

M.C. Higgins, The Great
A 6th Grade Literacy Focus Unit
Created by
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FEATURED SELECTION:

M.C. Higgins, The Great by Virginia Hamilton. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1974.

- Mayo Cornelius Higgins or M.C. for short is a young African-American boy, whose home is on Sarah Mountain by the Ohio River. M.C. lives with other African-American families. However his best friend is a young white boy from the other side of the river. M.C. and Ben love playing together but always have to sneak around so that their parents don't find out. M.C. dreams of escaping with his family and friends. One day M.C. thinks he sees their way out but in turn gets them in more trouble.

RELATED MATERIALS:

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.

- This book will be used in the applying stage to get another view on slavery and to incorporate art into this unit.

W.E.B Du Bois by Virginia Hamilton. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1972.

- This book is by the same author as the featured reading, and will be placed in a book basket for students to look at during free time.

The House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1968.

- This book is by the same author and will be available for students to look at during their free time.

Cousins by Virginia Hamilton. New York: Philomel Books 1990.

- This book is by the same author and will be available for students to look at during their free time.

The Time-Ago Tales of Jahdu by Virginia Hamilton. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969.

- This book will be used as a book that the students can look at when they have free time.

Many Thousand Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom by Virginia Hamilton. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.

- This book will be as a read aloud book, in the pre-reading stage to provide students with some background knowledge.

GOALS:

- Students will examine North America and its main features.
- Students will examine the Underground Railroad. (where it was, what it was used for, the effect it had on the U.S., and who the main people where that used it)
- Students will gain a better understanding of the life of slaves in the United States.
- Students will learn about different poetry and create their own poems on slavery.
- Students will learn more about plant life and how cotton grows.
- Students will gain a better understand of what the games and songs that the slaves played.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

Reading: 6.1.1-Reading aloud grade-level-appropriate poems and literary and informational texts fluently and accurately and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.

6.1.3-Recognize the origins and meaning of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing.

6.3.4-Define how tone or meanings are conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, alliteration and rhyme.

Math: 6.6.1- Organize and display single-variable data in appropriate graphs and stem-and-leaf plots, and explain which types of graphs are appropriate for various data sets.

6.6.5-Use data to estimate the probability of future events.

Science: 6.4.10- Describe how life on earth depends on energy from the sun.

6.5.4- Demonstrate how graphs may help to show patterns-such as trends, varying rates of change, gaps, or clusters- which can be used to make predictions.

Social Studies: 6.3.5-Give examples and describe the formation of important

river deltas, mountains and bodies of water in Europe and the Americas.

UNIT PLAN:

Pre-reading:

- Activity: Grand Conversation (Oral Language)
 - Students will brainstorm together to create a list on the blackboard of what they already know about slavery in the United States.
 - Monitoring: I will monitor this by watching the students work together and facilitate the conversation.
 - Assessment: I will make sure every student writes at least one idea on the board to contribute to the discussion.
 - Grouping: Whole Class
- Activity: Teacher Read-Aloud
 - *Many Thousand Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom* by Virginia Hamilton
 - Monitoring: I will monitor this by watching the students and making sure everyone is listening
 - Assessment: Quick write over the book that was just read.
 - Grouping: Whole Class, Individual

Reading:

- Activity: Different types of reading (Student Reading)
 - Students will have assigned reading which some will be done in class as independent, buddy, guided, shared, and aloud.
 - Monitoring: I will monitor this by observing the students and jotting quick notes about what each student is doing.
 - Assessment: Students will write a quick journal response about what they just read after each reading assignment.
 - Grouping: Independent, buddy, small group, large group

Responding:

- Activity: Journal writing (Written Language)
 - Students will write in their journals after each reading. They can write a brief summary or their thoughts on what they read.
 - Monitoring: I will monitor this by going around the room and quickly check off each journal (only check for completion)
 - Assessment: At the end of the lesson the students will be assessed on whether they completed the assignment after every reading.
 - Grouping: Individual

Exploring:

- Activity: Poems (Written Language)

