

# Brandi Self: Dinner At Aunt Connie's House

## Standards/Objectives

### Social Studies:

1. 5.5.11: Recognize people who have contributed to reform in TN and the US.
2. 5.5.11: Describe the struggle for racial equality.
3. 5.5.01: Recognize leaders and important people involved with the Civil War
4. 5.5.07: Explain the significance of the Harlem Renaissance

### Language Arts/Reading:

1. 0501.3.2 Identify purpose for writing (entertain, inform, share experiences, persuade, report)
2. 0501.3.8 Select vivid words and active words for writing sample
3. 0501.8.3 Distinguish among various literary genres (poetry, drama, letters, ads, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies)
4. 0501.8.5 First person point of view

### Drama:

1. Content Standard #2: Students imagine and clearly describe characters, their relationships, and their environment
2. Content Standard #6: Students compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts.

### Introduction:

1. Faith Ringgold. What was Faith's primary art form? Why was this unique?
2. Review the story Dinner at Aunt Connie's House that was read previously with the students. Have the student summarize what happened in the story.
3. Several influential African American were addressed in the book. Have the students name as many as they can. Make sure they list at least Rosie Parks, Sojourner Truth, Bessie Smith, Harriet Tubman, and Augusta Savage. As they list, have students summarize what they are important.

### Lesson:

1. Our Artist of the Month is Faith Ringgold. We have been reading her books and studying about her life. In Dinner at Aunt Connie's House, Cassie meets 12 influential African American women. This is done in a unique way. In this case, the women's portraits talk to Cassie and tell her about their lives. We have been working with relating text to text. What other movie or text do we see portraits talking? What do we call it when an actor gives a speech by themselves? Why do you think that Faith Ringgold choose to provide the reader with information about these famous Americans in this way?
2. We have talked before about how the genre historical fiction allows a writer to present his/her audience with historical facts while at the same time adding "spice" to it. In the book we read Cassie learned about the famous Americans because they

gave her an autobiographical sketch of their lives. Often times we can learn about important people by events or actions they participate in as well. For instance, if I were to talk to you about Abe Lincoln. I could give you his biographical sketch. He was the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. He was president during the Civil War. He was assassinated 5 days after the end of the war. I could make this much more meaningful by instead capturing an event, even if I turn it into historical fiction by adding exaggeration or fictional details, that is important in his life and vividly retelling it. To make it more meaningful, I might even tell it as if I am him. This is a change in point of view. What is point of view? What point of view is it when you use I? Go over other pronouns that signal 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view.

3. Holding up frame say----I can't believe that number of soldiers who died on this battlefield. I could never have imagined at the beginning of this horrible war, that it would last this long or be this brutal. How am I going to deliver a speech that honors the hundreds of men how were killed in this battle.
4. What I just performed is called a monologue. Do you know what a monologue is? Go over definition with students. This monologue is a memory or event that could have taken place in Abe Lincoln life. I took what I know about his life and embellished it a little. How were you able to know that it was Lincoln even though I didn't come about and use specific biographical information?
5. Look at the famous Americans on the board. These are Americans who each played an important role in the Civil Rights movement and the end of segregation. Who could give me an autobiographical statement about one of the individuals told in the first person? Go through each of the individuals until all have been reviewed.
6. Earlier this week we each created a visual art piece that was a memory one of these famous Americans might have had. You took on the first person point of view with your drawing. Now, I want you to think about a think about an event or experience that one of these individuals might have had that would help summarize who they were. This event/memory should be something unique to them. For instance, if you were to choose Harriet Tubman what would theme of the event/memory probably be?
7. Choose one of the people on the board. Close your eyes and visualize a memory or event that that person would have participated in. Picture it in your head. How would they describe the memory? Have a couple of students share their visualizations.
8. Monologue Planning Guide: Take a few minutes and write a brief monologue from the point of view of one of the people listed on the board. Make sure you tell an event/memory from the 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view. This isn't an autobiography, but a memory. An actual event they might have experienced. It only needs to be a couple of sentences long.
9. Now look back over your monologue. When you are writing historical fiction and trying to connect with your audience, it is important to use very vivid language. You want to draw on the senses. How it looked, smelled, sounded, etc. For instance in my original monologue, instead of saying "I can't believe the number of soldiers who died on this battlefield" I might start with "The smoke still hangs in the air from the cannons and guns. Everywhere I look I see death. Young boys died fighting for what they believed in." You can paint a picture of the event/memory with words. See if you can add

adjectives and sensory words into your monologue to help paint a picture of what you are saying.

10. Who can remember the 3 tools of an Actor? Body, Voice, Mind. We are going to focus on these tools when we perform our monologue.
11. “It’s time for math. Who can read this to me using the 3 tools of an actor? Have a few kids read they phrase. As an actor your voice tone and expression is very important. How many of you have heard “it’s not what you said, it’s how you said it”. Voice tone and expression involves the emotion a person puts behind what they say. You can completely change the meaning of a statement just by altering your voice tone and expression. Who can read our statement in a way that shows disappointment? Joy?
12. Hand out rubric. Before we perform our monologue, let’s review the rubric that will be used to grade your performance. This will help you “tweek” your monologue to make it the best it can be.
13. When you read your monologue, you need to incorporate tone, expression, and nonverbal gestures to help portray your mood and emotion. This might be easier if you don’t just read your monologue, but instead try to memorize what you are going to say. Before we do this for the class, turn to the person you sit beside and practice. Make sure you read the monologue you use expression and nonverbal gestures. Now I want you to practice saying your monologue with your partner before we perform.
14. Have students do this with a frame. While the students are performing, assess them with the rubric. Have students (audience) give examples of what they liked about each of the performances.
15. Do a final questioning of monologue and point of view. Ask about how nonverbal gestures and facial expression impact what a person says. One final problem solving question:

We know Ruby Bridges’s point of view concerning entering the all the white school for the first time. What would have been the point of view of the school officials?

Assessment:

1. Guided Questions
2. Rubric

Key Vocabulary:

Drama: monologue, point of view, voice tone, facial expression, nonverbal gesture