

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL® STORY SAMPLER

# American History

FOR CHILDREN IN  
KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3





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## What Is a Story Sampler?

A Story Sampler makes books come alive for children. It is a book-based thematic approach to reading designed to engage children in the book experience. Each Story Sampler includes hands-on, cross-curricular activities for books that are linked by a common theme.

### Why Use a Story Sampler?

Motivational activities are an important part of every Reading Is Fundamental program. And these motivational activities are an easy way to excite children's interest in reading and help them associate books and reading with positive experiences and fun! The ideas you will find in each Story Sampler show you how to build anticipation and excitement in your RIF programs.

Scores of studies show that students learn more and do better in school when their parents are involved in their education. Different types of hands-on activities enable all children to learn in different ways. Particular questions before, during and after read aloud activities can develop high-order thinking skills.

Family members can encourage children to become lifelong readers by reading aloud with them everyday. Reading aloud to children is one of the most effective ways

to support language and literacy development. Children who are read to from infancy associate reading with pleasant, warm feelings. When you invite children to participate in reading, ask open-ended questions that promote creative thinking and learning, and plan activities and experiences that allow children to expand their understanding of the story, you help them develop a love of reading.

### What Are the Standard Elements of a Story Sampler?

Each section of the Story Sampler includes a featured book plus additional titles and resources.\* The activities that accompany each section will help you develop a literacy-rich environment that contributes significantly to a child's enjoyment of reading. The standard elements in the Story Sampler include:

- Questions to ask
- Family involvement
- Things to do
- Community connections

*\*The ISBN listed indicates a specific edition of the book. However, other editions may also be available through the public library or other publishers.*

### Who Should Use a Story Sampler and Where?

Some Story Samplers are age-specific, but most can be adapted to a broad range of ages. Teachers, families, and child-care providers can use them in classrooms, community centers, homes, and in Head Start sites. And most importantly, parents can extend the story beyond the classroom with home-based projects and field trips.

Story Samplers can forge relationships and shared experiences within the family and the community. Through the family, children can be introduced to many kinds of books. Books can explain and reinforce concepts; allow children to build positive self-images; stimulate discussions and thinking; increase children's understanding of various concepts; and expand their imagination.

The age range for a Story Sampler is indicated at the beginning of each set of activities.

## When and How Should I Use a Story Sampler?

Story Samplers can be used within or as a supplement to a curriculum or an after-school program. They can be part of reading challenges, reading weeks, and family involvement events. Your imagination and the interests of the children who participate in the RIF program will help determine the best way to use the Story Sampler. Enjoy and have fun!

## Tips for Reading Aloud

### Before You Read a Story...

- Make sure everyone is comfortable
- Show the cover and read the title and author of the book
- Ask the children about the cover
- Suggest things the children can look or listen for during the story

### During a Story...

- Change your voice to fit the mood or action
- Move your finger under the words as you read them
- Show the pictures and talk about the book as you read
- Add information or change words to help kids understand more words and explain the meaning of a new word
- Ask children to make predictions about the plot, the characters, and the setting
- Share your own thoughts about the story
- Follow the cues of the children

### After You Read a Story...

- Ask questions about what happened in the story
- Encourage the group to relate the story to their own experiences
- Ask children how they might feel or act if they were one of the characters
- Encourage children to share their thoughts about the story and pictures
- Extend the story with an activity or another book

# American History

## A STORY SAMPLER FOR CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3

### ▶ THE PIONEER SPIRIT

## I Have Heard of a Land

by **Joyce Carol Thomas**, with illustrations by Floyd Cooper, HarperTrophy, 1998  
ISBN: 0064436179

### ▶ BLACK HISTORY

## Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

by **Doreen Rappaport**, with illustrations by Bryan Collier, Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2001  
ISBN: 0786807148

### ▶ THE NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

## Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message

by **Chief Jake Swamp**, illustrated by Erwin Printup, Jr., Lee & Low, 1995  
ISBN: 1880000547

### ▶ CREATING AN AMERICAN ART

## Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra

by **Andrea Davis Pinkney**, with illustrations by Brian Pinkney, Disney, 1998  
ISBN: 0786801786

### ▶ THE AMERICAN ATHLETE

## Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman

by **Kathleen Krull**, with illustrations by David Diaz, Harcourt/Voyager, 1996  
ISBN: 0152020985

# The Pioneer Spirit

## I Have Heard of a Land

by **Joyce Carol Thomas**, illustrated by **Floyd Cooper**  
HarperTrophy, 1998  
ISBN: 0064436179

