

BLM Freedom Flights: Curriculum Arc Outline

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Students will identify examples of figurative language by reading <u>Tar Beach</u> in order to gain a deeper understanding of how figurative language helps readers better understand the text.	Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in <i>The People Could Fly</i> by identifying specific word choice in order to determine the mood of certain sections of the text.	Students will analyze the characters of Cassie in <u>Tar Beach</u> and Toby in <i>The People Could Fly</i> by creating a Venn Diagram in order to participate in a Socratic Seminar.	Students will write their own folktales by using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences in order to express freedoms they wish to have.	Students will relate their personal experiences to make art by drawing a picture of themselves flying and folding it into a paper airplane in order to create the metaphor of them having freedom.

Written By Kasey Carey klcarey@bcps.k12.md.us

Recommended for Grades 6-8

References

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/flying-freedom-beach-people-32.html?tab=4#session1>

<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-now/2014/02/18/putting-books-to-work-tar-beach>

Lesson 1: Figurative Language with Tar Beach

Standards

RL4 CCR Anchor Standard: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

BLM Principles

2. Empathy: We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

9. Intergenerational: We are committed to fostering an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, show up with capacity to lead and learn.

13. Black Women: We are committed to building a Black women affirming space free from sexism, misogyny, and male-centeredness.

Objective

Students will identify examples of figurative language by reading Tar Beach in order to gain a deeper understanding of how figurative language helps readers better understand the text.

Materials/Preparation

Text: Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold

Alternative Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9RKJleFdBu>

Before teaching, teacher should read not only the text but also “About Tar Beach” located at the end in order to help provide context for the book.

Procedure/Strategies

Engage: Prompt students to write down what they notice and wonder about the cover of Tar Beach.

Discuss: Questions that guide students’ thinking: *Why do you think it is called “Tar Beach?” What are the children doing? What are the adults doing? Where do you think they are located?*

Engage: Do a “picture walk” with the rest of the illustrations in the book. Have students write down what they notice and wonder.

Read Tar Beach aloud to students. (Alternatively, students can watch a YouTube video of Faith Ringgold reading her own text.) As it is read, students write down what they notice and wonder about the main character, Cassie. Be sure to show the photographs as it is being read to help students create more meaning.

Discuss: Have students share out. Possible responses for what students notice: Cassie is strong, brave, caring.

Students may also notice/wonder about Cassie flying. Ask students if the main character, Cassie, is *really* flying? Does she *really* own the bridge or an ice cream factory? If not, then what is happening? In the story, Cassie is imagining all of these things. She is imagining that she is able to fly and therefore escape things that bother her and have other things that she wants. What do you think bothers her? What does she want? What is her motivation for flying?

Model: These are examples of figurative language. Faith Ringgold uses figurative language throughout in order to help readers better understand and to give more details. Figurative language often helps readers visualize what is happening in the text.

Examples of figurative language include similes and metaphors. A simile compares two things using the words *like* and *as*. Metaphors compare two things without using the words *like* or *as*, rather it just IS.

For example, if I ate something that was very spicy, I could use a simile or metaphor to describe just how spicy it was.

Simile example: My mouth was as hot as a volcano! (Notice how I used the word *as* to compare my mouth and a volcano?)

Metaphor example: My mouth is a volcano! (Notice how I again compared my mouth to a volcano, but I didn't use the words *like* or *as*.)

Guided Practice: With a learning partner, try to identify one example of a simile or metaphor in the first four pages of the text.

Correct Response: *His eyes like huge floodlights tracking me through the sky*

What is this an example of--simile or metaphor? How do you know? How does it help the reader better understand what is happening with her brother?

Correct Responses: *His eyes like huge floodlights tracking me through the sky* on page 4 is an example of a simile because it uses the word *like* to compare her brother's eyes to floodlights. This simile helps the readers better understand what is happening because we can visualize now her brother was watching her very closely as she flew through the sky.

Independent Practice: Later in the text, on page 9, Cassie says, "I can wear it like a giant diamond necklace." What is she comparing to a diamond necklace? Why do you think she would like to wear it like a diamond necklace? What is this an example of-- simile or metaphor? How do you know?

Correct Responses: Cassie is comparing the George Washington Bridge to a diamond necklace. She may want to wear it like a diamond necklace because she wanted to own it like a necklace, or maybe she wanted to wear it like a diamond necklace because of its "sparkling beauty." This is an example of a simile because she is using the word *like* to compare the necklace to the bridge.

Check for Understanding: About her Daddy, Cassie says, "Daddy took me to see the new union building he is working on. He can walk on steel girders high up in the sky and not fall. They call him the Cat." Why do they call him "the Cat?" What is this an example of-- simile or metaphor? How do you know? How does this example of figurative language better help the reader understand?

