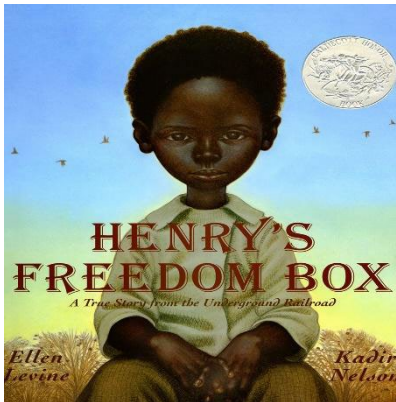


Henry's Freedom Box



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Topics: Constitution, Rights and responsibilities, Student voice, Rules, Legislation, Community building

Genres: Picture books-historical nonfiction, Slavery, Constitutional freedoms, Non fiction

All of us hear about the ‘freedoms’ we have because we live in the United States of America. If we think about the First Amendment of the Constitution, we realize we have the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the right to gather peaceably, and the right to petition the government.

Before the Read Aloud:

As a person living in the United States of America, what does FREEDOM mean to you? Draw a Freedom Box including pictures or words describing what freedom means to you.

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During the Read Aloud:

1. We are about to listen to a true story. Henry Box Brown was a slave who dreamed of a world in which his life belonged to him. Just look at the cover of this book. What do you think is in a box that is called a freedom box? Hint: Look at the cover, does Henry seem to be living in the 21st century? What might he have placed in his box?

2. People are always telling us that we need to find out as much as we can about ourselves, our families, and our culture. As the story Henry's Freedom Box begins, we learn that Henry - and all slaves for that matter - were not even allowed to know their birthdays. Why do you think the slave owners did not want slaves to know their own birthdays? Brainstorm all the answers you think possible.

3. Think about how much freedom meant to Henry Box Brown. Some feel that many people - old and young - take their freedoms that we have in this country for granted. Let's examine those freedoms we have in the First Amendment to the Constitution:
 - Freedom of Speech...Do you have the right to hold any opinion you want as long as you express that opinion in a respectful, responsible manner?
 - Freedom of Religion...Do you and your family have the right to practice any religion that you choose?
 - Freedom of the Press...Do you read a newspaper or listen to the news on TV or on your phone? Do you think that the Government controls what is written in the press?
 - Freedom to Assemble...Do we have the freedom to gather/assemble to protest something we do not think is right? Can you give an example that you might have seen or heard about?
 - Freedom to Petition the Government - Can you go to someone in city government and ask for something for your school or neighborhood?

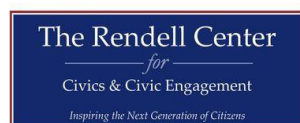
4. Do you think Henry Box Brown was a hero or a leader or both? Be prepared to support your answer.

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5. Henry Box Brown's box was 3 feet long, 2 feet 8 inches deep, and 2 feet wide. Henry had one hole for air. He stayed in the box for 27 hours not knowing what was going to happen or who was going to open his box. Do you think what Henry Box Brown did was worth what he got when his box was opened? Why or why not?

Take Action Project:

If Henry were to time travel from the 1800s to today, what would surprise him? How would he react to our boxes? What would he put into a box for today?



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