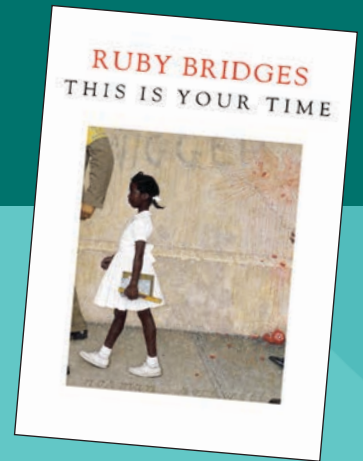


READING BANNED & CHALLENGED BOOKS

THIS IS YOUR TIME BY RUBY BRIDGES

Civil rights icon Ruby Bridges—who, at the age of six, was the first black child to integrate into an all-white elementary school in New Orleans—inspires readers and calls for action in this moving letter.



- Discuss why Ruby Bridges writes this book as an open letter to the young peacemakers of America. What might young peacemakers learn from Bridges? Explain the title of the book.
- The cover art is a painting by Norman Rockwell titled “The Problem We All Live With.” Explain the title of the painting. Who are the men in the painting? Why are they only partially visible? There is a racial slur written on the wall. How does the word illustrate the problem?
- Study the iconic photograph on page 5. Discuss the courage and bravery that Ruby Bridges showed as a six-year-old. Bridges says that she had looked forward to making new friends at school. How is it obvious that Bridges did eventually make new friends?
- Six-year-old Bridges walked into William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans flanked by U.S. Marshalls. Why wasn’t it safe for her father to walk her to school? Discuss why her father was fired from his job.
- Many teachers walked off the job because they didn’t want to teach black children. Who was Barbara Henry? Discuss the relationship that formed between Ruby and her teacher. Explain what Bridges means when she says, “We knew we had to be at school for each other.” (p. 16)
- Bridges says, “I was black, and that meant I didn’t matter.” (p. 14) How did the parents of the white children treat Ruby like she didn’t matter? Describe the protesters outside her school. Some have children with them. What message did they send their children and children all across America whose parents were watching this event unfold on national news?
- Explain the sign, “No child is free until all are free.” (p. 29) How is Bridges’s story about freedom for all? Discuss overt and covert racism. Ruby Bridges experienced overt racism when she walked to school each morning. Discuss examples of overt and covert racism in our society.



- Discuss the symbolism of the clasped hands in the photography on page 47. How is this photograph about hope?
- Why does Bridges say that racism is a “grown-up disease”? Discuss how this disease is rampant in our society today. How is censorship about this period in our nation’s history fueled by the disease that Bridges references?
- Rep. Matt Krause of Texas issued a list of books that “contain information that might make students feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any form of psychological distress because of race or sex.” *This Is Your Time* was placed on the list in 2021. Why is Krause more concerned with comfort than truth? Who does this benefit? How is history filled with uncomfortable times? What might children learn from these times?
- As a result of Krause’s list, *This Is Your Time* was banned from the Spring Branch Independent School District and the North East Independent School District in Texas. Other books by Ruby Bridges have been challenged in Iowa and Pennsylvania. How would you convey the hope in Bridges’s story to school board members?
- Ruby Bridges has addressed children all across the nation. Explain what Vae, one child that Bridges encounters, means when she says, “We are like a bag of M&M’s—different on the outside, but the same on the inside.” (p. 32) How do those who want to censor this book focus only on the outside? Why is the inside more important?
- In 2022, Bridges testified to the United States Oversight and Reform Committee. She stated, “My books are written to bring people together.” Explain why bringing people together provides optimism for the future.

Guide written by Pat Scales, children’s literature consultant



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