that the Buffalo Soldiers are an important piece of our country's history. Why do you think the Buffalo Soldiers are an important part of our history?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Subject-verb agreement

- Write the following subject-verb pairs on the board: *man/speaks, kite/soars, robin/sings*. Discuss how the subject and the verb must agree. Point out how each subject listed on the board is singular.
- Edit each of the singular subjects on the board to make them plural: *men, kites, robins*. Ask students to tell whether or not each new subject works with its verb (*no*). Have volunteers change each verb to make it agree with each new subject. Discuss how the endings of the verbs must change to agree with each plural subject.
- Discuss how certain verbs, such as *is* and *has* don't follow this pattern. Write the following subject-verb pairs on the board: *she/is, he/has*. Point out that if *she* became two women, then the subject-verb pair would change to *they/are*, and if *he* became two men, then the subject-pair would change to *they/have*.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following example on the board: *A field worker stand in a Florida cotton field in 1879*. Invite students to identify the subject (*field worker*) and the verb (*stand*) in the example. Discuss how, in this example, the subject, *field worker*, is singular. On the basis of this information, ask students to tell whether or not the verb, *stand*, agrees with the subject (*no*). Point out that the correct subject-verb agreement in this example would be *A field worker stands in a Florida cotton field in 1879*.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [subject-verb-agreement worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

Word Work: Compound words

- Write the word *peacetime* on the board. Ask students which two words were joined together in the word *peacetime* (*peace* and *time*). Explain that this word is called a *compound word* and that a compound word contains two words that together create one meaning. Explain that the definitions of the two separate words can help students figure out the meaning of the bigger word (a time of peace).
- Write the words *sunrise*, *Spanish-American*, and *Native Americans* on the board. Explain to students that these are examples of different types of compound words. Explain that each example has two parts that make up one meaning and that some compound words are separated by hyphens, some are joined, and some are separate.
- Have students turn to page 4 in the book and reread the page. Have students identify the compound words on the page (*peacetime, sunrise, sunset*). Ask students to identify the two separate words that make up each compound word (*peace* and *time, sun* and *rise, sun* and *set*).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 8 and reread the page. Ask students to locate a compound word on this page (*outlaws*). Ask students to identify the two separate words that make up the compound word (*out* and *law*). Discuss the definitions of each word, using the smaller words to figure out the meaning.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [compound words worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss answers aloud after they are finished.

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 students demonstrate how a reader asks questions then reflects on the answers while reading.

Extend the Reading

Writing Connection

Discuss with students that during the 1800s, the only way for the Buffalo Soldiers to stay in touch with family and loved ones was through letter writing. Review with students the basics of letter writing including formatting, greetings, salutations, and so on. Have students consider and discuss what it must have been like to for the Buffalo Soldiers who were stationed out west. Ask students how they must have felt when in battle, how it felt to be away from family, and so on. Have students create a rough draft of a letter written from the point of view of a Buffalo Soldier positioned in the West during the late 1800s. Invite students to peer edit. Once edits are complete, have students create a final copy. If time allows, have students crumple their paper and paint lightly with coffee to give the effect of an aging letter. Have students share their letters with the class, and display them in the classroom.

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

Social Studies Connection

Invite a local historian to come and discuss the history of the United States during the late 1800s. Have this guest discuss the changes occurring in the lives of Native Americans during this time and the role of the Buffalo Soldiers. Invite students to prepare for this presentation by creating questions to ask the historian. Students may use questions they recorded in the S section of their KWLS chart.

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 asking and answering questions to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- understand and accurately identify a sequence of events in text, during discussion, and on a worksheet
- correctly identify subject-verb agreement during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify and understand the use of compound words in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

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