



The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read

Written by Rita Lorraine Hubbard and Illustrated by Oge Mora

The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read gives us a glimpse of what life was like for Mary Walker, who was born a slave in 1848 and freed at 15 years old. She worked many jobs over her lifetime and always strived for more. At the age of 116, Mary accomplished her lifelong goal of learning to read. Mary is a real-life lesson in resilience and forgiveness.

READ

Before: Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *what do you think this story is about?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings.

During: Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in everyday conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words

plantation - a large area of land, especially in a hot part of the world where crops (such as cotton) are grown

Emancipation Proclamation - led to the proposal and ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which formally abolished slavery throughout the United States.

Freedmen's Bureau - created by Congress for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees to provide food, shelter, clothing, medical services and land to displaced Southerners, including newly freed slaves.

evangelist - a person, and especially a preacher, who tries to convince people to become Christian

sharecropper - a farmer, especially in the southern U.S., who raises crops for the owner of a piece of land and is paid a portion of the money from the sale of the crops

After: What would Mary think about when she would watch birds in the sky?

What rules did Mary have to follow on the plantation?

When Mary was free, what did she dream about learning?

How did the Emancipation Proclamation change the lives of Mary and her family?

Who did the Freedmen's Bureau help and how did they help people?

What did the evangelist give Mary? What did she say was inside it?

How many decades did Mary work as a sharecropper and have odd jobs to help her family?

How old was Mary when she finally signed up for a reading class?

Mary compared riding in an airplane to what?

According to Mary, you're never too old to do what?



DO

Make a Timeline

Materials:

paper
markers

Make a timeline celebrating the life of Mary Walker, beginning with her birth in 1848, and adding the significant personal and historic moments that occurred during her lifetime.



@BOOKITPROGRAM
BOOKITPROGRAM.COM

This printable is reproducible.

The Pizza Hut name, logos, and related marks are trademarks of Pizza Hut, LLC