



Objectives

★ LITERACY

Students will:

- Develop fluency and expression by practicing text at an appropriate reading level
- Understand characters' motives, actions, and feelings

★ SOCIAL STUDIES

Students will:

- Learn about two respected women of the mid-20th century, Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson, and how they fought discrimination
- Understand how African Americans were treated before civil rights laws were passed

★ CHARACTER EDUCATION

Students will learn about:

- Respect—be tolerant of differences
- Courage—do the right thing to promote equality for all people

Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson

Total words: 1,667

Summary

TV reporters Jake and Liz from the *You're Right There!* show go to Washington, D.C. in 1939 to interview Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson about an important event in civil rights history. Jake finds out that Marian Anderson, a world-famous singer, has not been allowed to sing at Constitution Hall in Philadelphia. An influential organization, the Daughters of the American Revolution, turned Anderson away because she is African American. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who has worked hard for civil rights her whole life, is upset by the decision. She invites Anderson to sing at the Lincoln Memorial. The concert is a huge success. Back in the present, Liz finds out that the D.A.R. later apologized for its decision and that Anderson did sing at Constitution Hall a few years later.

Characters

	Levels	
	N	30
Alyce Anderson	N	30
Concertgoer	R	40
Jake	R	40
Liz	S	44
Marian Anderson	S	44
Eleanor Roosevelt	T	44
Tom	T	44
Lorena Hickock	U	50

BEFORE Reading

1. Build Background

- Write *Marian Anderson* and *Eleanor Roosevelt* as headings on the board. Ask students to share anything they may know about these two women. Write their ideas on the board. Return to these lists after students read the play.
- Show students pictures of Constitution Hall and the Lincoln Memorial. Tell students the names of the two buildings. Ask whether they can tell you where these buildings are located and what their significance is.

2. Introduce the Script

- Give students a copy of the script and explain that they are going to read a play about a concert by Marian Anderson, a famous singer, organized in 1939 by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Ask them to turn to the list of characters, and read through it with them. Encourage students to speculate about the connection between Anderson and Roosevelt.
- Instruct students to skim the text, looking at the organization and illustrations and identifying the characters. If students are unfamiliar with the format of a play, explain how the text is organized and how they can tell when a different character is speaking.

For **E**nglish **L**anguage **L**earners instruction on introducing the script, refer to page 6.

3. Discuss Vocabulary

- Model how to read multisyllabic words such as *organization*, *Constitution*, *disappointed*, *discrimination*, *prestigious*, *opportunity*, *memorial*, and *resignation*. Instruct students to repeat the words several times. Ask volunteers to use them in oral sentences that give their meanings.
- Instruct students to find the content vocabulary related to equality: *civil rights*, *discrimination*, *injustice*. Make sure they know what each term means before they begin reading.

For **E**nglish **L**anguage **L**earners instruction on vocabulary and phonics, refer to page 6.

DURING Reading

4. Read the Script

- Familiarize students with the content and vocabulary of the script by having them read along with you as you model fluent reading.

Informally assess students' reading as you:

- Note students' level of participation.
- Note any vocabulary words that are still challenging for students to read. When finished, address questions about word pronunciation or meaning.
- Read the script chorally again, noting whether students' interpretations of the characters show an understanding of the story.

**Reread together
throughout the
week to develop
confidence and
build fluency.**



Building Character

- Marian Anderson and Eleanor Roosevelt taught the American public a lesson about being tolerant of people's differences. Summarize that lesson. Then name ways the students in your school show respect for people's differences.
- Marian Anderson and Eleanor Roosevelt showed courage by standing up for the rights of African Americans when it was not popular to do so. Tell about a time when you have done or said something even though you knew others might not like it or agree with you.

Staging and Performance Suggestions

- Props can include microphones made of paper-towel tubes covered with aluminum foil.
- Eleanor, Marian, Lorena, and Alyce can wear old-fashioned or straw hats. They might also carry a handbag or wear a shawl.
- A drawing of the Lincoln Memorial can serve as a backdrop.

