

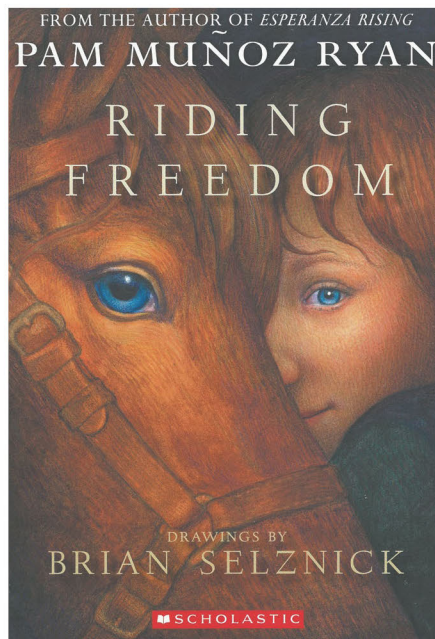
Reading ^{with} Relevance

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

Riding Freedom

A novel by Pam Muñoz Ryan



Recommended for:
Grade Levels
4th-5th

A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around a content-rich novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their character development and self-confidence. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

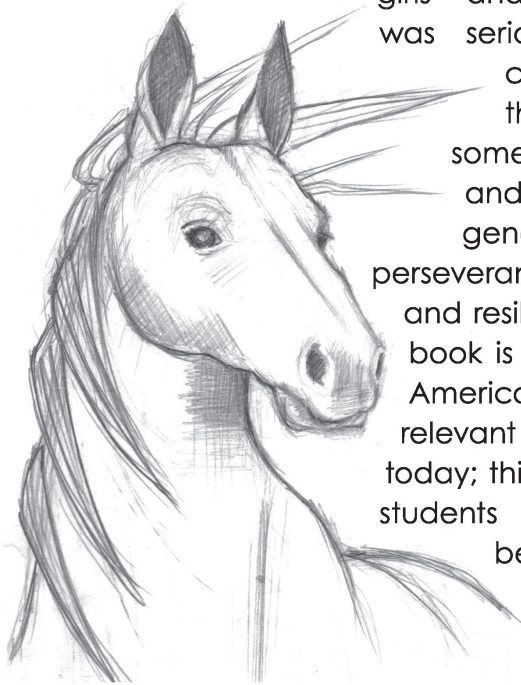
Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this Common Core Standards curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!



Why *Riding Freedom*

Riding Freedom is the fictionalized life story of Charlotte "Charley" Parker and her inspiring journey to pursue her passions during a time when girls' and women's freedom was seriously limited. We

chose this novel for its thoughtful attention to some powerful social and emotional themes: gender, determination, perseverance, freedom, identity, and resilience. Although this book is set in Gold Rush-era America, the novel is deeply relevant for young readers today; this curriculum will help students build connections between Charlotte's moving story and their own.



This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum.
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program.
- Ten individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts.
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program.
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards.
- A culminating essay-writing unit.
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel.

Session 2

pages 18-31

Vocabulary

prospective (pg 18):
adj., hoping to become
something

peering (pg 20): v.,
looking very carefully at
something that is difficult to
see

hovered (pg 20): v.,
waited near a person or
place

bolted (pg 22): v., ran
suddenly and quickly

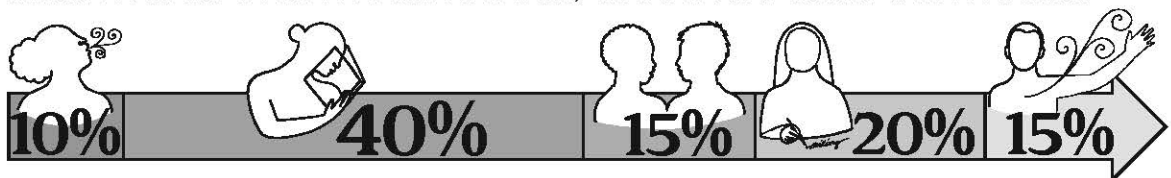
chaperon (pg 30): n.,
someone, usually an adult,
present to maintain order

