

Introduction: For the last three years, I have incorporated an Author of the Month initiative into my second grade curriculum. Each month students and teachers in second grade focus on one particular author. We read at least four books written by the Author of the Month, learn about their life and identity, watch videos, complete art activities, write about our favorite book, and complete a graph showcasing our favorite books by the Author of the Month. Sometimes we have author visits (virtual and in-person) or write letters to our authors. The Author of Month curriculum allows for integration between reading, writing, math, social studies, and sometimes science standards.

Project Idea: During the next academic school year, I propose that [Alice Faye Duncan](#), an author and children’s librarian from Memphis who writes fiction and nonfiction books for kids, becomes one of our Authors of the Month. In this document, I have created a four day lesson plan based on her children’s book *Yellow Dog Blues* (which follows the Mississippi Blues Trail) with an emphasis on geography, segregation and activism, and the blues. However, during this same month other Alice Faye Duncan would be read and discussed including *Coretta’s Journey*, *Opal Lee and What it Means to Be Free*, and *Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop*.

Second Grade Lesson Plans Focused on <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i>	
Maine Social Studies Standards	<p>History 1: Students understand the nature of history as well as the key foundation of ideas by following an established procedure to locate sources appropriate to reading level and identifying a few key figures and events from personal history and the history of the community, the state, and the United States, especially those associated with historically-based traditions.</p> <p>History 3: Students understand historical aspects of the uniqueness and commonality of individuals and groups, including Maine Native Americans, by describing traditions of Maine Native Americans and various historical and recent immigrant groups and traditions common to all.</p> <p>Geography 1: Students understand the nature and basic ideas of geography by using basic maps and globes to identify local and distant <i>places</i> and <i>locations</i>, directions (including N, S, E, and W), and basic physical, environmental, and cultural features.</p> <p>Geography 2: Students understand the influence of geography on individuals and groups in Maine, including Maine Native Americans, the United States and the world by identifying the impacts of geographic features on individuals and groups in those communities.</p> <p>Personal Finances and Economics: Students understand the influence of economics on individuals and groups in the United States and the World, including Maine Native Americans by describing the work and</p>

	<p>contributions of various groups to the economics of the local community in the past and present.</p>
<p>Day 1 Procedures:</p>	
<p>Hook</p>	<p>Tell students that today they'll listen to a new book written by our author of the month, Alice Faye Duncan. The name of the book is <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i> written by Alice Faye Duncan and illustrated by Chris Raschka. Show the cover of the book and let students look quietly for a little bit of time and then ask: What do you notice? What do you wonder? (Students' noticing may include: it looks like it was sewn or painted, there's a yellow dog, there are bright red guitar strings.) Students' wondering may include: I wonder why the little boy is looking around or I wonder what song the man is singing.)</p> <p>After students have shared, ask students to make a prediction - what they think will happen in the book. (Perhaps: they are creating a band, the dog learns how to play the guitar.)</p> <p>Use student noticings to help lead discussion and create connections throughout today's read aloud and the rest of the lessons.</p>
<p>Instruction</p>	<p>Read the book to students.</p> <p>At the end of the book ask questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this a fiction or nonfiction book? - What do you think the 'secret message' or moral of the story is? - How would you feel if your pet ran away? Would you track them down? - Do you think Yellow Dog will ever return to Bo Willie's house? Why or why not? Does Bo Willie think Yellow Dog will return? <p>Tell students that over the next 3 days we will be learning more about the place where <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i> takes place, the Mississippi Delta. Tomorrow we will read the book again and explore the towns that Bo Willie goes looking for his dog.</p>
<p>Day 2 Procedures:</p>	
<p>Hook</p>	<p>Show students the book <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i>. Ask students what they remember from the book (maybe: a lost dog, a boy traveling around) Ask students if they remember where the book takes place.</p> <p>Use Google Maps on the projector and point out where Mississippi is and where Maine is. Ask: How would someone travel to Mississippi from</p>

