

# Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore

## A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

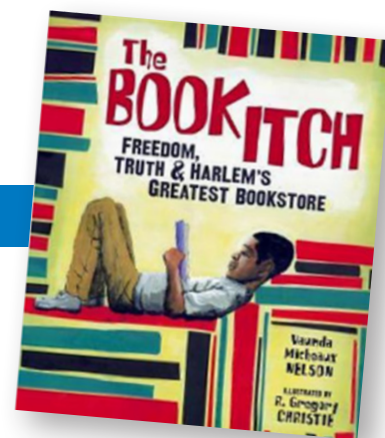
**Themes:** Community, Leadership

**Book Brief:** Lewis Michaux Sr. raised the funds to start the National Memorial African Bookstore in Harlem in the 1930s. This story celebrates literacy, the exchange of ideas, and using knowledge for power.

**Author:**  
Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

**Illustrator:**  
R. Gregory Christie

**Content Connections:**  
Social Studies



## TIME TO READ!



### BEFORE WE READ LET'S LOOK AT...

**The Cover:** Read the title and subtitle. Tell the students that Harlem is a neighborhood in New York City that has a large population of African American people. Then, talk about the colors on the cover: they are the colors of the Pan-African flag and represent the unity and strengths of Africa.

**The Pictures:** Take a brief picture walk through the book. Ask students to notice that most of the pictures show people talking and/or holding books.

**Content Specific Vocabulary:** facts, mission, propaganda, congregate

**Purpose for Reading:** Say to students, "As we read, think about the narrator of the story: who is it and how do they influence how the story is told?"

## WHILE WE READ

### MONITORING FOR COMPREHENSION

- Who is the narrator of this story?
- Why does the bookstore seem like home to the owner's son?
- Who is included in the list of people who are customers in the bookstore?
- How does the bookstore get started?
- Why does the owner have to raise his own money?
- Besides buying books, what else do people do at the bookstore?
- Why do the owner and his son set up a platform outside the store?
- Why is everyone sad at the end of the book?



## LET'S THINK ABOUT

**Our Purpose:** The narrator of this story was the bookstore owner's son. How does this relationship influence the way the story was told?

**Extending Our Thinking:** Is every book full of factual information? Ask students to name books/stories they have read or heard that are full of non-factual information (e.g., monsters, cats that speak English, bears that sleep in beds).

### NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- Vocabulary Scaffolding sheet also available.