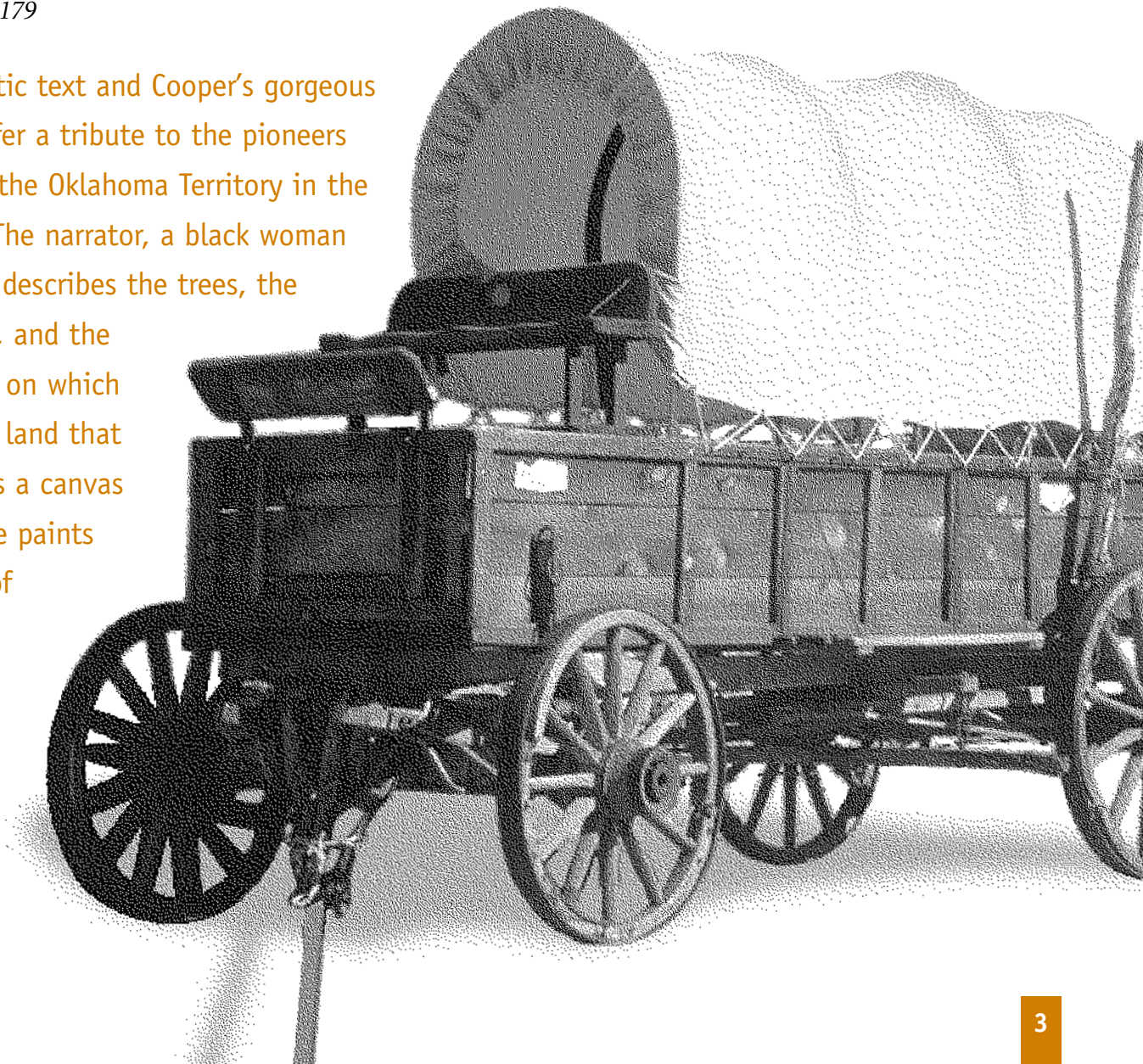
Thomas' poetic text and Cooper's gorgeous paintings offer a tribute to the pioneers who settled the Oklahoma Territory in the late 1800s. The narrator, a black woman on her own, describes the trees, the coyote's call, and the endless land on which to farm. The land that she settles is a canvas on which she paints her dreams of the future.

### What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children if they have ever heard of the Oklahoma Territory. Point out Oklahoma on a map.
- Let children call out familiar stories, television programs or films about pioneer life.
- Ask children what they think *pioneer* means.

### Things To Talk About During the Story

- Hold up the book and show the two pages that follow the title page. Ask children what they notice about the woman. Point out the poster hanging on the wall about *land runs*. The author's note explains the Oklahoma land runs of 1889 and 1893. Explain to the children how these pioneers acquired land without purchasing it.
- Point out how the seasons change in the illustrations. Ask children to examine the different kinds of work the pioneers do throughout the year.