Correct Responses: They call him "the Cat" because he is able to walk on steel girders high up in the sky and not fall, and cats are nimble like this, as well. This is an example of a metaphor because they are comparing him to a cat without using the words *like* or *as*. This figurative language better helps the reader understand how agile Daddy is and helps the reader visualize Daddy working gracefully up high.

Extension: Students can learn more about the artwork on the cover by exploring the Guggenheim website: <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3719>

Lesson 2: The People Could Fly

Disclaimer

This text can be triggering, as it exposes students to the violence that enslaved Africans experienced, as well as violence against women. Before you teach this lesson, students should be notified of this. Students should also be provided an alternative assignment if they feel that this is not something that they want to partake in. Students should be allowed to opt out and complete the alternative assignment at any time throughout the lesson.

Standards

RL4 CCR Anchor Standard: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

BLM Principles

2. Empathy: We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

Objective

Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in *The People Could Fly* by identifying specific word choice in order to determine the mood of certain sections of the text.

Materials

The People Could Fly:

<https://misstomlinson.weebly.com/uploads/2/3/7/3/23737706/thepeoplecouldflyandpg.69.pdf>

For reference, the teacher should read not only the text but also the Background located at the top of the website.

Literary Moods
angry, anxious, calm, carefree, careful, cautious, cheerful, excited, friendly, fearful, frustration, funny, gloomy, happy, hopeful, humorous, joyful, lonely, mischievous,

**optimistic, patriotic, peaceful, pessimistic, playful, proud, relaxed, sad, serious, scared,
shocked, silly, suspicious, terrified, thoughtful, upbeat, worried**

Procedure/Strategies

Today we will read a different text about flying. It is a folktale.

Provide Disclaimer: "This text can be triggering, as it exposes violence that enslaved Africans experienced, as well as violence against women. I have an alternative assignment if you feel that this is not something that you want to partake in. You will be allowed to opt out and complete the alternative assignment at any time throughout the lesson, without penalty." Provide alternate assignment for students.

Read the Background. As it is read, students should write down what they notice and wonder.

Have students share out.

Read *The People Could Fly* aloud to students. As it is read, students should write down what they notice and wonder.

Have students share out. Clarify misunderstandings.

Explain to the students that authors use something called *mood* to make readers feel emotions as they read. Good authors help their readers to feel emotions, and they do this by choosing specific words and details. This also helps readers create more meaning when they read.

Have the students read the text, either in small groups or with partners. This time, however, students should keep track of how they are feeling by drawing a plus sign (positive feelings: happy, excited, hopeful) or a minus sign (sad, angry, frustrated). Each time they write a plus or minus sign, they should jot a quick note of what gave them a feeling or reaction.

Model:

Read the following passage aloud:

Then, many of the people were captured for slavery. The ones that could fly shed their wings. They couldn't take their wings across the water on the slave ships. Too crowded, don't you know. The folks were full of misery, then. Got sick with the up and down of the sea. So they forgot about flyin' when they could no longer breathe the sweet scent of Africa.

Mood:

Think aloud: Now that I have read the passage, I have a good idea of how it made me feel, but I am still going to look on my Literary Moods chart. Sad is on here. It is really sad to me that people were captured for slavery, but I think that the author did a good job by using certain words to make me even more sad. The word *captured* is a really strong word. (Highlight *captured for slavery*) Also, they shed their wings. (Highlight *shed their wings*). (Highlight *misery, sick, forgot about flyin', no longer breathe the sweet scent of Africa.*) All of these details together create a mood for the reader. The mood this creates is sadness, so below the passage I am going to write *sad*.

Success Criteria:

1. Read the entire passage.
2. Select a word from the Literary Moods chart.
3. Highlight words or phrases within the passage that support the mood choice.

Guided Practice:

Go through the next two passages as a class:

Say the people who could fly kept their power, although they shed their wings. They kept their secret magic in the land of slavery. They looked the same as the other people from Africa who had been coming over, who had dark skin. Say you couldn't tell anymore one who could fly from one who couldn't. One such who could was an old man, call him Toby.

Mood:

Sarah hoed and chopped the row as the babe on her back slept. Say the child grew hungry. That babe started up bawling too loud. Sarah couldn't stop to feed it. Couldn't stop to soothe and quiet it down. She let it cry. She didn't want to. She had no heart to croon to it. "Keep that thing quiet," called the Overseer. He pointed his finger at the babe.

