

SAG-AFTRA FOUNDATION PRESENTS

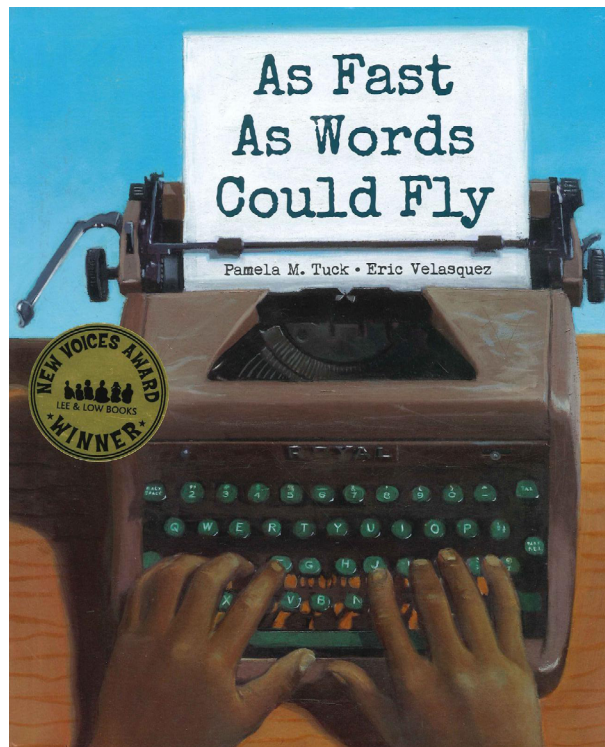
Storyline Online

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A TEACHER'S GUIDE

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 3/4



AS FAST AS WORDS COULD FLY

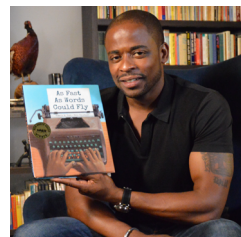
WRITTEN BY PAMELA M. TUCK
ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC VELASQUEZ

Watch the video of actor

Dulé Hill

reading this story at

storylineonline.net



ABOUT THIS STORY

SYNOPSIS

Young Mason Steele takes pride in turning his father’s excited ramblings about the latest civil rights incidents into handwritten business letters. One day Pa comes home with a gift from his civil rights group: a typewriter. Thrilled with the present, Mason spends all his spare time teaching himself to type. Soon he knows where every letter on the keyboard is located.

When the civil rights group wins a school desegregation case, Mason learns that now he will be attending a formerly all-white high school. Despite his fears and injustice from the students and faculty, Mason perseveres. He does well in school—especially in his typing class. And when he competes in the county typing tournament, Mason decides to take a stand, using his skills to triumph over prejudice and break racial barriers.

THEMES IN THE STORY

History, Civil Rights/Discrimination, Overcoming Obstacles, Heroism, Conflict-resolution

TALK IT UP!

Use the following questions to discuss the themes of the story:

- In 1954, the US Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* that “racial segregation” of students in public schools was “unconstitutional”. Discuss “racial segregation”. Does segregation exist today? Give examples of how humans may be segregated by color, ethnicity, gender and/or religion.
- Ten years after school systems around the country were ordered to desegregate, there were still areas of the country that had not made changes. It took the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to strengthen enforcement and enable progress of desegregation. Discuss “civil rights”. Give an example of discrimination and describe how you would feel if you were treated poorly.
- Patrick and Daniel were friendly to Mason and his brothers when they were picking tobacco in the summer. When Mason and his brothers got on the school bus to Belvoir High, though, Patrick and Daniel ignored them. Why do you think they behaved this way? Have you ever experienced something similar? What happened? How did you react?
- Mason was the fastest typist in his class and selected to represent the school in a typing tournament. Mason was hesitant to accept, but then he heard Pa’s words, “Somebody’s got to make a change.” Explain what this phrase means to you. Why do you think it inspired Mason?
- When Mason was announced as the winner of the typing contest, no one cheered. Why did the audience respond that way? Would you have cheered? Why or why not?

READING AND WRITING

BEFORE READING

Standards: CCSS.SL.3.1, SL.4.1

1. Build background/tap knowledge: Lead students in a discussion about segregation.
2. Show students the front cover of the book and point to the typewriter. Ask students:
What do you know about typewriters?
How is a typewriter like a computer? How is it different?
Why do you think the story is called *As Fast As Words Could Fly*?
What do you think the story will be about?
3. Discuss historical fiction with the class and tell them that this story is based on the real life experiences of the author's father during the 1960s.

DURING READING

Reading Focus: Characters, setting, plot

Standards: CCSS.SL.3.2, SL.3.3, RL.3.2; CCSS.SL.4.2, SL.4.3, RL.4.2

Objectives: Students will listen to story and answer teacher posed questions appropriately.


Procedure: Stop periodically to ask questions/pose prompts related to characters, setting and plot such as:

1. Who are the main characters in the story?
2. Where does the story take place? What information does the author provide that helps build the setting?
3. What's the problem in the story?
4. Describe how the characters attempt to solve the problem. What additional problems did they encounter?
5. How did the story end? What lesson do you think Mason learned from his experience?

AFTER READING

Standards: CCSS.RL.3.2; CCSS.RL.4.2

Objectives: Students will use a story map to identify the characters, setting, plot, and important details in the story.