## What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- The author uses beautiful language to describe the natural world: “the laughing creek,” “the syrup is honey stirred thick by a thousand honeybees.” Give children time to describe, using this type of “vivid” language, some of the things they see around them.
- This book describes a homemade swing. Ask children if they have ever swung on a homemade swing. If so, ask them to describe it — was it made out of wood and rope?
- In her journal, the narrator writes that she grinds corn for meal and makes sorghum syrup and hominy grits from scratch. Ask the children if they have ever tasted these foods. Describe what they taste like and how people eat them or use them to prepare other dishes. Try to bring in one of these foods for them to sample.

## Family Involvement

- Collect the new state quarters. Families can collect them in a book or on a map of the United States. With a map as a guide, children can collect the coins in the order the territories became states. This activity will help them to better understand the westward settlement of the United States.

- PBS aired a series called “Frontier House” in which three families spent five months on the Montana frontier. Watch this series together for a deeper understanding of pioneer life.
- Have a family discussion about what life might have been like during the late 1800s. Make a list of all the things your home has now that it would not have had back then

## Community Connection

- Provide a pancake breakfast for the families in your group, complete with grits and sorghum syrup. Children can help send out invitations, set the table, and serve the guests.
- Research Habitat for Humanity. Send for some information or invite a speaker to visit.

## Additional Titles

**Children of the Wild West** by Russell Freedman, Clarion, 1990  
*ISBN: 0395547857*

The photographs in this book document the lives of pioneer and Native American children during the settling of the West.

**Johnny Appleseed: A Tall Tale** retold by Steven Kellogg, Morrow, 1988  
*ISBN: 0688064175*

Kellogg offers a retelling of the life of the legendary Johnny Appleseed, who spent his life planting apple orchards for new settlers.

**Little House on the Prairie** by Laura Ingalls Wilder, with illustrations by Garth Williams, HarperCollins, revised edition 1953  
*ISBN: 0064400026*

Wilder’s view of pioneer life is beloved, and in this novel she continues the saga of Laura and her family, begun in *Little House in the Big Woods*.

**Our Only May Amelia** by Jennifer L. Holm, HarperTrophy, 1999  
*ISBN: 0064408566*

This Newbery Honor book set in 1899, tells of the adventurous and headstrong May Amelia, who lives with her seven brothers. Will she become a “proper lady”?

**Sarah, Plain and Tall** by Patricia MacLachlan, HarperTrophy, 1985  
*ISBN: 0064402053*

Set in the Midwest during the late 19th century, Anna and Caleb meet their father’s new mail-order bride, Sarah, who’s come all the way from Maine.

**Wagon Train** by Sydelle A. Kramer, with illustrations by Deborah Kogan Ray, Grosset & Dunlap, 1997  
*ISBN: 0448413345*

In 1848, a family makes the long trip from Missouri to California in a covered wagon.

## Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

by **Doreen Rappaport, with  
illustrations by Bryan Collier**  
Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, 2001  
ISBN: 0786807148

Dramatic paper collage and watercolor illustrations of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a child and as a grown man reveal the strength and conviction of his character. This book dramatizes the will of Black Americans to fight for their rights that were denied for generations.

### What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Hold up the book and ask children if they know who is featured on the cover.
- Ask children if they have heard of Martin Luther King, Jr. Show the endpapers filled with stained glass images. Does this make them think of a specific place? Explain that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a minister.
- Set the time period of this picture-book biography, and let children know that this special man has made the world better for us today.

### Things To Talk About During the Story

- This book opens during Jim Crow days, when blacks and whites were kept separate by law. Explain that signs like the one shown in the book (“Whites Only”) were posted on water fountains, restaurants, restrooms, hotels, etc.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. Point out India on a map or globe and explain that Gandhi believed in *peaceful* resistance, or arguing for something without using violence.
- Ask children if they know who Rosa Parks is. Talk about how Martin Luther King, Jr. supported and eventually came to lead the Civil Rights movement. Explain the meaning of *civil rights*.



Hulton Getty Photo Archive



## What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Try to obtain a recording of King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Listen to the speech together.
- Give children time to make their own portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr., using materials of their own choice.
- Compile a list of ways the children can help make the world a better place. Include things they can do now and things they want to do when they grow up. Reproduce this list and send it home with the children.

