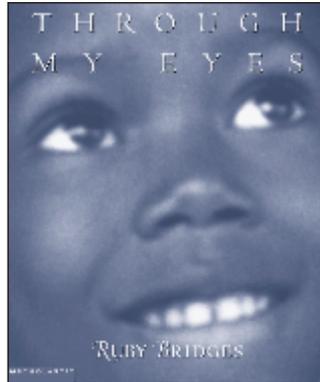


# Through My Eyes



by Ruby Bridges  
genre: biography

**Level W**

**Summary** On November 14, 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges, surrounded by federal marshals, became the first African-American student to attend the all-white William Frantz Public School in New Orleans, Louisiana. Ruby tells her story in this autobiography, which also serves as a historical document. Throughout the book, readers will find quotes from newspaper accounts of the time and from Ruby's family members and teachers, as well as sidebars that illustrate how Ruby pops up in both John Steinbeck's book *Travels with Charley* and a Norman Rockwell painting.

## Background Information

In 1951, Oliver Brown, an African-American railroad worker, sued the Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education for not allowing his daughter, Linda Brown, to attend an all-white school near her home. Thurgood Marshall, who later became the first African-American justice of the Supreme Court, presented the legal argument for Brown. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that segregation violates the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which states that all citizens have the right to equal protection under the law.

For more information on the Civil Rights movement, see the web site of The Leadership Council on Civil Rights at [www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org).

## Supportive Text Features

The photographs in this autobiographical text are dramatic, and they strongly support the events that swept up New Orleans in the fall of 1960, as well as the feelings experienced by one small child the time. The text is written in a simple, straightforward style that should be easily comprehensible for most students.

Praise students for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 54 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

## Challenging Text Features

There are excerpts throughout the book, including quotes from Ruby's mother, the book by Robert-Jay Green, and *The New York Times*, that contain reflections on the events that Ruby Bridges experienced. They are written from a different point of view than the rest of the text. The content of these sidebars adds information not found in the running text.

## Comprehension Strategies

### Understanding Cause/Effect

Cause-and-effect relationships usually make up the events in a nonfiction book or article. A cause is the reason something happened. It answers the question “Why did this happen?” An effect is the result. It answers the question “What happened?”

- Why did the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People contact Ruby’s parents in the summer of 1960?
- At first, Ruby and her family must have felt like the whole world was against them. But that changed. What caused so many people around the country to start sending money and other gifts to the Bridges?
- Why did Robert Coles become interested in Ruby?
- What effects does Ruby hope the Ruby Bridges Foundation will have?

### Understanding Genre: Autobiography

This book is an autobiography in which a person tells the story of his or her own life. An autobiographical narrative tells about an event in the writer’s life and often contains personal ideas about the importance of the event.

- What feelings does Ruby describe when she first attends the William Frantz School?
- In what way did the importance of the events of 1960 influence the rest of Ruby’s life?

## Phonics and Word-Solving Strategy

### Recognizing Variations of Words

Explain that words formed from the same base word are related in both spelling and meaning. Prefixes, suffixes, or both can be added to these base words to form new words.

- Write the following sentences from page 59 on the chalkboard:  
*When The Story of Ruby Bridges was published in 1995, I became visible again to the public, and amazing things began to happen.*  
*When she saw the book, she was able to contact me through my publisher.*

- Ask students to identify the base word that can be found in the words *published* and *publisher*. Then have them identify the suffixes that have been added.
- Have students identify a prefix that can be added to make a variation of the word *published*.
- Encourage students to add both prefixes and suffixes to the base word *public* to form variations on this word.

## Oral Language/Vocabulary

- Discuss with students other young people who struggled against tremendous odds. Have students compare the difficulties faced by those people to Ruby’s experiences.
- Have children review the photographs in the book. Ask them which photos look as if they might be from Ruby’s personal collection, and which might have been taken by news photographers covering the integration of the William Frantz School.

## Extending Meaning Through Reading and Writing

- Tell students to reread the jump-rope rhyme about Ruby Bridges on the last page of the book. Then have them choose an incident from Ruby’s life and write either a rhyming or a free verse poem about it. **(Poetry)**
- Ask students to review the news story excerpts on pages 14 and 16. Then have them write their own news story about an incident in New Orleans in the fall of 1960. Remind students to answer the 5W’s: *who, what, where, when, and why*. **(Expository)**

## Fluency Practice

**Model fluent reading of a passage from the book, stressing appropriate pauses that would occur at the ends of sentences, before commas, and so on. Then have the group read a passage from the book together.**