5. Interpret the Script

Discuss Ideas and Issues

- *Marian Anderson said she had to let her singing speak for her. Do you think she would have helped African Americans more if she had spoken out instead of only singing? Why or why not?*
- *Why do you think Eleanor Roosevelt's resignation from the D.A.R. became such big news in the United States in 1939?*
- *How were Marian Anderson and Eleanor Roosevelt alike?*
- *How did the events of the play influence civil rights?*

6. Assign Roles & Rehearse the Script

- Use the reading levels provided to help you assign roles.
- Decide whether to develop a simple reading of the script or a dramatization of it.
- Discuss the staging. Use the suggestions provided here and in the Teacher's Handbook.
- Discuss rehearsal expectations. See the Teacher's Handbook.
- During the first rehearsal, offer suggestions for expression and voice. During the second rehearsal, act only as the audience.
- Provide feedback at the end of the rehearsal. See the

For English Language Learners, see the Teacher's Handbook. For additional instructions on modeling the play, refer to page 7.

7. Perform the Script

- Read the script as a Reader's Theater or dramatize it

For English Language Learners, see the Teacher's Handbook. For additional instructions on performing the play, refer to page 7.

Content Connections

Social Studies

Marian Anderson's Lincoln Memorial performance was a milestone for African Americans, one of many in the fight for civil rights. President Lincoln freed the slaves in 1862. In 1870, African Americans gained the right to vote. Until the 1950s, many public schools admitted only white students. African Americans had their own schools. In 1955, the Supreme Court said African American and white students must attend public schools together. This was called *desegregation*. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 said businesses such as hotels and restaurants must serve all people no matter what their color or race. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 said people could not be kept from buying or renting housing because of their color or race.

Try This!

With a partner, make a civil rights time line.

1. List important events in the fight for civil rights. Write the year and a brief description of each event. Use facts from the play and from the paragraph above.
2. Find one additional year and event in the library or on the Internet to add to the list.
3. Draw a 12-inch-long line on a long sheet of drawing paper. Along this line, draw short vertical lines about an inch apart.
4. Label each vertical line with an event, its year, and the description from your list.

Literacy Extensions

Letter to Roosevelt or Anderson

Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson were both admired by many Americans. Suppose you had lived in 1939. Write a letter to one of these women. Tell her what you think about something she did.

Play Titles

Think of and write two alternate titles for the play. Share your titles with your classmates. Discuss which titles would be the best choices for the play. List all the alternate titles on the board and then vote to find out which title is liked by the most students.

Character Education Connection

In the play, Liz says the D.A.R. finally apologized for their treatment of Marian Anderson. Tom says it is never too late to right a wrong and change for the better. Write about a time when you apologized for something you did. How did admitting you had done something wrong help you change for the better?

Vocabulary

- Locate a word or phrase that may cause difficulty, such as *civil rights*. Create a word web on the board. Write *civil rights* in the middle. Extend the web as you discuss phrases such as *free speech*, *freedom of religion*, *right to vote*, and *freedom from discrimination*. Point to each and **say**: *These are some civil rights*.
- Help students predict the meaning of unfamiliar words using the following questions:
 1. Does this word look like a word I know? (cognates)
 2. Is this word formed by two smaller words? (compound words) Do I know the meaning of the smaller words? If I put the meanings together, can I guess the meaning of the original word?
 3. Does this word have a smaller word I now know? (base word/prefixes/suffixes) What could the other part mean?
 4. Does this phrase have some words I know? Who is using the phrase? Is this character answering a question or expressing something? What could this mean in the story?

Phonics

- Some students may have difficulty pronouncing the word *dignity*. Write the word on the board and say it. Explain that the /g/ and /n/ sounds here are pronounced separately (not as in *sign*). Ask students to read a line from the play where *dignity* appears (page 13). Practice other words with similar pronunciation, such as *designation*, *signal*, and *signature*.

1. Introduce the Script

Comprehension

- Introduce the topic of learning about the news by asking students how they get information. **Ask**: *How do your parents get the news? Do they watch TV? Do they listen to the radio?* Write those examples on the board. Explain that this play is set in 1939. **Say**: *Back in 1939, people listened to the radio or read newspapers to get the news. There were no computers!*
- Discuss the difficult subject of racial discrimination. **Say**: *This play happens at a time when our country had different laws for people of different color.* **Ask**: *Has anyone heard of Marian Anderson or Eleanor Roosevelt?* If students are unfamiliar with either or both women, **explain**: *Marian Anderson was an African American singer. Eleanor Roosevelt was the wife of President Franklin Roosevelt. This is a story of how Marian wasn't allowed to sing in Philadelphia because she was African American.*
- Students may benefit from understanding how and why such discrimination was tolerated at this time. **Say**: *There used to be laws that didn't allow African Americans to be in the same places as white people.* **Ask**: *Do you think those laws were fair?*

2. Explain the Structure of a Play

- **Ask**: *Can you name the characters of the play?* List them on the board. Help students with difficult names, such as *Roosevelt*. Explain that the setting of the play is Washington, D.C. Point out that the action takes place today *and* in 1939, so some characters are from the present, while others are from the past.
- Pick one or two characters and ask for volunteers to help you model the reading or act out a few lines. Work on intonation and dramatic expression.