## Family Involvement

- Celebrate Martin Luther King Day (a National holiday) or Black History Month in a meaningful way, such as reading about a famous Black American or reading the works of Black American poets such as Gwendolyn Brooks or Langston Hughes.
- Encourage a family visit to the library to learn more about Rosa Parks, Gandhi, or the Civil Rights movement.
- Hang some quotes by Martin Luther King, Jr. on the refrigerator or some other highly visible place.

## Community Connection

- Visit the communities around you. Shop at different grocery stores. Eat at different restaurants. Explore the neighborhood. Check the new census data about which ethnicities are living in your city.
- Support the idea of a sister school. Perhaps with the help of RIF's national headquarters, your program can link up with another RIF site across town.

## Additional Titles

**A Band of Angels** by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by Raul Colon, Atheneum, 1999

ISBN: 0689810628

A young girl imagines the life of her great-great-grandmother, who formed a touring gospel-singing group to raise money for Fisk University.

**Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad** by Pamela Duncan Edwards, with illustrations by Henry Cole, HarperTrophy, 1997

ISBN: 0064435199

From the point of view of animals at night, this book tells the story of a young boy's successful escape from slavery.

**Dear Benjamin Banneker** by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brain Pinkney, Harcourt/Voyager, 1994

ISBN: 0152018921

Born free, Benjamin Banneker grew up to be many things; this story tells how he wrote Thomas Jefferson about the condition of his people in slavery.

**Freedom Like Sunlight: Praisesongs for Black Americans**

by J. Patrick Lewis, with illustrations by John Thompson, Creative Editions, 2000

ISBN: 1568461631

Through poetry and stunning art, this book celebrates the lives of 13 famous Black Americans.

**Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman** by Alan Schroeder, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney, Puffin, 1996

ISBN: 014056196X

Beautifully illustrated in watercolor, this picture book provides a fictional account of Harriet Tubman's childhood.

**The People Could Fly** by Virginia Hamilton, with illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon, Knopf, 1985

ISBN: 0679843361

This collection of Black American folk stories is poignant, humorous, and exquisite fun.



# The Native American Experience

## Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message

by Chief Jake Swamp, illustrated by Erwin  
Printup, Jr.

Lee & Low, 1995

ISBN: 1880000547

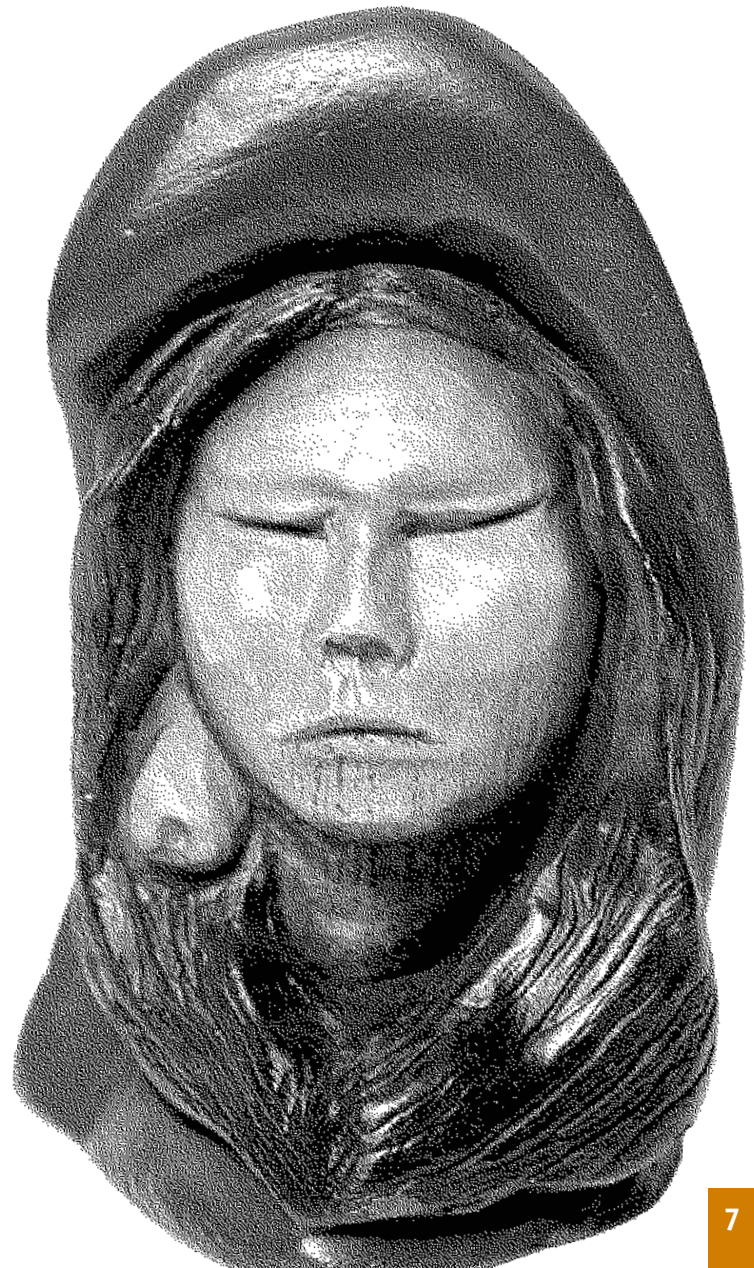
This picture book asks its audience to respect the world and all its living things. The strong artwork fills double-page spreads and teaches much about gratitude. Readers will find a new perspective on the place of human beings in the world. A basic version of the book's text in the Mohawk language is appended.

