



**Sylvan** Learning<sup>sm</sup> **READING**  
**ADVENTURES** with  
**Inspirational**  
**People**

**FUEL THE PASSION TO  
CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE  
WITH BOOKS FROM THESE  
INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE!**

Whether reading with family or friends, this activity brochure will spark important and thoughtful conversations.

**This brochure includes:**

*This is Your Time*

- ◆ Discussion Questions

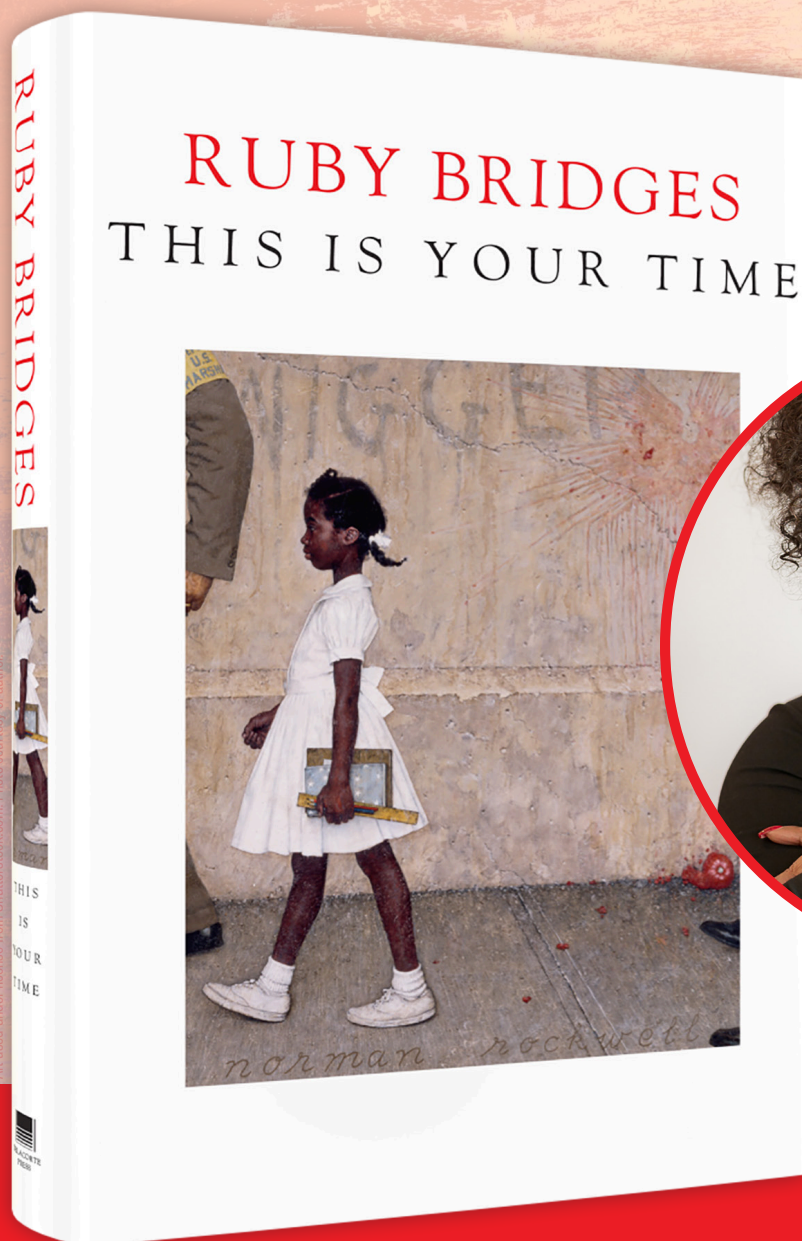
*It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime*

- ◆ Discussion Questions

# THIS IS YOUR TIME

## Reader Discussion and Writing Guide

Guide your family or group's discussion about this inspirational letter to today's young activists from **RUBY BRIDGES** herself.



**Language Advisory:** *This Is Your Time* contains some images of racist language and other offensive epithets.

This guide was written by Kimiko Cowley-Pettis.

# A Brief Overview of the Civil Rights Movement in America

## THE FIGHT TO END THE SEGREGATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

May 18,  
1896

The Supreme Court made a ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case that established the separate but equal doctrine.

July 2,  
1964

President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing racial discrimination in employment, voting, and the use of public facilities.

## TIMELINE OF THE FIGHT FOR SCHOOL INTEGRATION

December 4,  
1849

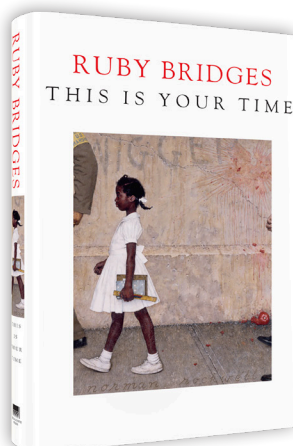
The Massachusetts Supreme Court heard arguments about school segregation in *Roberts v. the City of Boston*. Months later, it declared that school integration would only increase racial prejudice.

