The Green Book: Black Traveler’s Guide to Happy Motoring

Students learn how African Americans circumvented the “inconveniences” of travel along U. S. highways due to Jim Crow restrictions.

Author: Sara Jenkins and Gale Ekiss
Grade Level: 7-8
Duration: 2-3 class periods

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<td><strong>6-8.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and</strong></td>
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Overview

The Great American Road Trip, often seen as the ultimate sign of freedom for travelers, was not that free for African Americans who had to worry about which businesses would allow them to service their cars and themselves.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will understand the role social networking played in African-American business and leisure travel along America’s highways before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed.

Materials

- Ruth and the Green Book by Calvin Ramsey
- “The Car and Jim Crow” article (located on the website Automobile in American Life and Society)
- “The History of the Green Book” (located at the end Ramsey’s book or at the Lerner Publishing website)
- Downloaded version of The Green Book 1949 edition to print or computer access to electronic version
- Route 66 Map (Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program)
- Citations for My Research worksheet
- Access to computer lab

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Describe the impact that the Jim Crow laws had on African Americans.
2. Integrate visual information with other information in print.

Procedures

SESSION ONE

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to think of a road trip they took that lasted several days.
2. Have students make a list of the preparations before and during the trip. Have the students work in partners to list the items—one item per turn (passing the paper back and forth) without talking. After 2 minutes, have them stop.
3. Read the book or ebook, Ruth and the Green Book.
4. Read “The History of the Negro Motorist Green Book” and “The Car and Jim Crow” highlighting what travelers did in areas where there were no services for blacks.

SESSION TWO

5. Tell the students they are going to plan a road trip for the characters in the story only this time they are traveling from Chicago to Los Angeles using Route 66. They will be divided into groups. Each group will be assigned a city to research in the scanned copy of the 1949 The Green Book.
The Green Book: The Black Traveler’s Guide to Happy Motoring

Their task will be to make one power point slide with two images for a trip scrapbook/guidebook. They should check The Green Book for hotels, gas stations, and any other places that would provide services to the characters from the story. The one slide with two images and information should seem believable for a 1950s traveler.

6. Show the students the sample power point slide “Leaving Chicago” for the beginning of the journey. Explain the Citations for My Research worksheet and scoring system.

7. Then show the students the online version or printed copy of The Green Book. Use Chicago as an example of what is listed. However, in some cities, not all services (gas, hotel, restaurant) are given. Students should then describe what they had to do to make up for those services that are not available. (For example: no hotel—slept in a tent, no restaurant—ate food stored in the car) They can add clip art or actual historic photos to make this seem believable.

8. Groups may need to communicate with cities prior to their city in the journey. They will tell them to buy food at the store and put it in the car. Then when their city comes in the trip, there is food to eat.

9. Groups should write their conclusion page as if they are commenting today on how things have changed for black travelers since the time of The Green Book.

SESSION THREE
Teacher will combine the group slides in order of the cities listed on the Route 66 map. At a later date, show the students the complete power point. Have students share their conclusion paragraphs.

Assessment

Power point slide and conclusion statement can be graded for geography, civics, history, reading and writing according to the scoring guide on the Citations for My Research worksheet. Mastery will be considered 80% or higher.

If Accelerated Reader program or similar computer comprehension program is available, students can take a quiz on Ruth and The Green Book. Mastery will be considered 80% or higher.

Extensions

Invite a guest speaker to class to talk about traveling in the U.S. and using The Green Book.

Have students interview friends and family that used The Green Book.


Visit some of the businesses listed in The Green Book and take pictures or interview neighbors about the sites.

Suggest that students read The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis.

Sources

Automobile in American Life and Society and Copy of The Green Book

• http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Race/R_Casestudy/R_Casestudy2.htm
• http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Race/R_Casestudy/Negro_motorist_green_bk.htm

Story Map based on Ruth and the Green Book http://publicdomain.nypl.org/greenbook-map/

Ruth and The Green Book materials

• Lerner Publishing Group You must sign in to download the pdf files. http://www.ruthandthegreenbook.com

“The Open Road Wasn’t Quite Open to All” http://www.nytimes.com


Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program

Route 66 Maps

• http://www.cr.nps.gov/rt66/map/index.htm
• 1dustytrack.com
• http://www.theroadwanderer.net/route66.htm