3. Model the Script

- Read the play aloud as students follow the text in their books. You may use gestures and dramatic expression to help students follow the story.
- Reread sections or lines as needed. Ask students to identify illustrations of characters and actions in the play.
- Check for comprehension. Some appropriate pauses and comments for this play are:

Pages 2–3 • Say: *Marian Anderson was supposed to sing at Constitution Hall but didn't.* **Ask:** *Why not?*

Pages 4–5 • Ask: *When and where did Marian start singing?*

Pages 6–7 • Ask: *What kind of discrimination did Marian face?*

Pages 8–9 • Ask: *What did the law say about white and black people?*

Pages 10–11 • Ask: *Why did Eleanor Roosevelt resign from the D.A.R.?*

Pages 12–13 • Ask: *Which people did President and Eleanor Roosevelt work to help?*

4. Perform the Script

- Assign roles to students depending on your assessment of their reading and speaking levels, their comprehension, and how comfortable they feel representing each character.

Multilevel Strategies

Review the main points of the play by asking students to identify the main characters and what they did.

Beginner

Encourage students to use the illustrations and point to the names of the characters and places in the play. Students may also copy names in their notebooks. Show a picture of Eleanor or Marian. **Ask:** *Which is the famous singer? or Which is the First Lady?*

Intermediate

Ask: *Who was Marian Anderson? Who was Eleanor Roosevelt? How did Eleanor Roosevelt help Marian Anderson?*

Advanced

Ask: *Why did Eleanor Roosevelt ask Marian Anderson to sing at the White House? You may also want to introduce other important figures in the civil rights movement, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. or Rosa Parks, and explain their roles in fighting for equal rights for African Americans.*

Background Information

Marian Anderson

Marian Anderson was born in Philadelphia in 1897. When she went to apply to a local music school, a clerk turned her away with racist comments. Anderson later said, "I could not conceive of a person surrounded as she was with the joy that is music without having some sense of its beauty and understanding rub off on her." Anderson went on to take private singing lessons. She sang in New York's Town Hall in 1924. However, the performance wasn't a big success due to Anderson's below-par foreign language skills. Anderson had a successful career in Europe for 10 years. The famous conductor Arturo Toscanini said she had "a voice one hears once in a hundred years." She returned to the Town Hall in 1935. This time her performance was critically acclaimed.

Constitution Hall's refusal to allow Anderson to sing caused protests around the nation. In 1993, the *New York Times* reported that the Constitution Hall manager had been responsible for the policy excluding black performers, instituted after a racially motivated incident during the performance of another African American. The D.A.R.'s executive committee had not rejected the policy.

Marian Anderson's Lincoln Memorial performance, on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, attracted a huge audience in person and on the radio. Anderson also played to a full house in 1953 when she finally sang at Constitution Hall. On January 7, 1955, Marian Anderson became the first African American to sing onstage at New York City's Metropolitan Opera. She later sang at the inaugurations of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Johnson in 1963. Marian Anderson died in 1993, and 2,000 people attended her memorial service at Carnegie Hall.

Other Books of Interest

BENCHMARK EDUCATION COMPANY

A Voice for the Animals

Trade Books

*Eleanor Everywhere:
The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt*
by Monica Kulling. Rebound by Sagebrush

Eleanor Roosevelt
by Mary Winget. Lerner Publishing

*Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady,
Humanitarian, and World
Citizen*
by Pam Rosenberg. Child's World

*Eleanor Roosevelt:
A Life of Discovery*
by Russell Freedman. Clarion Books

*The Eleanor Roosevelt
You Never Knew*
by James Lincoln Collier. Children's Press

*The Voice That Challenged
a Nation: Marian Anderson
and the Struggle for Equal
Rights*
by Russell Freedman. Clarion Books

*When Marian Sang: The True
Recital of Marian Anderson*
by Pam Munoz Ryan. Scholastic

Who Was Eleanor Roosevelt?
by Gare Thompson. Grosset & Dunlap

Web Sites

[www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/
american_originals/eleanor.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/american_originals/eleanor.html)

[www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/remember/
1997/anderson_2-26a.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/remember/1997/anderson_2-26a.html)

[www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/
ar32.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/ar32.html)