1960

Black and white children went to separate schools in New Orleans. A judge ordered that four black girls attend two all-white schools—McDonogh Elementary School and William Frantz Elementary School. One of these girls was **RUBY BRIDGES**.

May 17,  
1954

The US Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. the Board of Education* that segregation is unconstitutional.



Look at the cover of *This Is Your Time*. This painting was created by Norman Rockwell in 1964 and is titled *The Problem We All Live With*. It is considered an iconic image of the civil rights movement.

Turn to the Image Credits page of the book to read more about the history of this painting and about Norman Rockwell.

# Key Terms for Your Guided Discussion

**bigotry:** obstinate or unreasonable attachment to a belief, opinion, or faction; in particular, prejudice against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular group

**desegregation:** the ending of a policy of separation

**federal marshal:** an officer responsible for carrying out law enforcement on behalf of the federal courts

**integration:** bringing separate people or things together

**Jim Crow laws:** a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation

**March on Washington:** a massive protest march that occurred on August 28, 1963, when 250,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC

**protest:** express an objection to what someone has said or done

**racism:** a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race

**racist:** a person who is prejudiced against or antagonistic toward people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or is marginalized

**resilience:** the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

**unrest:** a state of dissatisfaction, disturbance, and agitation in a group of people, typically involving public demonstrations or disorder

# Discussion Questions

1. Explain how Ruby's parents (Lucille Bridges and Abon Bridges) were courageous.
2. Why would the National Guard be needed to escort a kindergartner to school?
3. What criteria did Ruby meet in order to be accepted as the first black child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School?
4. Why did some white adults hate Ruby Bridges?
5. What character traits do you think Ruby Bridges's teacher possessed? Why?
6. Watch [this video of Ruby Bridges](https://youtu.be/hzuS8CI-sSI) (https://youtu.be/hzuS8CI-sSI) reflecting on her experience integrating William Frantz Elementary School. If you were Ruby Bridges, would you want to attend William Frantz Elementary School the following the school year? Share your thought process.
7. How would you describe US Marshal Charles Burks, one of the men who escorted Ruby Bridges to school?
8. Dr. Robert Coles was a psychiatrist who volunteered to work with Ruby Bridges. Put yourself in Ruby's shoes. What do you think it was like to walk to school? What type of social or emotional trauma do you think Ruby had to deal with?
9. Why do you think Ruby titled her book *This Is Your Time*?
10. What is the central theme of this book?
11. How does Ruby's story contribute to the development of the theme?
12. If you could interview Ruby Bridges, what would you ask her?
13. How do the images in the book help you understand Ruby's experience?

# Further Materials

Click through the embedded links for additional articles on this topic!

- [“School Segregation and Integration”](#) from the Library of Congress
- [“The Secret to School Integration”](#) by Halley Potter and Kimberly Quick
- [“Why School Integration Matters”](#) by Pedro A. Noguera
- [“Youth in the Civil Rights Movement”](#) from the Library of Congress
- [“Nearly Half of New York City’s Public-School Students Stayed Home to Protest: Segregation in a 1964 Boycott. That Fight Is Still Unfinished”](#) by Olivia B. Waxman
- [“The Largest Civil Rights Protest You’ve Never Heard Of: Teaching the 1964 New York City School Boycott”](#) by Adam Sanchez

## Supplemental Books for Discussion

### Picture Books

- *Thurgood* by Jonah Winter
- *Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop* by Alice Faye Duncan
- *Lift as You Climb: The Story of Ella Baker* by Patricia Hruby Powell

### Middle Grade

- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth* edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi
- *The Lions of Little Rock* by Kristin Levine
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia
- *The Promise of Change* by Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy
- *The Power of One: Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine* by Dennis B. Fradin and Judith Fradin

# Further Materials Continued

- *Tell All the Children Our Story: Memories and Mementos of Being Young and Black in America* by Tonya Bolden

## For Older Readers

- The March Trilogy by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell
- *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High* by Melba Pattillo Beals
- *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement* by Hasan Kwame Jeffries
- *How to Be Less Stupid About Race* by Crystal Fleming
- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo

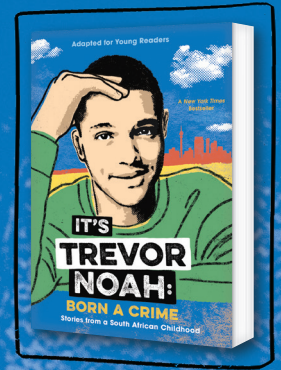
## Supplemental Films for Discussion

- *The Ernest Green Story* (1993) is a docudrama detailing the story of Ernest Green and eight other African American high school students (known as the Little Rock Nine) as they embarked on their historic journey to integrate Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.
- *Ruby Bridges* (1998) tells the story of one of the first African American children to integrate a school in the Deep South.
- *Soundtrack for a Revolution* (2009) is a documentary that traces the history of the civil rights movement through its music.
- *Selma* (2014) is a historical drama based on the 1965 voting rights marches from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama.
- *Voices from the Black Lives Matter Protests* (2020) is an oral and visual recounting of the fourteen days that followed the murder of George Floyd. From Minnesota politicians and friends of the victim to activists at the front lines of the Black Lives Matter protests, rallies, and marches, we hear from pivotal voices who paint a picture of the beginnings of a revolution.

