

LESSON E-UI-L4

A Brave Hero

Unit I: Human Behavior

Grade Levels: K–3

Time: 45–60 minutes



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Interdisciplinary Connections

Literacy, art, character education, social studies, music

Objectives

- Realize that we are all able to make contributions and help others.
- Understand the effects of our words and actions on others.
- Understand that greatness isn't only for famous people or famous deeds.
- Appreciate the accomplishments of firefighters.

Key Terms

- hero
- rescuer
- trolley
- volunteer
- pumper
- tenement
- upstander
- wedged

Lesson Materials

- *New York's Bravest* by Mary Pope Osborne (Random House Children's Books, 2006)
- drawing paper
- journals
- crayons or markers
- other books:
 - American Tall Tales* by Mary Pope Osborne
 - John Henry: An American Legend* by Ezra Jack Keats

Lesson Background

- Ask the students: "What is a hero?" Have them describe their answers in writing and then draw an image representing a hero.
- Have student volunteers share their descriptions and/or images with the class. (If available, use an overhead projector or ELMO projector to show the images on a screen.)

Lesson Plan

- Introduce the book to the students and explain that it is a story about a hero.
- Read the story to the class and show pictures from the book. Discuss the dedication page and the historical note.
- Have the students participate in a Think-Pair-Share activity. Guide pairs to focus on these discussion questions one at a time:

How was Mose brave? What did he do? Who did he save?



New York's Bravest,
by Mary Pope Osborne
marypopeosborne.com

How are real-life firefighters like Mose?

How was firefighting different in Mose’s day than it is now?

What qualities of firefighters are the same today as they were in the past?

Which qualities are different?

Who does Mose represent?

- Have the students discuss their responses and then record them in their journals.
- Show the students the illustrations by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher in *New York’s Bravest*. Discuss the traits that make the characters “larger than life.” Brainstorm a list of adjectives that describe characters in tall tales like this story.

Evidence of Understanding

Have student volunteers share their responses to the discussion questions.

Additional Activities and Resources

- Guide students through a discussion of tall tales:
 - Ask the students to name their favorite tall tales. Have them draw a picture of a tall tale character and then discuss in small groups why they admire these characters.
 - Explain that tall tale heroes were ordinary folks about whom extraordinary stories were told. Tall tales can be written about contemporary, everyday people: firefighters, teachers, nurses, students, police officers, housewives, truck drivers, mechanics, plumbers, waitresses, computer operators, etc.
 - Ask the students why the book *New York’s Bravest* is considered a tall tale.
- Rewrite the story of Mose Humphreys as a play. Have the students add new characters and new, extraordinary feats that Mose did. Have them make hand puppets of the characters and perform the play in a puppet theater.
- Davy Crockett and John Henry have songs written about them. Have the students write a song about Mose, New York’s bravest firefighter, using the tune from a familiar song.

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Have a Mose Humphreys Day at your school to honor the firefighters in your town.
 - Begin with a visit to a community firehouse with your family or class.
 - Share the story *New York’s Bravest* with the firefighters. Be sure to note the dedication and historical note.
 - Ask the firefighters to talk about their own reasons for joining or volunteering for the fire department.
 - Ask about the history of the fire department in your community.
 - After the visit, have the students create a plaque for the firehouse with their own dedication and historical note.
- Write letters to firefighters thanking them for the job they do.
- Encourage your students to be good citizens in the spirit of Mose Humphreys. Create a Mose Humphreys Good Deed Award. Every month, give out the award to a student who does something “above and beyond.”