	<p>Maine? How long do you think that trip would take in a car? Take guesses from students. Show kids that it would take about 25 hours to drive to Mississippi from Maine without stopping in a car. Tell students that Ms. B has driven to Mississippi several times, but when she drove she would stop and spend the night at a hotel so it would take 2 days of driving. This past summer Ms. Bradford flew in a plane.</p> <p>Then use Google Maps and zoom in on the Mississippi Delta and Route 61 and point out where Route 61 is in Mississippi. Ask kids what do you notice about Route 61? (Maybe: there are other roads nearby, there is a river, there's lots of green)</p>
<p>Instruction</p>	<p>Tell students that we are going to re-read the book <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i>, but this time we are going on a road trip or a journey to learn about the actual places in the book!</p> <p>Start reading the book. While reading the book, use a map on a projector to show the following geography points to point out the following particular places in the Mississippi Delta.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ On page 5, where Highway 61 is mentioned, point out on the map where Highway 61 in the Delta is. ➤ On page 7 where Cleveland is mentioned, point out the city of Cleveland. ➤ On page 9 where Dockery Farm is mentioned, point out Dockery Farm on Route 8. ➤ On page 12 where Merigold and Juke Joints are mentioned, point out where Po' Monkey's is outside of Merigold. ➤ On page 18 where the crossroads of Rosedale are mentioned, show the town of Rosedale. ➤ On page 20 where Clarksdale is mentioned, show the town of Clarksdale. ➤ On page 25 where Memphis is mentioned, show the city of Memphis. <p>Hand students a paper map of the Mississippi Delta. Explain how to orient the map and what the compass rose means. (The map will have each location from the book marked with the name of town and/or landmark.) Tell students that all the places in the book are based on real places in the Mississippi Delta. At the same time you will be looking at your paper map, we will also look at photos of those locations.</p> <p>Go through the map one location at a time. Have students trace Bo Willie's adventure looking for Yellow Dog. At each location, display a photo from a slideshow to show students what the town looks like or looked like.</p>

	<p>The slideshow will have photos of: Route 61 - from Vicksburg to Memphis with Mississippi River labeled, a Chinese Grocery store in Cleveland, Dockery Farm, Po' Monkeys in Merigold, the blues sign in Rosedale, Hick's World Famous Hot Tamales in Clarksdale, Beale Street in Memphis.</p> <p>At each photo ask students what they notice or are wondering about the photograph. As students notice and wonder, answer questions about the photographs and locations. If there are questions that have unknown answers, these questions can be written down on the board to answer later.</p>
Exit Ticket/ Assessment	<p>Have students flip the map over and draw or write questions you have</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One thing you learned 2. One question you have <p>Use student questions and learnings to lead discussion and create connections throughout the rest of the lessons about <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i>.</p>
Day 3 Procedures:	
Hook	<p>Show the introduction (or a snippet) of the <i>Voices from the Sit-In</i> to students. Ask students to analyze the video by asking questions such as: Where do you think this video was taken? How do you know that? Why do you think this video was created?</p>
Instruction	<p>Ask students to remember the map from our <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i> journey yesterday through the Mississippi Delta. Ask: What were a few of the places where Bo Willie went to look for his dog? After receiving a few answers, tell kids that today we'll focus on some history in the town of Cleveland, Mississippi. There's a college in the town of Cleveland. It's name is Delta State University and it was founded 100 years ago in 1925. (Show students the DSU home page on the projector or photos of DSU.)</p> <p>However, when this college was founded it only allowed white people to attend. People of different races were not allowed to attend, only white people were admitted into the school. This practice is called segregation. Segregation is a system of keeping certain people apart from each other. There were rules and laws in our country for a long time, for more than 100 years, that said Black and White people couldn't go to the same pools to swim or eat at the same restaurants. There were rules that said that Black and White children could not go to the same school together.</p> <p>Finally in 1967, about 50 years ago, DSU admitted their first Black students. But the teachers at the school and the other students at the school did not treat Black students very well.</p>