Mood:

Allow students to analyze this passage with partners:

"Yes, Daughter, the time is come," Toby answered. "Go, as you know how to go!" He raised his arms, holding them out to her. "Kum . . . yali, kum buba tambe," and more magic words, said so quickly, they sounded like whispers and sighs. The young woman lifted one foot on the air. Then the other. She flew clumsily at first, with the child now held tightly in her arms. Then she felt the magic, the African mystery. Say she rose just as free as a bird. As light as a feather.

Mood:

Independent Practice:

The Overseer rode after her, hollerin'. Sarah flew over the fences. She flew over the woods. Tall trees could not snag her. Nor could the Overseer. She flew like an eagle now, until she was gone from sight. No one dared speak about it. Couldn't believe it. But it was, because they that was there saw that it was.

Mood:

The one callin' himself Master come runnin'. The Driver got his whip ready to curl around old Toby and tie him up. The slave owner took his hip gun from its place. He meant to kill old Black Toby. But Toby just laughed. Say he threw back his head and said, "Hee, hee! Don't you know who I am? Don't you know some of us in this field?" He said it to their faces. "We are ones who fly!"

Mood:

Assessment/Check for Understanding:

They rose on the air. They flew in a flock that was black against the heavenly blue. Black crows or black shadows. It didn't matter, they went so high. Way above the plantation, way over the slavery land. Say they flew away to Free-dom. And the old man, old Toby, flew behind them, takin' care of them. He wasn't cryin'. He wasn't laughin'. He was the seer.

Mood:

Extension

What do you think this folktale says about the importance of hope in the lives of oppressed people?

Lesson 3: Fishbowl Socratic Seminar

Standards

RL3 CCR Anchor Standard: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of text

RL9 CCR Anchor Standard: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take

SL1 CCR Anchor Standard: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

BLM Principles

2. Empathy: We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

3. Loving Engagement: We are committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.

4. Diversity: We are committed to acknowledging, respecting and celebrating difference(s) and commonalities.

9. Intergenerational: We are committed to fostering an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, show up with the capacity to lead and learn.

13. Black Women: We are committed to building a Black women affirming space free from sexism, misogyny, and male-centeredness.

Objective

Students will analyze the characters of Cassie in Tar Beach and Toby in *The People Could Fly* by creating a Venn Diagram in order to participate in a Socratic Seminar.

Materials

Venn Diagrams for small groups

<https://www.classtools.net/Venn/>

Procedure/Strategies

Engage:

Have students define *freedom*. Freedom (n): the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.

Prepare:

In small groups, students will create Venn Diagrams to compare and contrast Cassie from Tar Beach and Toby from *The People Could Fly*. Students should consider their purposes for flying, what happened when they flew, what they were flying away from or towards, and how it changed their situations.

Discuss:

Students will participate in a Fishbowl Socratic Seminar

- Teacher explains guidelines of the fishbowl activity and explains success criteria
 - Students are split into two groups: Speaking Group and Listening Group
 - Speaking Group:
 - Build on previous speakers by listening to what is being said by others
 - Use text evidence to support responses
 - Share their voice at least once
 - Use complete sentences
 - Make sure ideas are on topic
 - Initiate new ideas
 - Elaborate on their ideas and explain why
 - Are respectful of their peers' ideas and are conscious of who has/has not yet spoken
 - Listening Group:
 - Take notes on what is being said
 - Think about connections you can make or things you can add to what is being said
 - I agree with ___ because ___
 - I disagree with ___ because ___
 - Support their peers by using nonverbal communication signs
 - While one group is speaking, the other is listening, and then groups will switch.
- Each group will have 5 minutes to speak on the following: Think about Tar Beach and *The People Could Fly*. In what ways were the characters the same or different? Why did each character want to fly? What did flying help them do? In what ways were their reasons for flying the same or different? Do you think the ability to fly was important to both of these characters? Why? What would happen if either of these characters *couldn't* fly? Be sure to support your ideas with evidence or examples from the texts.

- Students will be asked closing questions: What does flying have to do with freedom? What does freedom mean to you?

Lesson 4: My Freedom Folktale

Standards

W3 CCR Anchor Standard: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences

BLM Principles

1. Restorative Justice: We are committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension all people. As we forge our path, we intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.
2. Empathy: We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.
3. Loving Engagement: We are committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.
4. Diversity: We are committed to acknowledging, respecting and celebrating difference(s) and commonalities.
12. Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Objective

Students will write their own folktales by using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences in order to express freedoms they wish to have.

Materials

Response journals and writing utensil

Procedure/Strategies

Warm Up:

Prompt students to think about the things that Cassie and Toby wanted to change in their lives. Remember how Cassie thought about not only herself but also her mother and father? What did she want for them?

Students will then brainstorm and free-write about things that they wish they could change in their own lives. What do you want freedom from? Students can share out if they wish.