### What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children if they can name any Native American tribes. If there are any Native children in the program, let them talk about their heritage.
- Ask children to call out the first thing they do in the morning. Write these answers on the blackboard or a large piece of paper.

### Things To Talk About During the Story

- In his book, Chief Swamp offers thanks to Mother Earth. Ask children what they know about Mother Earth.
- Chief Swamp also thanks Mother Earth for providing "good medicine herbs, for healing us when we are sick." Discuss natural medicines vs. modern medicine. Explain that many medicinal treatments are still derived from plants.
- Chief Swamp gives names to natural things, such as "Four Winds," "Grandfather Thunder Beings," "Elder Brother Sun," and "Grandmother Moon." What happens when something is named?





## Family Involvement

- Write a “good morning message” together and post it on the refrigerator.
- Learn more about the Iroquois or Six Nations peoples (Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscarora) from upstate New York and Canada. Or, learn more about the native communities in your region. Begin your search at the local library.
- Native American names often have ancestral significance. Discuss how and why your family members were given their names. Find out if the names have significant meanings or translations.

## Community Connection

- Take a walk in your community. Point out the beautiful things in nature. Ask the children what is special to them? If Chief Swamp were in their community, what do the children think he would be thankful for.
- Invite an environmentalist to talk to your group. Children can learn more about the environment and why we need to all be stewards of the Earth.

## Additional Titles

**Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message from Chief Seattle** by Susan Jeffers, Dutton, 1991  
*ISBN: 014054514X*

Jeffers’ delicate illustrations illuminate Chief Seattle’s 1850’s plea to protect the web of life: “Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.”

**The Good Luck Cat** by Joy Harjo, with illustrations by Paul Lee, Harcourt, 2000  
*ISBN: 0152321977*

A contemporary Native American child is the protagonist in this picture-book about pet ownership.

**Jingle Dancer** by Cynthia Leitich Smith, Morrow, 2000  
*ISBN: 068816241X*

Jenna, a contemporary Native American girl of Muscogee and Ojibway heritage, prepares for her performance of a traditional dance.

**The People Shall Continue** by Sharol Graves, with illustrations by Simon J. Ortiz, Children’s Book Press, 1988  
*ISBN: 0892391251*

A solid, short history of Native American peoples from creation to the present.

**Powwow** by George Ancona, Harcourt, 1993  
*ISBN: 0152632697*

Ancona’s beautiful photographs celebrate a modern-day powwow.

## What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Appended to the book is the text of the book in the Mohawk language, “provided to give readers of all backgrounds a sense of this ancient and still-evolving Iroquoian language.” Try reading these words.
- Ask children if this thanksgiving message reminds them of any message that they have heard.

# Creating an American Art

## Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra

by **Andrea Davis Pinkney**, with  
illustrations by **Brian Pinkney**  
Disney, 1998  
ISBN: 0786801786

This lively picture book biography of jazz great Duke Ellington is filled with bright scratchboard pictures that bring the energy of Ellington to a young audience. The Pinkneys tell the story of his youth in Washington, D.C., his career, and his 1943 debut at Carnegie Hall. Duke Ellington is one of America's great musical influences; use his life to talk about other great American artists.

### What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children if they have ever heard of Duke Ellington or a type of music called *swing*. Hold up the book and explain that Ellington played piano, and that he wrote (or *composed*) and performed his own original music.
- Place this story in a time frame for children: he was born more than 100 years ago, etc.

### What To Talk About During the Story

- Play a famous piece of Ellington music for the children and let them move freely to it as you read the text.



## What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Ask children to name their favorite musician or favorite song.
- Talk about how there are always talented people that push various art forms forward and help them grow.

## Family Involvement

- Encourage children to ask their parents and grandparents (and caregivers) about their favorite musicians, writers, or artists. Also, encourage them to play the music for their children.