Materials: Story Map graphic organizer ( **Google It:** Search for story map that best meet the needs of your students)

Procedure: Give out the selected story map and discuss with students. Have students work as a whole group, individually, or with a partner to complete the story map. After completion, allow time for students to use their map to retell the story to a partner.

READING RESPONSE

Standards: CCSS.RL.2.1; RL.3.1, CCSS.SL.2.2; SL.3.2

Objectives: Students will answer the prompt using at least two details from text to support the response.

Materials: Writing paper

Procedure: If necessary, review the process for answering a response in a complete sentence before students begin.

Prompt 1: The story takes place during the Civil Rights Movement. How did people living during this time period feel about black students attending a white school? Use details from the story to support your response.

Prompt 2: The book begins with the sentence, “Trouble was brewing in Greenville, North Carolina.” To what kind of trouble is the sentence referring? Use details from the story to support your response.

WRITING

Standards: CCSS.ELA.W.3.2; CCSS.ELA.W.4.2

Objective 1: Students will use their completed story map to write a summary of the story using grade appropriate sentence structure and spelling.

Materials: Completed Story Map Graphic Organizer (above activity)

Procedure: Have students use their completed story map to write a summary. Remind students to use transition or sequence words when writing the summary.

Objective 2: Students will write a journal entry from the point of view of Mason describing how he felt when he won the typing contest.

Materials: Example of journal entry, paper

Procedure: If necessary, review or teach the parts and purpose of a journal entry and point of view. Have students complete the entry independently.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

STEM

COMPARE/CONTRAST — An electric typewriter with a computer using a Venn diagram.

- What are some jobs that use computers today?
- Are there any situations where typewriters would still be useful today?

 **GOOGLE IT** —

Parts of a Computer Diagram and Worksheets for both computers and laptops. Have students label the parts on the diagram and locate each part on a classroom computer.

The History of the Computer or visit Livescience.com. Have students make a timeline showing how computers have changed. Ask students to choose 5 events that they consider the most important/interesting to include in their timeline.

Words per minute – Have students research to find records for fastest typing.

Typing Test Games or Typing Test – ind sites that allow students to practice and record typing skills.

TYPING TOURNAMENT —

After students have had time to practice typing, hold a class typing tournament.

SOCIAL STUDIES

OBJECTIVE —

Students will explore and understand that it is important to stand up for what is right even when it's not the popular thing to do.

MATERIALS —

Chart paper

VOCABULARY: DISCRIMINATION, SOCIAL JUSTICE, BULLYING, UPSTANDER —

1. Ask students to recall how the teachers and the students treated Mason and his brothers. Lead students in a brief discussion about discrimination and what it feels like.
2. Remind students that Patrick and Daniel Jones were friendly with Mason and his brothers, yet they didn't stand up for them on the bus.
3. Read the following excerpt from the story:
Henry spotted a familiar face. "Hey, Patrick, he said. Patrick didn't answer. He just looked straight ahead. "You Steele boys are asking for trouble," Daniel whispered.
 - Ask students if they were surprised by the way Patrick and Daniel treated the boys? Why do you think this happened?
 - Ask students to think about a time when they did not take action when they witnessed something unfair. Have them share their story with a partner. Ask students to consider the following: Why did you feel uncomfortable about speaking up?
 - After hearing students' responses, explain the term "Upstander".

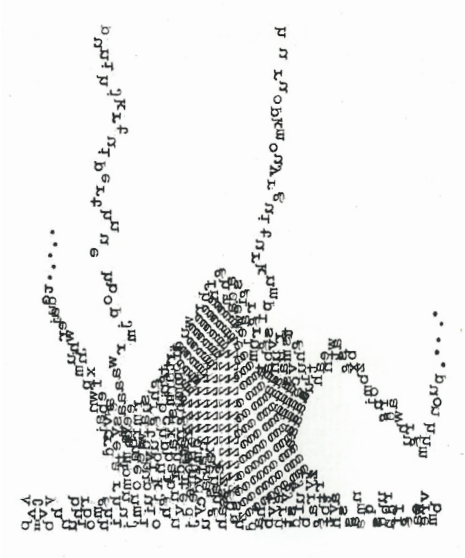
- Engage students in role-plays or discussion about how they can interrupt bullying or other oppressive behaviors using their own experiences or provide examples for discussion.
- Generate a classroom list: **What do I do if I notice someone is not being treated fairly?** List student responses and post in classroom.

ART

Students use letters, numbers and symbols on a keyboard to create pictures.

GOOGLE IT

For information and ideas: *Typewriter Art, Typewriter artist, Paul Smith*



ABOUT US

ABOUT STORYLINE ONLINE

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation's children's literacy website *Storyline Online* streams imaginatively produced videos featuring celebrated actors to help inspire a love of reading. Storyline Online receives millions of views every month in hundreds of countries. Visit Storyline Online at storylineonline.net.

ABOUT THE SAG-AFTRA FOUNDATION

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation provides vital assistance and educational programming to the professionals of SAG-AFTRA while serving the public at large through its signature children's literacy programs. Founded in 1985, the Foundation is a national non-profit organization, independent from SAG-AFTRA, and relies solely on support from grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual contributions to maintain our programs and create new ones. Visit sagaftra.foundation.

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