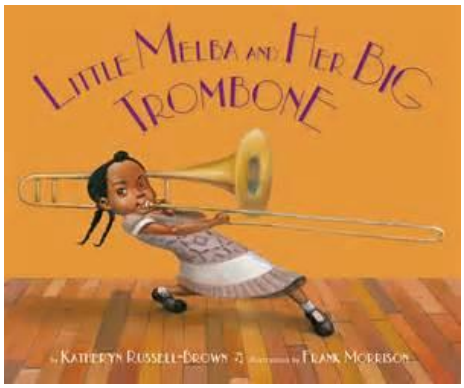
Read Aloud Program: Small Group Integrative Strategy Guide

words alive



Title: Little Melba and Her Big Trombone

Author: Kathryn Russell-Brown

Themes: Confidence, Determination, Discrimination, Racism, Sexism

Vocabulary: Trombone, metronome

See video of this book read aloud here: Little Melba and Her Big Trombone

Items Needed for Center: device to show video; map print

Volunteer readers should preview biographical information in the Afterward at the back of the book prior to their sessions.

★ 3rd Grade Common Core Reading Standard ★

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

I. **INTRODUCTION (PREP QUESTIONS)**

- Ask students which two words in the title are opposites. Discuss how the cover illustration supports the title and discuss why a trombone would be a difficult instrument to physically manage. Ask students to guess the age of Melba in the illustration.

- Draw students' attention to the Coretta Scott King Honor Award Seal on the cover. Discuss who she was and the significance of the award for this book.

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards are given annually to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values. The award commemorates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and honors his wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood.

II. **INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES**

DURING READING SESSION

- P. 1: Read; it says that, "…you could reach out and feel the music." Ask students what that means and have them discuss the mood of the people in the pictures.

- Pp. 2-3: Read; ask students what the thought bubble above Melba's head tells us about her (all she can think about is music and musical instruments. Tell students this is an example of "**showing writing**" which is an author's way of "showing" the reader information about a character rather than directly **telling** the reader qualities about a character.

Point out the red **onomatopoeias** and ask students to describe this type of **figurative language** (a word that copies the sound of the object or action it refers to. When you pronounce an **onomatopoeia**, it will copy its sound: *meow*, *tweet*, *ding-dong*, etc.).

Also draw the students' attention to another example of **figurative language** on this page known as **personification** ("…*rhythms* **danced** in her head") and have them describe **personification** (when an author makes an object or idea do something only a human can do).

Pp. 4-5: Read; discuss more examples of the author's use of "**showing writing**" and ask students what we learn about Melba (students will need help recognizing musical terms such as *notes*, *lyrics*, *beats*).

- Pp. 6-7: Read; have students identify more "showing writing" and what we learn about Melba's family. (they love music)

- Pp. 8-9: Read; have students infer why there must have been a traveling music store (most people didn't have cars to get to stores).

- Pp. 10-11: Read; and show students the words that are stretched out and have them discuss how they help the reader to "see" how long a stretch it was for little Melba. Ask students to identify the 2 **onomatopoeias** (*honk* and *hank*) and how stretching the onomatopoeias out helps us to *hear* her first attempts to create trombone sounds.

  Point out the **simile** (a comparison of two things using **like** or **as**): "*It* sounded bad, **like** a *howling dog*" and ask what is being compared to the sound of a howling dog (Melba's first musical notes).

  Discuss the last sentence as another example of "**showing writing**" and ask students to discuss what it **shows** us about Melba. (determined, doesn't give up, etc.)

- Pp. 12-13: Read; ask students what it means in the first sentence when it says, "…teaching herself to play the trombone was **no piece of cake**"? Explain that this is another example of **figurative language** known as an **idiom** (an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but it has a special meaning of its own).

- Pp. 14-15: Read; ask students what the first sentence means. Have them identify the example of **Cause→ Effect** in the first paragraph. (**Effect**: Melba and her mother moved to Los Angeles; **Cause**: hard times hit rock bottom).

- Pp. 16-17: Read; ask students to discuss the difficulties Melba faced as the star player in the after-school music club and how she handled her feelings. Help students to understand that women's roles in those days were very different and that Melba's success really defied female stereotypes, especially in the music world.

- Pp. 18-19: Read; discuss what it means when it says that Melba's talent was growing and she began **writing** music. Point out another example of "**showing writing**" in the second paragraph and what the reader learns about Melba's mother and her support of her daughter's talent.

- Pp. 20-21: Read; have students discuss what the illustration shows. (how Melba was competing in a man's world)

- Pp. 22-23: Read; ask students to discuss what two kinds of discrimination Melba experienced, citing examples. Have students identify 2 examples of **Cause→ Effect** (**Effect:** Melba was lonely**; Cause**: she was the only woman in the band and the men were cruel and ignored her; **Effect:** Melba was discouraged and left her trombone for good; **Cause**: she and her bandmates were black and treated unequally). Discuss **segregation**. Point out the sign on

  p. 23.

- Pp. 24-25: Read; why didn't Melba quit playing the trombone when she felt so discouraged? Help students realize that the listed examples are the names of famous male musicians of the time who not only wanted her to play with them but they also sought to play the music she composed.
- Pp. 26- 27: Read; discuss Melba's accomplishments. Have students note another use of **personification** (making her trombone *sing*).

III. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

POST READING

- What were challenges for Melba at that point in time of history? What does that show us about her determination and courage to follow her dream?
- What is the message of this story? What should we learn from Melba? Why is it important that she did not give up?
- Have you ever been teased or have seen someone get teased because they are very good at something? Why do you think that happened? Is it right to tease someone because they are better than others? Why or why not?

IV. SMALL GROUPS

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZbvEWZtmZM (1:21)
- Show students the photos of Melba in the Afterword.
- Do you have something you are very passionate about, as Melba was about music?
- Using the map, revisit p. 1 and show students the location of Kansas City. Do the same p. 15 to show students Los Angeles, and retrace the five states Melba and her mother must have traveled through on their way to Los Angeles.
- Let students revisit the illustrations.

United States of America
State Boundary
Road
River
National Capital
State Capital
City or Town
0 300 KM
0 300 Miles
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U.S.A.
CANADA
MEXICO
Gulf of Mexico
Pacific Ocean
Atlantic Ocean
Washington, D.C.
Ottawa
Mexico City
Hermosillo
Chihuahua
Saltillo
Monterrey
Laredo
Corpus Christi
Nassau
THE BAHAMAS
RUSSIA
ALASKA
Anchorage
Juneau
HAWAII
Honolulu
0 500 KM
0 500 Miles
0 100 KM
0 100 Miles