- Start playing a musical instrument together. Families can begin by purchasing an inexpensive instrument, such as a harmonica.
- Join a choir together. Or help start a choir at the children's school.
- Volunteer to be "an art parent" in the school. This would require one period a week (or some other agreed-upon amount of time) during which the parent comes into the classroom to share a piece of art or a piece of music with the children. The volunteer also provides a short lesson about the artist and why the piece is significant.

## Community Connection

- Attend a formal jazz concert or a free concert in the park.
- Invite a local jazz musician to visit your group.
- Visit the music section of the local library, and let children explore and check out some music to play at home.
- Ask the school music teacher to do a unit on jazz.

## Additional Titles

**Charlie Parker Played Be Bop** by Chris Raschka, Orchard, 1992  
ISBN: 0531070956

In this innovative picture book, a rhythmic text inspired by Charlie Parker's "A Night in Tunisia" brings jazz music to life. Also note Raschka's *Mysterious Thelonious* about the jazz pianist Thelonious Monk.

**Emily** by Michael Bedard, with illustrations by Barbara Cooney, Dragonfly, 1992  
ISBN: 0440417406

A little girl moves in to the house across the street from Emily Dickinson and has a strange but wonderful encounter with the famous poet.

**Henry Hikes to Fitchburg** by D. B. Johnson, Houghton, 2000  
ISBN: 0395968674

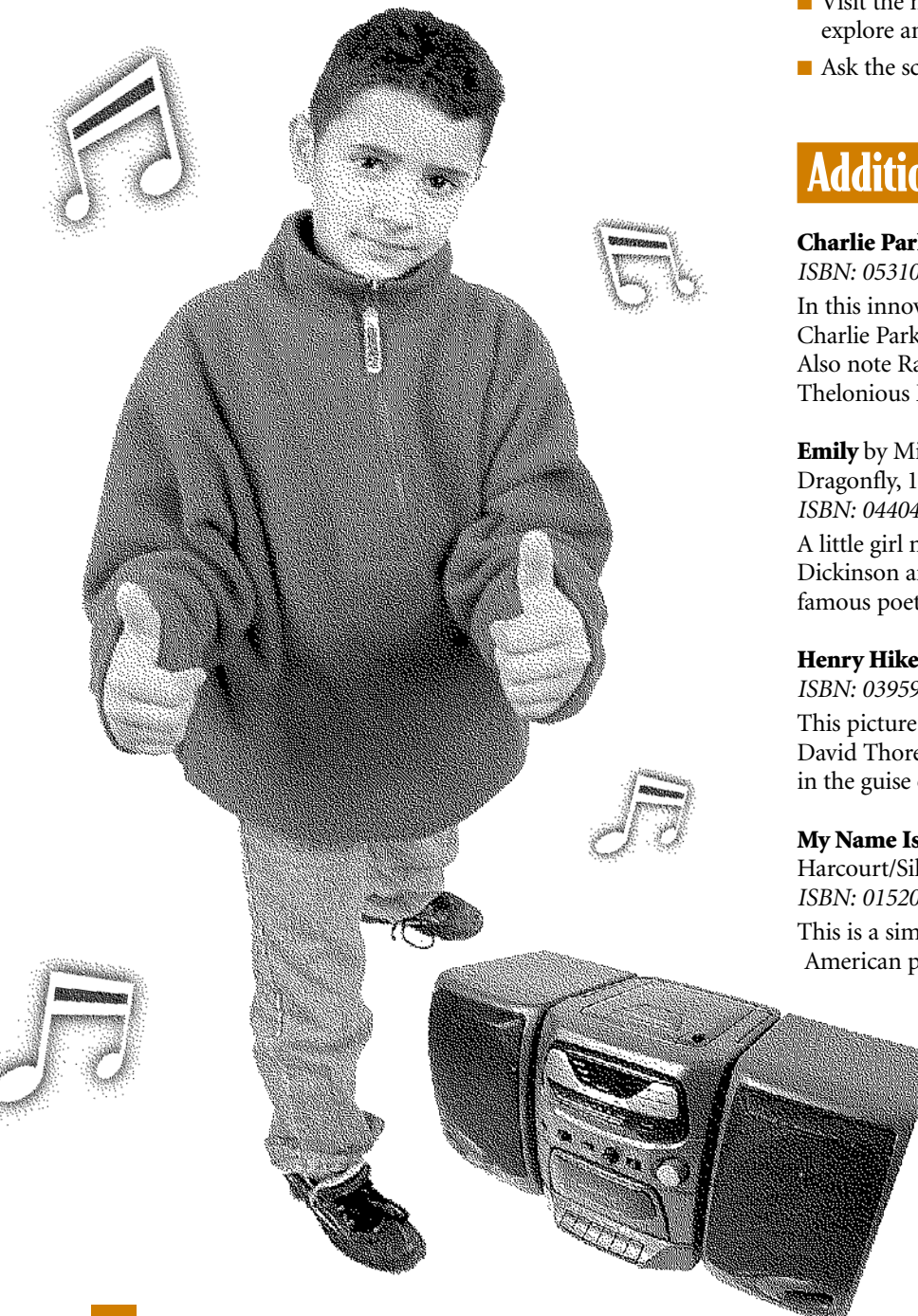
This picture book introduces the famous American writers Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the guise of animal friends.