	<p>Tell students the story of the DSU Sit In on Monday, May 10th, 1969 and that the only reason your teacher knows this is because she listened to two of the students, Lula and Maggie, talk for about an hour this summer. <u>(Show pictures of Lula and Maggie, play parts of a video where Lula and Maggie are speaking, and photos of the sit-in protest.)</u></p> <p>Lula and Maggie and their classmates were students, just like you. They were older than you by about 10 years. They were 17, 18, 19 years old. They were among the first Black students to go to Delta State and they decided that they were tired of being treated unfairly at their college. Sometimes people, teachers and students, called them names and were mean to them. They had 10 items that they wanted to improve, including no name-calling and being taught Black history. <u>(Show students the <i>Voices From the Sit In</i> documentary booklet on the projector. Pass around the physical copy of the booklet, pointing out the autographs.)</u></p> <p>These students wanted to talk to the people in charge of the school and work together to make some changes. But instead White policemen were called and the Black students were sent to prison. In fact one student spent her 18th birthday in prison. Eventually the students were released from prison, but only some improvements were made. Even today Delta State is still working towards meeting those 10 demands they have.</p> <p>Use the DSU sit-in story as a jumping off point for students to ask and answer questions about segregation, unfair treatment in our country, activism, and what young people can do.</p>
Exit Ticket/ Assessment	<p>But one of the most important things that Lula and Maggie said when I met them was: “It just takes a small light to curse the darkness”</p> <p>Ask students what they think that phrase means: What was their ‘secret message’ that Lula and Maggie wanted Ms. Bradford and the other teachers, who learned their story to think about?</p>
Day 4 Procedures:	
Hook	Listen to “ Green Onions ” by Booker T and MG’s. After listening to it for a minute or so, play Freeze Dance. (When the music is paused, students freeze. If they continue dancing or moving, they are ‘out’ of the game.)
Instruction	Tell students that today we are going to learn about a very special type of music called the blues. The blues originated in the Mississippi Delta. Blues music is about expressing your feelings and can tell a story about someone’s life. Sometimes the songs are happy and sometimes the songs are sad. Blues music is really important because it was created by Black

	<p>Americans and influenced a lot of other musical styles (like rock and roll) in America and around the world.</p> <p>Ask kids to remember the book we read this week by Alice Faye Duncan. Why do you think the book is called <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i>? (Maybe: the dog is sad, the boy is sad, they are in the ‘blue zone’, the dog is playing blues music)</p> <p>One of the places that Bo Willie goes looking for Yellow Dog is in a Juke Joint (show kids pages 12-15). Remind kids of what segregation is. Tell kids that there were also segregation laws about where you could hang out with friends and listen to music and dance. So sometimes African Americans would hang out in a small house to dance, and sing together and these places were called Juke Joints. And it is in these Juke Joints in the Mississippi Delta that blues music developed into a genre of music.</p> <p>Read the back section of <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i> titled Delta Blues: How the Music Was Born.</p> <p>Watch What is the Blues? video. (Another video to watch could be A Short History of the Blues.) As you watch, really listen to what these blues musicians say the blues means to them.</p> <p>Listen to about a minute of these blues songs: Crossroads by Robert Johnson, Got My Mojo Workin’ by Muddy Waters, Smokestack Lightnin by Howlin Wolf. Show students videos of Keith Johnson and Bill Abel playing blues songs.</p> <p>Read the ending of <i>Yellow Dog Blues</i> and explain how blues musicians, just like Yellow Dog, traveled out of the Mississippi Delta into Memphis and into other bigger cities such as Chicago. In these bigger cities, the blues became popular and the style of music changed into an electric sound which transformed into rock and roll music. The Blues music that originated in the Mississippi Delta is known around the world and is so important to music today.</p> <p>Read the lyrics of the dog’s blues song to students. Talk about what those words might mean.</p> <p>Have a classroom conversation about if Yellow Dog will ever return to Bo Willie’s house? Why or why not?</p>
Exit Ticket/ Assessment	Have each student write a short piece about what they think will happen with Yellow Dog. Will he return? Or will he stay a Blues singer in Memphis or go on a different adventure somewhere?

Differentiation / Intervention for lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Some discussion questions could be done in think, pair, share or small group format.- The teacher could write students noticings and wonderings on chart paper or have students write them on paper themselves.- Write vocabulary words (example: blues, Mississippi Delta, segregation) and have kids define them with words or pictures
Extensions for further activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Read and discuss other books about the Mississippi Delta and Blues experiences- https://alicefayeduncan.com/resources- Invite the music teacher to incorporate the blues music into her music classes or come into our classroom for lesson 4- Write letters to Alice Faye Duncan- Create a class map of the Mississippi Delta