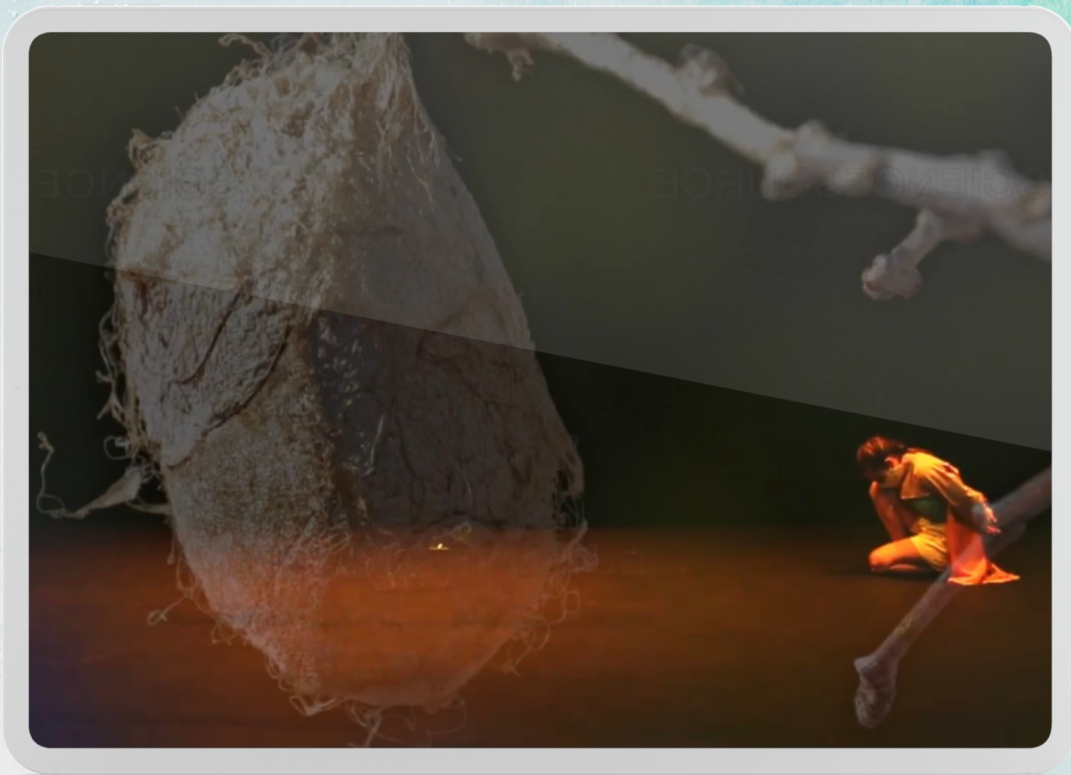


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# MOTH



**GRADE: FIFTH**

**SUBJECTS: ELA, SOCIAL STUDIES, MUSIC**

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# THE STORY OF THE MOTH

I remember once, when I was about ten or eleven, my friend Judy and I found a moth cocoon and brought it in to school. It was January and there were doily snowflakes taped to the windowpanes. Teacher kept the cocoon in her desk all morning. She brought it out right before recess, when we started to get restless.

In a book we found that it was the cocoon of a Polyphemus Moth and we saw what the adult moth would look like. It would be beautiful. It would have a wingspan of six inches, much larger than a swallowtail butterfly. The wings would be a velvet brown edged in bands of blue and pink, and in the center of each hind wing, there would be a big blue and yellow eyespot. It would be beautiful.

We passed the cocoon around; it was heavy. As we held it tightly in our fists, the creature inside began to warm. The cocoon began to squirm and then jerk violently. I can still feel it thumping against the curve of my palm.

We kept passing it around. When it came to me again, it was so hot; it jumped half out of my hand. The teacher took the cocoon from me and put it in a mason jar. It was coming. There was no stopping it now, January or not. Teacher fades... classmates fade... I fade... I don't remember anything but that thing's struggle to be a moth or to die trying.

It emerged at last, all wet and crumpled up. It was a male. He stood still, but he breathed.

But something was wrong. He couldn't spread his wings. You see, there was no room in that jar. And the chemical that coats a moth's wings like varnish... it dried and hardened his wings as they were, all stuck to his back, as useless and as wrinkled as dirty tissues. I remember how hard he struggled to free them. I can still see that so clearly, how hard he struggled.