**My Name Is Georgia: A Portrait**, by Jeanette Winter, Harcourt/Silver Whistle, 1998  
ISBN: 015201649X

This is a simple picture book biography about the famed American painter, Georgia O'Keeffe.

**Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina** by Maria Tallchief (with Rosemary Wells), illustrated by Gary Kelley, Viking, 1999  
ISBN: 0142300187

The life of the Osage dancer from her childhood on a reservation until she sets off to follow her dream of performing with the Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo.



## Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman

By **Kathleen Krull**, illustrated by **David Diaz**  
Harcourt/Voyager, 1996  
ISBN:0152020985

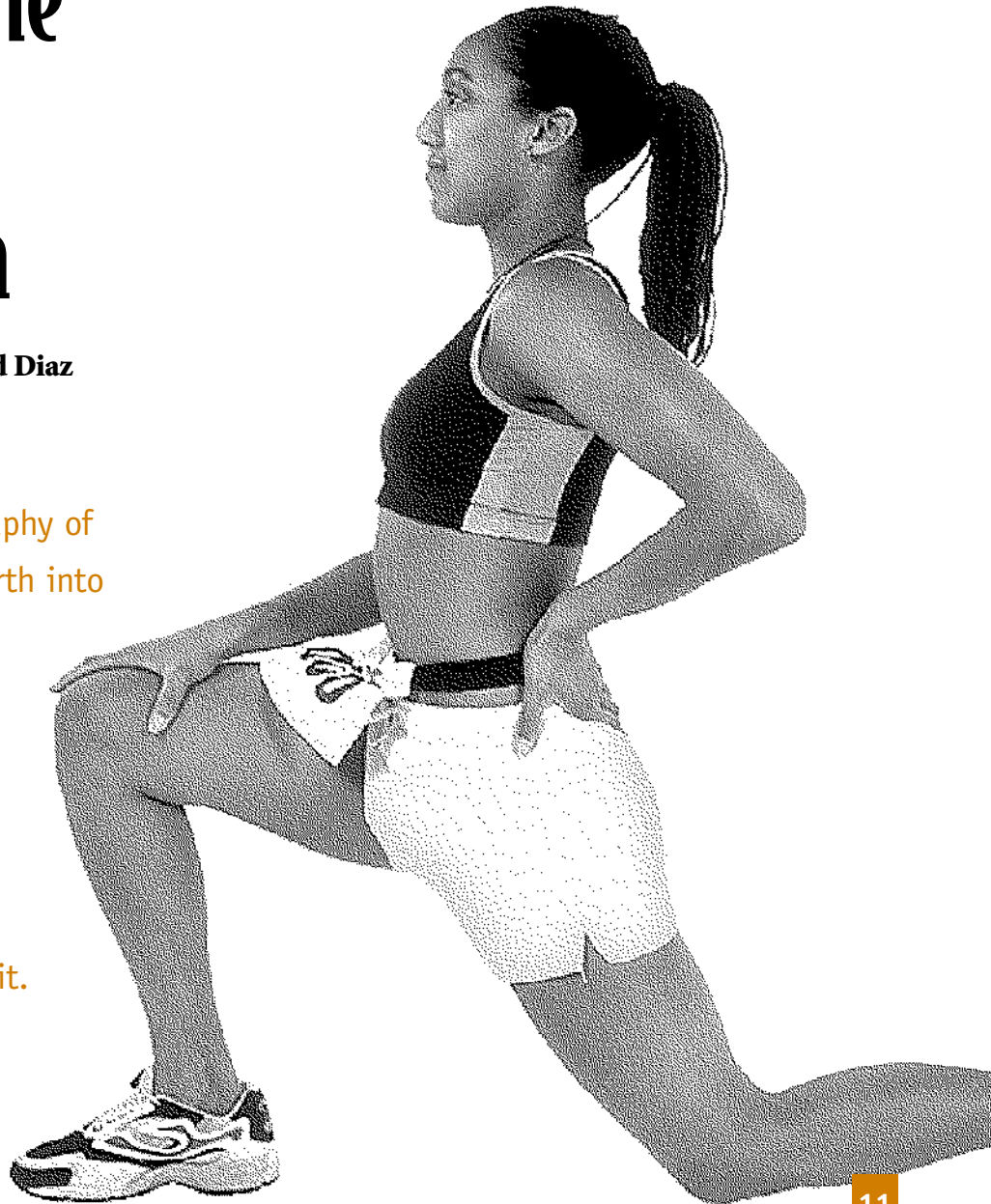
Krull's popular picture book biography of Wilma Rudolph begins with her birth into a large family, her struggle with polio, and her commitment to walk again. The story concludes with Rudolph's winning three gold medals at the 1960 Olympics in Rome. Diaz's stylized artwork captures this special woman's spirit.