- Students will look back in the book and write poems on what it was like to be a slave or to be a friend of a slave. Students can write from Ben or M.C.'s point of view and may write about their experiences or the settings.
 - Monitoring: I will be walking around the room helping students with their poems.
 - Assessment: The students will be assessed by a teacher made rubric.
 - Grouping: Individual
- Activity: Singing African-American Slave Songs and Play Games (Music and PE)
 - Students will look back through the book especially the last chapter and will sing and play different African-American games
 - Monitoring: I will quickly jot some notes down making sure everyone is participating.
 - Assessment: I will have the students complete a quick write before and after the activities. Before the activities I would like the students to write about some of the songs and games in the book, and after they will write about the different games and song that they participated in that day.
 - Grouping: Individual and Small Groups.

Applying:

- Activity: Freedom Quilts (Art)
 - Students will create their own freedom quilts.
 - Monitoring: I will monitor the students by walking around the room making sure everyone is on task.
 - Assessment: Students will be assessed by a teacher made rubric.
 - Grouping: Individual
- Activity: Graphing (Math)
 - Students will compare the total number of slaves to the population of the states. Students will also create graphs and charts representing the number of slaves in the Southern U.S.
 - Monitoring: I will watch the students as they work making sure they are staying on task.
 - Assessment: Students will complete a story problem worksheet and several graphs showing the data they found.
 - Grouping: Partners
- Activity: Growing Cotton (Science)
 - Students will look at how cotton grows and the different environments. The students will also look at growing patterns and weather patterns to see how those affected the crops and the slave trade.
 - Monitoring: I will monitor this by watching the student's progress through mini-lessons and worksheets.
 - Assessment: Students will be assessed by worksheets.
 - Grouping: Whole Class and Individual
- Activity: Mapping the Underground Railroad (Social Studies and oral language)

- Students will look and many different maps and books to gain a better understanding of the Underground Railroad. Then they will actually draw the route on a map showing what main geological features that either helped it or made it harder for the slaves to escape.
 - Monitoring: This will be a three day project and students will be checked on their progress daily.
 - Assessment: students will give a brief presentation on what they found.
 - Grouping: Small Groups (4 to 6 students to each group)
- Activity: Talk Show (Culminating Activity and oral language)
 - The students will create and perform a live talk show. Students will act as the characters in the story and answer questions from the audience.
 - Monitoring: I will be making sure all groups are working on task and everyone is contributing to the group.
 - Assessment: I will observe the talk shows and evaluate the questions the audience members ask and the way the guest answer the questions. Every audience member must ask at least one question and every character must answer at least one question. Students will also turn in to a copy of their outline.
 - Grouping: Small Groups

TIME SCHEDULE:

Day 1 Brainstorming Teacher read aloud <i>Many thousand gone...</i> Read chap 1	Day 2 Chapter 2	Day 3 In class read chapter 3	Day 4 Chapter 4 Read <i>Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt</i> and start quilting project	Day 5 Chapter 5 In class discussion Quilts Due
Day 6 Chapter 6	Day 7 Chapter 7 Introduce poems	Day 8 Chapter 8 Introduce Talk show project Another mini-lesson on poetry Work on poems	Day 9 Read teacher aloud chapter 9 Read poems in class Turn in Poems	Day 10 Chapter 10 In class discussion

Day 11 Chapter 11 Start graph project	Day 12 Chapter 12	Day 13 Teacher reads aloud chapter 13 Turn in Graph Project	Day 14 In class read chapter 14 Quick write on songs and games	Day 15 Fun Day outside (Songs and Games) Quick write on days activities
Day 16 Start underground railroad project	Day 17 Cotton lesson Work on underground railroad presentation	Day 18 Present underground railroad	Day 19 Work on talk shows	Day 20 Present talk shows

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- ___ Poems
- ___ Journal entries after each reading and 3 quick writes
- ___ Quilt Square
- ___ Graphs and Worksheet
- ___ Cotton Worksheets
- ___ Maps and Presentation
- ___ Talk Show Outline

IDEAS TAKEN FROM:

[Http://www.courses.dsu.edu/eled360/publish/angieb.htm](http://www.courses.dsu.edu/eled360/publish/angieb.htm)