The next thing I remember, it was recess. I was standing on the driveway, alone, shivering in the cold. Someone, it must have been the teacher, had let the moth go. Someone had given the moth his freedom... and he was walking away.

He heaved himself down that asphalt driveway by tiny degrees. His crumpled wings glued to his back were still now. Yet he heaved himself on. The bell rang. I was glad I had to go. I had to get away from him. I left. I ran inside.

I dream about him now. And in my dream, I never see him as he could have been. Big and beautiful and flying free. In my dreams, he is always crawling down that driveway, all hunched up and deformed. And I think to myself... if I had just let him alone, ya know? What if I had just thought about it first, and let him be.



**AUTHOR:** DR. AMY BRAMBLE

**SUBJECTS:** ELA, SOCIAL STUDIES, MUSIC

**GRADE:** FIFTH

## STANDARDS

### ELA

Inquiry Based:

Standard 3: Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.

Standard 5: Reflect throughout the inquiry process to assess metacognition, broaden understanding, and guide actions, both individually and collaboratively.

Reading:

Standard 6: Summarize key details and ideas to support analysis of thematic development.

Standard 7: Analyze the relationship among ideas, themes, or topics in multiple media, formats, and in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Standard 4: Demonstrate an understanding of the conflicts, innovations, and social changes in the United States, including South Carolina, from 1950–1980.

Enduring Understanding: The United States during the post-World War II period was dominated by a power conflict that pitted former allies against each other over economic and political differences, which affected all aspects of American life at home and abroad.

Additionally, various civil rights movements within the United States and South Carolina impacted society.



## MUSIC

**Artistic Processes: Creating-** I can use the elements of music to communicate new musical ideas and works.

- Anchor Standard 1: I can arrange and compose music.

**Artistic Processes: Responding-** I can respond to musical ideas as a performer and listener.

- Anchor Standard 6: I can analyze music.

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## MATERIALS

Novels:

- "Through My Eyes" by Ruby Bridges
- "The Lions of Little Rock" by Kristin Levine
- "Let the Children March" by Monica Clark-Robinson
- "Child of the Dream (A Memoir of 1963)" by Sharon Robinson
- [Civil Rights Songs](#)

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The teacher and students will discuss how a performance can really portray strong emotions and have intense themes that an audience can relate to.
2. Introduce the [Moth performance](#).
3. The teacher will ask students how they felt while watching the video. What are some themes they feel are portrayed in this performance?



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## LESSON

1. Students will rewatch the Moth performance. The teacher will ask students how they can relate to the student speaking and how they can relate to the moth. The class will discuss the themes of self-growth, struggle, perseverance, being a bystander versus taking action to help, etc.
2. The teacher will integrate social studies and ELA through reading novels and curriculum on the civil rights movement. Connect the theme of the moth to how African Americans had constant perseverance to better society and laws. Discuss how this struggle is still happening today. Connect the theme of being a bystander versus taking action and supporting a cause or others to help them.
3. The music component can be differentiated for students depending on their comfort level with music. The teacher will work with students on identifying different songs during the civil rights time period and how the music, much like the moth performance, can cause emotion in the listener. Students can work to create their own song that can symbolize struggle, perseverance, and success. The student would need to develop lyrics and may create or use the musical components of a current song. Students can also select a song (different than those discussed in class) that they feel symbolizes struggle, perseverance, and success. If a student selects a song, s/he would have to analyze the lyrics, composition, and musical components to explain why s/he feels this song is a good representation.

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## CLOSURE

The teacher will have students present their songs or song analysis to the class. The teacher will relate to how students have their own struggles to overcome on a regular basis and how they need to have perseverance and help one another.



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## ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on their novel discussion and assignment as well as song composing and/or analysis.

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## RESOURCES

Bridges, Ruby, and Margo Lundell. *Through My Eyes: Ruby Bridges*. Scholastic Press, 2009.

Clark-Robinson, Monica, et al. *Let the Children March*. Findaway World, LLC, 2019.

Levine, Kristin, and Annie Beth Ericsson. *The Lions of Little Rock*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2012.

Masley, Ed. "25 Songs of Social Justice, Freedom, Civil Rights and Hope to Honor Black History Month." *The Arizona Republic*, Arizona Republic, 6 Feb. 2021, [www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/music/2021/01/12/best-civil-rights-protest-songs/6602985002/](http://www.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/music/2021/01/12/best-civil-rights-protest-songs/6602985002/).

Robinson, Sharon. *Child of the Dream: A Memoir of 1963*. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2019.