



CANNON February BOOK OF THE MONTH
Crossing Bok Chitto
 By Tim Tingle

Summary: There is a river called Bok Chitto that cuts through the state of Mississippi. Many years ago this river served as a boundary: on one side lived the slave owners, on the other, the Choctaw Indians. Martha Tom, a young Choctaw, while out searching for blueberries one day, breaks her village's rules against crossing the Bok Chitto. She meets Little Mo and becomes friends with him and the slaves on the plantation on the other side of the river. When Little Mo's mother is slated to be sold, Martha Tom helps little Mo and his family cross the river to freedom.

Building Background knowledge:



Crossing Bok Chitto is a Choctaw *tale* that actually began as a song and later became a tale as part of the Choctaw *oral story telling tradition* and is now a book. This particular tale was passed down to keep alive the story of friendship between the Choctaw Indians and the slaves of Mississippi near the river Bok Chitto where the Choctaws built stepping stones, just below the river's surface to enable the slaves to cross to freedom.



This link will take you to a YouTube book trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFp8iO8bMQs>

Each of the BoM teacher information sheets for this year will include 'Goldilocks' vocabulary strategy.

Vocabulary Connection: "Goldilocks" Vocabulary (*What Really Matters in Vocabulary*, P. Cunningham)

Step 1: Identify 3 "Goldilocks" words from the text. The following words have been chosen with consideration of the usefulness and appeal of the words to your students and how well the words are defined by the context and pictures.)

boundary slave escape

Step 2: Read the text for the first time, making no reference to the three chosen words. (The first time you read aloud is for enjoyment.)

Step 3: Show the three words to students. (Help students pronounce the words but do not yet share the meanings. The point is for students to practice discovering the word meaning during the next reading of the text.)

Step 4: Reread the text and have the children stop you when you read each of the words. (Place the words on cards where students can clearly see them. When they signal you, stop reading and use the context, pictures and word parts to discuss each word.)

Step 5: Help the children connect their own experience to the three words. (After reading, focus again on each of the three words and ask a question that helps students connect their own experiences to the text.)

Step 6: Reread and have the children retell the story, using the three words in their retell.

Step 7: Display the title, a cover picture and the three words somewhere in the room. (Tell students that they are going to be on the lookout for these three words whenever they read or are read to.)

Research tells us the children need at least 15-20 exposures to a word in order to know the word.

C. Snow, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Thinking Map: Choose two of the characters in this story (Martha Tom, her mother, Little Mo, his Father) and create Bubble Maps using words that describe the characters as the story unfolds. Site text evidence to support word choice.

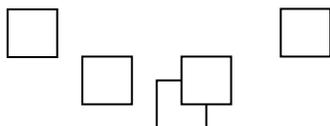
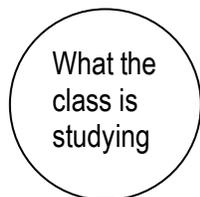


Frame of reference: After completing the Bubble Maps add the ethics icon to the frame of reference and discuss posing the questions: What made the Choctaws decide to help the runaway slaves? Were there other groups that helped runaway slaves? What risks/rewards were involved?

Follow *the Drinking Gourd* or *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* would be good stories to pair with this book.

Differentiation:

SIDE TRACK



Example: The class is studying **space**. You get side tracked and conduct a mini study about **orbits** as the class continues its study.

(Kaplan, 2002)

My class is reading...

Crossing Bok Chitto
 A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and



I'm sidetracked and will do a mini study.

I will write three summaries for this story: one from the perspective of Martha Tom, one from the perspective of Little Mo and one from the perspective of the plantation owners.

Considering the story of "Crossing Bok Chitto" by Tim Tingle, what can you infer about typical activity near the Choctaw Nation border? How does this tie in with Choctaw Nation demographics? Done.Â 2. How does that compare to the Choctaw's surrounding in "Crossing Bok Chitto"? 3. How do their clothing differ? Done. texts. Crossing Bok Chitto. by. Tim Tingle. Publication date. 2006. Topics. Choctaw Indians -- Juvenile fiction., Choctaw Indians -- Fiction., Slavery -- Fiction., Friendship -- Fiction., Indians of North America -- Mississippi -- Fiction., Mississippi -- History -- 19th century -- Fiction. Thus begins Crossing Bok Chitto , told by award-winning Choctaw storyteller Tim Tingle and brought to life with the rich illustrations of Jeanne Rorex Bridges. Martha Tom, a young Choctaw girl, knows better than to cross Bok Chitto, but one day--in search of blackberries--she disobeys her mother and finds herself on the other side. A tall slave discovers Martha Tom. A friendship begins between Martha Tom and the slave's family, most particularly his young son, Little Mo. Martha Tom, a young Choctaw girl, knows better than to cross Bok Chitto, but one dayâ€”in search of blackberriesâ€”she disobeys her mother and finds herself on the other side. A tall slave discovers Martha Tom. A friendship begins between Martha Tom and the slaveâ€™s family, most particularly his young son, Little Mo.