

LESSON PLAN – READING *FEARLESS MARY* (GRADES 3-5)

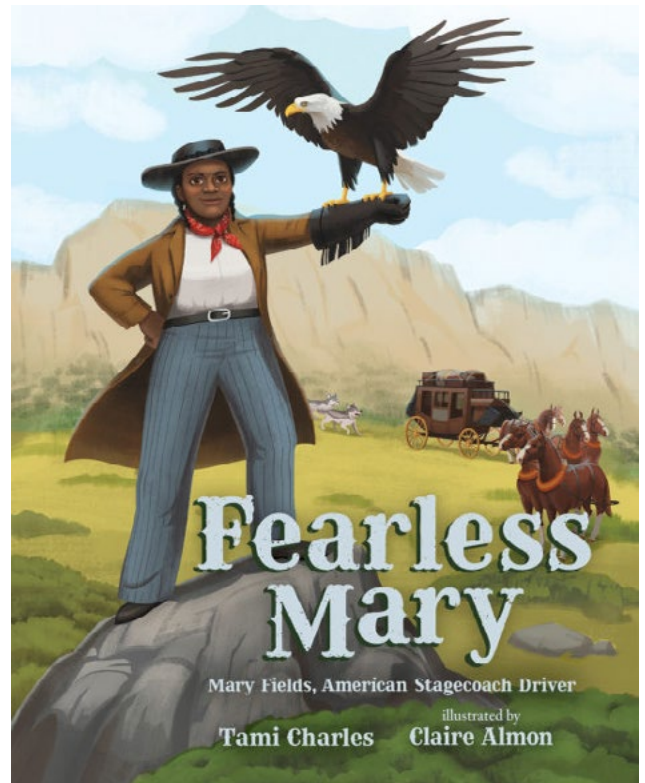
OBJECTIVE: Introduce students to the life of "Fearless Mary," the first female stagecoach driver.

CONTENT AREA: Social Studies

TIME ALLOTMENT: One class period or two class periods if students are writing the essay described in Post Activity II

SKILLS: Reading and analysis, cause and effect

DESCRIPTION: Meet Mary Fields, a trailblazer of the American West. She was formerly enslaved, tough-as-nails and eventually became the first African American woman stagecoach driver in 1895, when, in her 60s, she beat out all the cowboys who wanted the job by being the fastest to hitch a team of six horses. Fields excelled and opened the door for other women and people of color to become stagecoach drivers and postal workers.



TEACHER TIP: Great lesson plan for Women's History Month.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY I

Before reading the book, ask students to look at the book cover. Ask students what they think the book is about. Collect the different opinions, then ask the students to vote until one idea has been chosen by the group. Have a short discussion on how we choose people to represent our country.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY II

Introduce students to the following vocabulary words.

- » **Telegraph:** a communication device used to send messages from a distance using coded signals
- » **Trails:** a marked or established path or route, usually through a wilderness
- » **Stagecoach:** a horse-drawn vehicle that carried passengers and mail, traveling between established stops on a regular schedule

- » **Opportunity:** a favorable chance for advancement or progress
- » **Segregated:** set apart or separated from others due to race
- » **Freedom:** liberation from enslavement; not under the control or in the power of another person
- » **Lasso:** a long rope with a noose at one end that is generally used for catching horses or cattle
- » **Fearless:** brave; free from fear
- » **Navigate:** to steer or stay on a certain path
- » **Gully:** a trench which was originally worn in the earth by running water and through which water often runs after rains

READING

Read the book *Fearless Mary; Mary Fields, American Stagecoach Driver* written by Tami Charles and illustrated by Claire Almon.

POST-READING ACTIVITY I

Ask students the following discussion questions:

- » Mary, being a woman of color, had a lot of things against her. Name one.
- » Are the things Mary faced different now, the same or improved? Why?
- » Mary's bravery opened the door for women to work for the Post Office. What other job(s) can you think of that should be open to women?

POST-READING ACTIVITY II

This activity can be done as homework and reviewed during the second class period. Ask students to write a short essay using the prompt:

- » *What do you want to do when you grow up? Is this job open to women today? Explain why or why not. If not, do you (student) think you are fearless enough to make a change?*

For more online learning resources, visit freedomcenter.org