# IT'S TREVOR NOAH:

## BORN A CRIME

**ABOUT THE BOOK:** Trevor Noah tells the story of growing up as a biracial boy in South Africa during and post apartheid in this young readers' adaptation of his bestselling adult memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The title of his memoir is *It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime*. What is the meaning of “born a crime”? How would it feel for your very existence to be considered a crime? How does this concept impact Trevor’s life?
2. What does *apartheid* mean? Look up the definition and discuss the history of apartheid in South Africa. Read the “Apartheid History” chapter at the end of the book.
3. Religion is a central theme of Trevor’s childhood memories. How did his mother’s interest in religion affect his relationships, his everyday life, and his actions?
4. Trevor describes his mother as being “rebellious” and includes stories of her childhood in his memoir. Notice the similarities between his mother’s behavior and Trevor’s. What else does Trevor have in common with his mother? How are they different?
5. Trevor and his family endured many hardships because of racism. Have a conversation about these moments and how they affected Trevor’s life. How did racism affect the lives of other people in South Africa? What were the differences for black people and white people?
6. Trevor speaks multiple languages. He says he “learned that the quickest way to bridge the race gap was through language.” Trevor shares a memory of coming across a group of “Zulu guys” who were talking about mugging him. They decided not to when they realized he could understand them and speak their language. Reflecting, Trevor says he understood “that language, even more than color, defines who you are to people” (pp. 53–54). What does he mean, and how is this idea reflected in this encounter? Do you use language differently in different situations? At school? At home? With friends?
7. Trevor’s mother told him: “Learn from your past and be better because of your past, but don’t cry about your past. Life is full of pain. Let the pain sharpen you, but don’t hold on to it” (p. 67). Do you think he followed his mother’s advice based on his memoir? What does he share about what he has learned from his memories?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

8. Trevor's name is both meaningless and meaningful. He explains: "The names Xhosa families give their children always have a meaning, and that meaning has a way of becoming self-fulfilling. . . . When it was time to pick my name, she chose Trevor, a name with no meaning whatsoever in South Africa, no precedent in the family. . . . My mother wanted her child beholden to no fate. She wanted me to be free to go anywhere, do anything, be anyone" (pp. 67–68). How are names tied to expectations? What do you know about your name? Who named you? Were you named after someone? Research the origin and meaning of your name.
9. Trevor says he was blessed with a trait he inherited from his mother: the "ability to forget the pain in life" (p. 94). Think of some examples from the book where this happens. Do you think Trevor's outlook—"never let[ting] the memory of something painful prevent [him] from trying something new" (pp. 94–95)—is a smart approach to life? Do you have a similar attitude? Why or why not?
10. Think about the meaning of the word *oppression*. Trevor says: "People love to say, 'Give a man a fish, and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he'll eat for a lifetime.' What they don't say is, 'And it would be nice if you gave him a fishing rod'" (p. 182). Consider Trevor's addition to the old adage. What is he trying to say about helping others? Discuss short-term vs. long-term needs.
11. When Trevor finished high school, he ended up working "in the hood" for a few years, instead of pursuing his education. When he looks back on why he stayed, he says, "The hood was strangely comforting, but comfort can be dangerous. Comfort provides a floor but also a ceiling" (p. 212). What does he mean? How do people get stuck doing something comfortable? What do people need to be propelled forward?
12. Reflecting on a potential deal with a stolen camera, Trevor thinks about why we cause others pain. He says: "We live in a world where we don't see the ramifications of what we do to others, because we don't live with them. If we could see one another's pain and empathize with one another, it would never be worth it to us to commit the crimes in the first place" (pp. 215–216). Do you agree with him? Can you think of examples from your own life that support this? How else does this apply to Trevor's life?
13. As a boy, Trevor loved to pull pranks and make people laugh. How did this change how he saw himself? What about how others saw him? How easy or hard do you think it is to say or do funny things?
14. What does Trevor's story suggest about the human condition? What do you take away from his memories, and how can you apply his lessons in your own life?
15. Trevor tells stories of devastating oppression and accepted racism alongside tales of hilarious encounters with vibrant characters, including friends, love interests, and peers. Which are your favorite stories, and why?
16. This memoir is about Trevor's childhood through his teens. What title would you give your memoir? Start writing!