### What To Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children to call out their favorite or most revered sports stars. Have them explain what they admire about this person. How many of these athletes are American? How many are alive today?
- Ask children what sports they enjoy playing and where they play them.
- Set the time period of this book for the children so they know when Wilma Rudolph lived.

### Things To Talk About During the Story

- Rudolph was a tiny baby and no one expected her to live long. Discuss with children why access to medical care and preventive medicine was not available in Tennessee in 1940.
- Rudolph was stricken with polio when she was five years old. Discuss polio and how children today are vaccinated against it.





## What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Ask children what it took for Wilma to become a gold medallist. Talk about the training it takes to become an Olympic athlete.
- Do a bit of research on other Olympic athletes. Talk about the sports that are part of the Olympics and whether they are part of the summer or winter Olympics.
- Talk about setting goals and determination; ask the children what motivates them to accomplish their goals. Make a list of classroom goals and see if you can accomplish them as a group.

## Family Involvement

- Learn a sport together. Play a game of one-on-one basketball or tennis, or go swimming.
- Encourage families to attend their children's sporting events.
- Watch the Olympic games together on television.

## Community Connection

- Read the Sports section of the daily newspaper together every day, or on the weekends.
- Find out if a former Olympic athlete lives in your community. Invite them in to talk about their experience.
- Attend a middle school or high school sporting event such as a baseball, soccer, or football game or a swim meet.

## Additional Titles

**America's Champion Swimmer: Gertrude Ederle** by David A. Adler, illustrated by Terry Widener, Harcourt, 2000  
*ISBN: 0152019693*

Widener's evocative illustrations and Adler's exciting text present the highlights of Ederle's life.

**Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888** by Ernest Lawrence Thayer, illustrated by Christopher Bing, Handprint Books, 2000  
*ISBN: 1929766009*

Historical facts, a scrapbook-like design, and Thayer's famous poem combine to reveal the world of baseball in 1888.

**Home Run: The Story of Babe Ruth** by Robert Burleigh, with illustrations by Mike Wimmer, Harcourt/Silver Whistle, 1998  
*ISBN: 0152009701*

Realistic oil paintings convey the awe and excitement that people must have felt when Babe Ruth stepped up to the plate.

**Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man** by David Adler, with illustrations by Terry Widener, Harcourt/Voyager, 1997  
*ISBN: 0152024832*

This is a simply told biography of the heroic Yankee who fought a debilitating illness.

**Teammates** by Peter Golenbock, with illustrations by Paul Bacon, Harcourt/Voyager, 1990  
*ISBN: 0152842861*

Here is the inspiring story of Jackie Robinson, the first black baseball player in the Major Leagues, and his teammate and friend, Pee Wee Reese.

# RIF'S MISSION

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate older children to read. Through a national network of teachers, parents, and community volunteers, RIF programs provide books and other essential literacy resources to children at no cost to them or their families. RIF's highest priority is the nation's neediest children, from infancy to age 11.

## ABOUT RIF

Founded in 1966 in Washington, D.C., RIF is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit children's literacy organization, with programs operating nationwide in 20,000 schools, child-care centers, libraries, hospitals, clinics, migrant worker camps, Head Start and Even Start programs, homeless shelters, and detention centers.

RIF serves more than 5 million children through a network of more than 400,000 volunteers. Two-thirds of the children served by RIF have economic or learning needs that put them at risk of failing to achieve basic educational goals.

Through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, RIF provides federal matching funds to thousands of school and community-based organizations that sponsor RIF programs. RIF also receives private support from hundreds of corporations and foundations, thousands of local organizations and businesses, and countless individuals.

RIF distributes about 15 million books a year. In 2001, RIF celebrated its 35th anniversary and the milestone of placing more than 200 million books in the hands and homes of America's children.



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