

Subject: Social Studies

Book: Almost To Freedom, by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

Lesson Created By Holli Turpin

Grade: 4-5

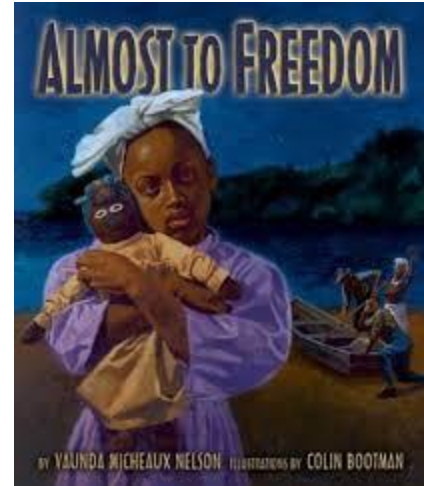
Setting: Whole class, story carpet or at desks

Time: 40min

Note – This lesson should be presented after the class has studied slavery in the United States. Students should be familiar with the concepts of plantations, the Underground Railroad, the goals of runaway slaves, and the presence of slave catchers as well as abolitionists.

Hook:

What is your most prized possession? Why is it important to you? Think back to when you were younger, did you have a toy, doll, teddy bear, blanket or something that you took everywhere with you? Something that helped you get through a hard time in your life?



Alt. Hook:

Think about a time in your life that you were really scared. Take two minutes each to share with your partner, I will ring the bell to let you know when to switch tellers. Let students discuss question with their partners, giving 2min, ring the bell and give 2 more min. After that call on a few people to share. (have people tell their partners story not their own)

Pre-Reading

Today we are going to read a book that shares a scary time in a little girls life.

Show the cover, Almost to Freedom , by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, Illustrated by Colin Bootman.

- What does the title and cover art tell you about the story setting? Prompt as needed to discuss who the story is about, when the story takes place, where the story takes place and what the genre is likely to be.
 - Slavery,
 - Runaway slaves (clues – boat, traveling at night), a little girl and her doll,
 - South,
 - early 1800's, before the civil war,
- Review concepts from recent SS lessons. Use questions below as prompts if they are not part of the discussion above.
 - What did it mean to be a slave?
 - Why do you think the people in the picture getting on a boat at night?
 - How old do you think the girl in the forefront of the picture is?
 - Why is she hugging the doll so tightly?
 - How do you think the little girl is feeling?
 - Looking at the cover do you think the story is going to be a true story or a made up story? (accept all answers at this time)
- What do you think this story is going to be about?
- Read the quote opposite the title page "A doll is a witness who cannot die, with a doll you are never alone." Margaret Atwood
 - That's a weird quote, what do you think that means, a doll is a witness who cannot die? How can a toy be a witness?

Begin Reading

This should be a teacher read aloud. Hand out the worksheet and have student fill it out as you read. Stop periodically to ask questions and discuss ideas.

- Pg 2 – From what point of view is the story being told? Who is telling the story?
- Pg 3 – Why is Sally so important to Lindy?
 - Reread last paragraph
 - Think Aloud – "a mite easier, hmmm I wonder what mite means hear? If something is easier it's either a lot or a little easier..... because they are clearly working really hard and the overseer seems mean, I would think that singing might make it a little easier but not much, what do you think?" (allow students to weight in) "so mite probably means a little."
- Pg 8 – What happened to Lindy's father? How did Sally help Lindy when she lost her father?

- Pg 10 – Why does Lindy get whipped? Go deeper – why is would Lindy asking how to spell her name make the Master so mad? Why does he want to make them “forget all about reading and writing”? Why does Mrs. Rachel fear that Lindy may be sold?
- Pg 11 – What clues tell Sally that something is different this morning? What do you think is going on? How is Lindy feeling?
- Pg 13 – Think aloud – “my feet, Mama. There’s burs,” she must be running through the woods bear foot. That’s gotta hurt, along with being hit by braches, this is not a fun trip. I think I’d be scared, but I’m glad Lindy has Sally.
- Pg 16 – What do you think Lindy is feeling? Have you ever felt happy, sad, excited and scared at the same time?
- Pg 17 – There are two secret signals used on this page common to the Underground Railroad. What are they? What do we know about the white man in eyeglasses.
- Pg 19 – Think Aloud – There’s that word mite again. I remember that before I thought it meant ‘a little’. That makes sense here as well so that must be right.
- Pg 22 – Why is everyone still scared, aren’t they safe? (prompt as needed to get students to understand that they are still in the south, in a safe house but not safe from slavery yet.
- Pg 23- State: You were right they haven’t made it to freedom yet. Ask: What does Lindy mean when she says she needs to make water?
- Pg 26 – read page 26 fast and breathless to enhance the sense of urgency
- Pg 27 – How is Sally feeling? What do you think happened to Lindy and her parents? What does it mean that the silver haired lady come back to clean the hiding room? Why did the silver haired lady leave Sally, but tuck her in?
- Pg 30 – How does the author mark the passage of time? Why do you think no-one is using the room?
- Pg 32 – How do you think Sally feels about Willa? What assumptions can we make about Willa and the woman with her? (possible answers include, they are also runaway slaves, they are mother and daughter)
- Pg 34 – Ohh, you were right they are runaway slaves seeking freedom just like Lindy and her parents. Think Aloud – “It’s a right important job” haven’t we heard that before? (flip back in the book and locate where this line was used before) Oh, yes here it is. “Bein’ Lindy’s doll baby is a right important job.” Ask: I wonder why being someone’s baby doll is such an important job?

Post Reading

This can be completed after reading #1 or reading #2 or as a center activity following readings. Complete the additional questions and writing assignment.

Second Reading

The day after reading #1

Time: 20min

Utilize emotion graphic organizer, each student should have a worksheet. This time when you read the book students should be at their desk. Stop at parts where emotions are expressed, work together as a class to fill in the first event and clues, writing answers on worksheet projected for the whole class to see. The second and third time, go over the event and clues having a student come up to projector worksheet and fill in sections. The next couple should be quickly discussed but not written on projected worksheet. Students should fill them in on their own. If students need more scaffolding offer the assistance needed for success to be reached. By the end of the worksheet you should be able to pause and students can complete the section s on their own. Once the story had been read again and the worksheet completed, allow students to share their completed worksheets with table group to compare clues and descriptions.

- Pg 2 – Emotion: Happy, Event: Sally is given to Lindy, Clues: hug, smiling in picture, “We gonna be best friends”, Lindy takes Sally everywhere

Continue through book in same vain.

Name: _____
Date: _____

Almost To Freedom

How do Sally and Lindy share what they are feeling. We read the story pay attention to how Sally and Lindy are feeling. When something happens write a quick description of the event and the clues in the story that tell you how they are feeling.

Emotion: Happy	Event:	Clue:	Emotion: Excited	Event:	Clue:	
Emotion: Sad			Emotion: Scared /fearful			