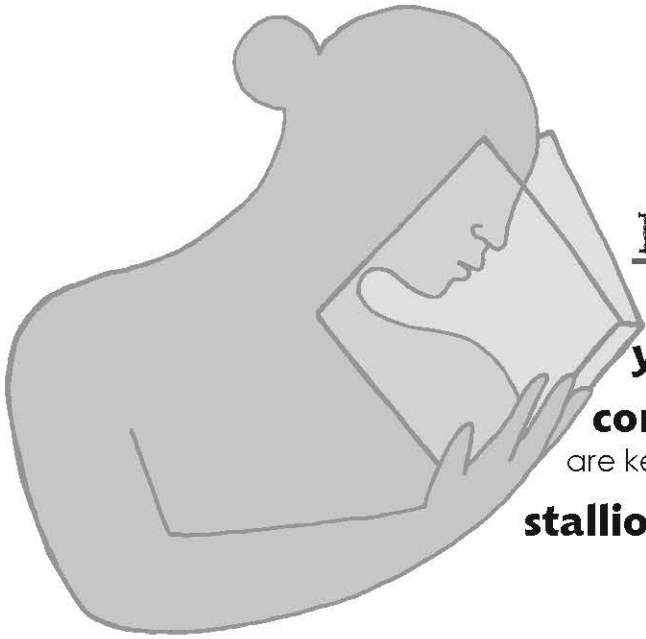
Today's Theme

A critical theme to explore in today's reading is **gender stereotypes**—the expectations society has for the behaviors and interests of girls and boys. Charlotte's passions, interests, and talents don't always line up with what people expect from a girl. She is told that she shouldn't race horses, shouldn't work outside, should help in the kitchen, and that she won't be adopted—all because she is a girl. Help students make connections between the gender stereotypes they see in the book and those they have seen in their everyday lives.

Session 1 Recap

When Charlotte is a baby, her parents are killed in a horse-wagon accident, but Charlotte, whom everyone says is very strong, survives and is taken to an orphanage. She grows up there, and has to work in the kitchen with mean Mrs. Boyle because she is a girl. But Charlotte isn't like other girls. Charlotte loves horses and spends as much time as she can with Vern, the stable master, who is a run-away slave. She and her best friend Hayward dream that they will leave the orphanage and have a fine ranch and home where they can live free and keep out bullies. Charlotte loves the horse Freedom the best, and she wins a race with Freedom.





During Reading

filly (pg 21): a young female horse

young'uns (pg 22): slang for young ones

corral (pg 22): a fenced area in which horses are kept

stallion (pg 24): an adult male horse



Discussion Questions

- Why is Charlotte never adopted?
- What does Charlotte think it feels like to be adopted?
- Why does Mr. Millshark tell Charlotte she can't be in the stables?
- Who was the boy who got adopted? How does Charlotte feel about this? Is it fair?
- How is Charlotte's life at the orphanage different than the boys' lives?
- How do you think Charlotte is feeling in this chapter?
- What does Charlotte decide to do after learning that Hayward is leaving?
- What would you do if you were in Charlotte's situation?

**DEALING WITH
LOSS**

- Charlotte loved Freedom, but when Freedom dies, Charlotte doesn't cry at first. In fact, Charlotte doesn't like crying at all.

Why do you think Charlotte doesn't like crying?

- » Do you feel like it's okay to cry when you are feeling sad or hurt? Why or why not?
- » When you are feeling sad, what are some ways that you express these feelings?
- » How does it make you feel when people tell you not to cry?

INTERESTS

- Mr. Millshark says that the townspeople don't think it's "ladylike" for Charlotte to be working with the horses in the stables, so he has forbidden her from spending time with them anymore, despite her love for the horses.

What is something that you love to spend your time doing?

- » Why does this hobby, interest, activity inspire you?
- » How would you feel if, like Charlotte, someone told you that you couldn't participate in this activity anymore?



Extension Activity

Today's activity allows your students to reflect and write about their talents. Pass out the extension worksheet and give students time to answer the prompts about their talents.

Materials:

- » Talent Talk Handout

Name: _____

What is one way that you are really talented?

What do you like about it?

What personal qualities do you have that make you good at this thing?

**Do you have to practice this a lot?
Are you persistent? Do you work hard at it?**

Charlotte loves horses and everything about horses. She loves to be around them, work with them, and learn more about them, and Charlotte is a really talented rider who is gifted at taking care of horses. Think about a special talent you have or something you are really good at and write about that talent using as many descriptive details as possible.

Talent Talk

Appendix

Additional Activities

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Get to Know MFI

Moving Forward Institute is a nonprofit publisher of social justice educational materials. The organization was created by the founders and staff of Moving Forward Education, a multi-generational tutoring and mentoring organization aimed at fostering academic and emotional success for underserved students in California. Since our founding in 2003, MFE has provided tutoring and mentoring services to thousands of students and has trained hundreds of young adults to enter careers in the educational field. This reading curriculum was developed by our leadership team and its advisory group, including credentialed teachers and college professors. This program has been successfully facilitated throughout California by achieving powerful and measurable results for students and schools. To learn more about our organization, or our research and data, please contact us today.

Our Purpose

At Moving Forward Institute, we know that students can be successful learners when their social and emotional needs are met.

We empower educators to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students by using culturally-relevant and gender-responsive reading curricula.

Training and Professional Development Services

While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our in-person training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula.

Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services!

Contact Us

Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!

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If your students liked *Riding Freedom* . . .

...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out Any Small Goodness, One Crazy Summer, or Bud, Not Buddy. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!