



COLUMBUS
CITY SCHOOLS

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY LEARNING ACTIVITY**



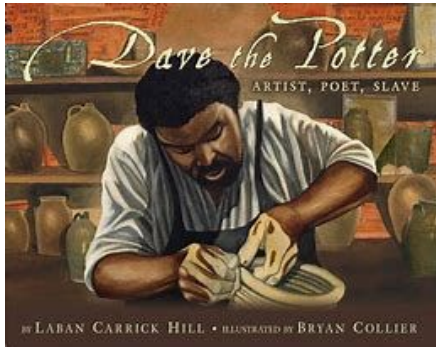
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**ODE
Library
Guideline**

Grade Band: 3-5
Guideline: Information Literacy
**Organizer: Reading Encouragement, Understanding Information,
Primary/Secondary Sources**

Title

Dave the Potter by Laban Carrick Hill and illustrated by Bryan Collier
The book gives a biography of Dave as well as his prowess for creating pottery.



Themes: Poetry, Perseverance,
African-American History

**Resources
and
Materials**

- Book: This beautiful biography can be used for Black History Month, Poetry Month (April) or Book Awards season (late Jan.)
- 2011 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Winner
- 2011 Caldecott Honor
- Documentary video: (6 minutes long)
<https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/material/dave-potter-video>
- Teaching Guide for Educators:
https://www.rif.org/sites/default/files/Support_Materials/Dave-Educators.pdf
- Worksheet: [Nonfiction Read and Respond](#)
- Educator's Guide from Little Brown Publisher:
https://www.teachingbooks.net/media/pdf/LittleBrown/DavePotter_Hill_Guide.pdf

Activity

Pre-reading:

- Tell the students the book you are reading today is a biography. What is a biography? Where are the biographies located in our library? Read the title and author/illustrator. What else do you notice on the cover of the book? (Award medals)
- Inform students on the various awards and what they mean.

Prior Knowledge:

- Find out what your students already know about slavery around the time of the American Civil War. You may need to briefly explain or review to build historical context. Explain that this is the true story of an enslaved man named Dave who lived during that time.
- Locate Dave's home of Edgefield, South Carolina, on a map or globe.
- Vocabulary: potter, vessel, embrace

Purpose for Reading:

- "As we read, make inferences, or guesses, about Dave and his life based on evidence from the text."

Discussion questions:

- The book goes through the entire process of making a ceramic pot. Let's think about the process from beginning to end. What are the different steps? Were there any that surprised you?
- One big idea in the book is that Dave knows the whole time, from beginning to end of making a pot, how it is going to look. What other tasks or projects can you think of that require you to have an idea from the very start in order to finish?
- The author, Laban Carrick Hill, writes the book itself as if it were a poem. He uses many similes throughout the book to create images with words. What is a simile? What are some examples of similes throughout the book? (One answer might be: "Like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat...") Did these images help you understand Dave and how he made his works of art better? If so, how?
- In the beginning of the book, Hill writes that "to Dave, it was a pot... to hold memories." What do you think this means? Is he being literal? How can a pot hold memories?
- Show students the photograph of Dave's pottery in the back of the book and visit this site for a photo you can zoom in on from the Smithsonian: http://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:nmah_1181785?q=url%3Aedanmdm%3Anmah_1181785&record=1&hlterm=url%3Aedanmdm%3Anmah_1181785&inline=true
- Tell students some of Dave's pots are in museums and some have sold for many thousands of dollars.

If you have taught **primary sources**, this would be a good time to point out that these pots are primary sources of information from that time in history. Some of the photographed pots have dates inscribed on them.

What is a Primary Source?

Primary sources are the voices of the past. They are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without first hand experience. Documents, letters, posters, film, artifacts, photographs, maps, etc. can be primary sources that tell the story of people, places, an event of the past.

Why Use Primary Sources in the Classroom?

Examining primary sources gives students a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. Helping students analyze primary sources can also guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills (from the [Library of Congress](#)).

Where Do I Find Primary Sources?

- [Library of Congress](#)
- [National Archives](#)
- [History Colorado](#)
- [Colorado Encyclopedia](#)
- [Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection](#)
- [Local Museums](#) (Scroll down to the bottom of the page for a map of local history museums and articles)

Lesson Extension Ideas:

- **A COUPLE OF COUPLETS:** Pick two of Dave's couplets and compare them. What was Dave's mindset as he wrote each one? Students should support their inferences with evidence from the poems, the book, or their own experiences. As a group, using chart paper, write a couple of couplets about the importance of reading and writing.

I read each night so I can know.

Of all the world's places I'd like to go.

When I write something funny to my friend

She writes back, you forgot the end.

- Students complete the [Nonfiction Read and Respond](#) worksheet .
- Collaborate with the Art Teacher on a pottery lesson.