

Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth
Discussion Guide
Grades Pre-K – 3rd

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Explore this resource from NMAAHC Kids to support the development of students' background knowledge: [Understanding and Celebrating Juneteenth](#).
- Ask: What makes a strong leader? (Optional: Think, Pair, Share OR brainstorm on chart paper).
- Share with your class that you will be reading a book about a real event in history. Encourage students to think about why it is important that we learn about history.

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- How would you describe the atmosphere during the Juneteenth Jamboree on pg. 1-2?
- What do you think the author means by "Juneteenth is YOU and ME."?
- What are some of the challenges that Opal Lee faced throughout her lifetime? How did she overcome them?

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- Read about the real Opal Lee from the back of the book. Ask: *What makes Opal Lee a strong leader?*
- On sticky notes, have students complete an affirmations activity to reflect on their unique differences. On each note, encourage students to write an "I am" statement. At the end of the activity, have students put all their notes into a bag or cup that they will keep at their desk. Remind students to read their statements when they are feeling challenged or discouraged to remind themselves of how special they are.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.
- Read aloud additional books recommended by the NMAAHC on pg. 8. Discover more resources at www.rif.org/literacy-central