Model/Guided:

Tell students that they will eventually be writing their own folktales. They will have to think of a problem that they or someone they know is having, and then a character, such as Toby from *The People Could Fly*, will use a magical power to solve the problem. Or perhaps in their folktales if it is someone else who is having the problem, the *student* can be Toby with the magical powers that solves the problem. It's up to them to decide.

Before they begin writing their own folktales however, they need to know how to use the organizer. Show students how to use the organizer by creating a model folktale with the students; generate the folktale together as a class.

The organizer is meant to provide structure to students as they write, but sentence stems can be eliminated or adapted as teachers and/or students see fit. This can be shown to students as the teacher is modeling.

Independent:

Now it is time for students to create their very own folktale. Provide time for students to work on their own writing. Check in with students as they write to be sure students understand the assignment and are making progress.

*The organizer prompts students to write in complete sentences, as the next lesson requires students to rewrite their boxes together as a final draft.

Freedom Folktale Organizer

What is a real problem/challenge/difficulty that you or someone you know is currently facing? What is something you or someone you know might want freedom from? It might be something you would like to change, something that you want to be different than it is right now.

Be sure to write in complete sentences. Answer *who* has the problem/challenge/difficulty and *what* the problem/challenge/difficulty is.

They say that the people could (insert magical power here). I am here to tell you that story. There once was a person named (person with a problem) who had the problem of...

What is a fun, magical way to make this problem disappear? (Think about how Toby said magical words to make people fly.)

Be sure to answer these questions in complete sentences: Who is creating the magic? What does this person look like? Sound like? What is the magic power that this person has? How is the magic created? This is a great place to add dialogue and descriptive details about your character.

Luckily there was also a person named...

Be sure to show that the magical person has met up with the person with the problem! Show the magical person fixing the problem.

It just so happens that (magical person) and (person with the problem) met. And when they met...

Explain how your life is different now that the problem is gone. Be sure to write your response using complete sentences.

Now that the problem has changed, my life is different than before. Now...

Lesson 5: Paper Airplanes

Standards

Visual Arts Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

BLM Principles

2. Empathy: We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

3. Loving Engagement: We are committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.

4. Diversity: We are committed to acknowledging, respecting and celebrating difference(s) and commonalities.

12. Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Objective

Students will relate their knowledge and personal experiences to make art by writing a final draft and drawing an illustration of their folktales. Students will then fold this final product into a paper airplane in order to create the metaphor having the freedom to fly.

Materials

- How to Fold the World Record Paper Airplane Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDiC9iMcWTc>
- 1-2 sheets of loose leaf paper, depending on whether or not students want to first create a “test” airplane
- Media of students’ choice/availability
- Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold

Notes

- Students may already know how to create a paper airplane and do not have to use the model provided.

- It may be a good idea for students to attempt the paper airplane on a separate sheet of paper before attempting it on the final copy of their writing/artwork.
- Students may want to take photographs of their work before folding it, while some students will not want to fold their writing/artwork at all. This is ok! Encourage students to instead create a paper airplane on a separate sheet of paper. This activity is meant to help students destress, not create more stress!
- Alternatively, teachers may choose to show students how to create the airplane first. Then students may be selective about where to draw and/or write their folktales for design purposes.

Procedure/Strategies

1. Students should neatly rewrite their folktales from the day prior onto a blank sheet of computer paper. The boxes from the organizer should help students write their folktales sequentially and as a complete piece; however, students should feel free to edit and revise as they rewrite.
2. On the opposite side of the paper, students should draw an illustration that goes with their folktale from the day prior. Students may use whatever media they have available to them; however, paint is not suggested, as it would take time to dry. Students should color the entire page. This can be modeled by the teacher with the Model/Guided practice folktale from the day prior.
 - *Alternatively, if students were absent the day prior, they can draw themselves flying towards freedom from whatever their troubles may be and/or towards their hopes and dreams. Show students the cover of Tar Beach for inspiration.
 - *If time permits, or if students finish early, they can also draw a border around their writing on the opposite side.
3. Students should have the option to share their work, either as a whole class or in small groups. Students do not have to share their work if they do not wish to share it.
4. Show students the video on how to create a paper airplane.
5. Students turn their writing/artwork into a paper airplane. Consider providing the link to students so that they can stop the video while they are creating the plane.
6. Students test their paper airplanes.
7. Discuss: Why did we turn our writing/artwork into airplanes? What did today's activity have to do with freedom? How did you feel once you flew your airplane with your ideas? Did you learn anything about your peers today? Did you learn anything about yourself today?

Alternate Art Assignments:

- Students can create a kite.
- Students can create a quilt, like that shown in Tar Beach.