



Connecting it All: How Connecting Students to a Text Increases Motivation to Read

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Students want to feel connected to a text. They want to read books that reflect them and their cultures. So many times classroom libraries are filled with books of mainstream culture. What effect does that have on the children? It is important for students to see themselves in the text. Students can begin to develop their identity as they read books that reflect them.

In this unit, students will participate in activities that will help them connect to the text. After reading about the life of Booker T. Washington, a comparison organizer may be used by students to visibly show the similarities and differences. Students will examine how his determination to accomplish his goals allowed him to go from being a slave to the Founder of a University. Since Washington is an example of how to set goals, students will use his model to set and accomplish their own goals.

The complex text, *Up From Slavery*, in this unit can be used at any grade; however, the activities were written with primary students in mind. Students of any culture can benefit from the lessons taught by Washington's life. The lessons in this unit transcend ELA and connect multiple discipline areas.

(Developed for ELA/Social Studies, grade 3; recommended for ELA/Social Studies, grades 3-5)

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