

10 Things Every Teacher Should Know

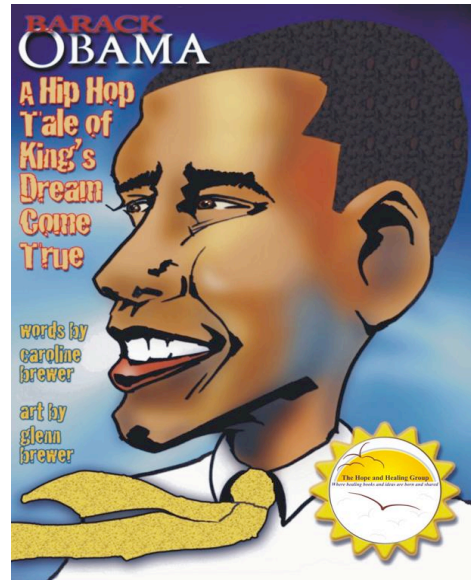
About Teaching With

Barack Obama: A Hip Hop Tale of King's Dream Come True

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- 1) The first thing you should know is that your students are going to LOVE the artwork in this book. The colors in *Barack Obama: A Hip Hop Tale of King's Dream Come True* will make your students' eyes pop! And the moment students are captivated by a book's illustrations is your first teachable moment. If you have young students, say ages 4 -6, who are not yet reading, you can take a picture walk with them through this book and discuss what they see happening in the illustrations. And you can use this exploration to write key words and phrases from the book that you can teach your students to recognize and read. Students are like adults when it comes to pictures and color. They are deeply attracted to and heavily influenced by them.



- 2) The second thing you should know about *Barack Obama: A Hip Hop Tale* is that one of the most powerful educational tools embedded in this book is its 60-sets of rhyming words, such as these: *street, meet, feet, hope, cope, say, day, fear, dear, skin, within, frogs, dogs, hogs, flap, nap, night, fright, uptight, light, soon, moon, ear, near, air, fair, all, fall, down, around, sound.*

We know that children love rhymes because they're fun. But research tells us that rhyme builds memory, vocabulary, and confidence faster than any other reading technique. Confidence is crucial in helping "hungry" readers see themselves as fluent, successful readers. Nursery rhymes are introduced to children at infancy and help them take their first steps up the ladder of literacy.

The thing I love most about rhymes is what Author Jim Trelease revealed. He said rhymes are "comfortable, predictable," and "the closest things to a mother's heartbeat." And that's why children will love *Barack Obama Hip Hop Tale* and the lessons you teach using it.

- 3) The third thing you should know is that you can boost, enhance, and teach your students dozens of English language skills using this book alone. No matter your students' ages or grades, from kindergarten to 12th grade, lessons abound. Unlike some children's books that are written strictly for a certain age group or reading level, *BO: HHT* gives you a variety of sentence lengths and styles. Declarative, Imperative, Interrogative, Exclamatory, Complete, Compound, and Complex Sentences can be found in this book. Not to mention compound words, onomatopoeia, and all sorts of grammar conventions that are taught from K – 12.

10 Things Every Teacher Should Know About Teaching with BO:Hip Hop Tale

4) You can begin or extend your students' knowledge of fun facts about animals with this book. There are three types of animals in the book: frogs, rats, and crows. You will see that the way the animals behave in the story life is consistent with their behavior in real, natural life. For instance, in *BO: HHT*, we see frogs taking a piggyback ride, lounging in trees, flying through the air, and making lots of loud noises. Real frogs do all of these things. In fact, although we mainly think of frogs as jumpers, I know that I didn't know that frogs are the best *leapers* in the world. In online research, I found that frogs can launch themselves more than 20 times their own length. That would be similar to an adult jumping 100 feet! Imagine that.

Frogs also are noisy little beasts, and in *BO: HH Tale*, you and your students will encounter some very noisy, boisterous frogs. In fact, some frogs make so much noise they can be heard for miles. And the web site says the ears of frogs are connected to their lungs and that keeps them from blowing out their eardrums while they make all that noise.

5) You can begin or extend your students' social studies and current events education with this book. You can discuss and use the book to teach the election process, the Electoral College, governmental structure, the economy, health care, education, drugs, crime, justice, and neighborhood activism. You can discuss our nation's history as it relates to African Americans, Latinos, and Asians and their experiences in politics. Moreover, you can guide students through comparison and contrast between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barack Obama.

6) You also can enhance your students' understanding of Phonics: *Barack Obama: A Hip Hop Tale of King's Dream Come True* contains many examples of long vowels, Short vowels, Silent e, Vowel and Consonant Blends. Moreover, there are four very common vowel pairs in this book. They are: **ow**, as in down and frown; and **ou**, as in sound and around; **ee**, as in see and tree, and **ea** as in fear and dear. The phonics lessons are nearly unlimited with this book.

7) You can teach and enhance your students' understanding of Proper Nouns – As you know, Proper Nouns, in general, are like common nouns. They identify people, places, things, events, qualities and ideas. But Proper Nouns could be considered Super Nouns because they have the power to **name** things. Names make things unique and powerful. For instance, help your students understand that their names are Proper Nouns. The name of the city, town, or county they reside in is a Proper Noun. Each student and his hometown are unique. They are the only ones that exist and that gives them power.

Barack Obama: A Hip Hop Tale of King's Dream Come True is in itself a Proper Noun and also a book that contains dozens of Proper Nouns. They include names such as Barack Obama, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Michelle, Malia, Sasha and places such as, Chicago, Niagara Falls, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Florida, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and the fictitious Crabby Crowland. Play some Proper Noun games with your students. Send them on a Proper Noun hunt to see if they can identify at least one Proper Noun on each page OR find a common noun that they can turn into a Proper Noun.

8) You can play games, such as Rhyming "BINGO," with vocabulary from this book. Write me for a list of the 60-sets of rhyming words, plus a blank card that can be filled in like a BINGO card and you'll be on your way to helping boost your students' vocabulary and comprehension.

9) You can help students jumpstart their dramatic skills using *BO: A HH Tale*. This book is nothing short of an emotional rollercoaster ride, with characters that experience highs, lows, joy, pain, sadness, and excitement. Give your students a license to be dramatic – and help them improve their literacy skills -- by having them role-play some of this book's thrilling characters.

10 Things Every Teacher Should Know About Teaching with BO:Hip Hop Tale

10) You can continue to build your students' comprehension skills using this book. When children can explain or answer questions about what they read or what's being read to them, that's a good indication that they comprehend the story. *Barack Obama: A Hip Hop Tale of King's Dream Come True* contains lots of fascinating situations, scenarios, and characters, such as grouchy frogs and crabby crows, which make it easy to check students' comprehension.

In a 2nd grade classroom, where 100 percent of students improved their reading skills over six months using this book as the main text, students were asked to identify problems the Hoppers had, as well as problems Mr. Obama encountered. Students then suggested solutions for each problem. In addition, students made comparisons between the problems the Hoppers had and the problems facing communities. When students are challenged to problem-solve, especially using material relevant to real life, it provides a great comprehension-expanding opportunity.

Testimonials

"I have been amazed at what this book has done not only to teach my 2nd graders about President Obama's historic road to the White House, but also at how it has taught my children to become much better readers...Some of my best days teaching have been with this book."

-- *Marni Barron, veteran teacher and instructional coach.*

"I would use this book on my booklist for book reports and oral reports. It can be used to teach LA and Social Studies standards. The voting process could be taught. Students could research the red and blue states, and create a variety of maps, which would cover Science standards. They could investigate health care, the cost of the wars, the recent bailout, and create budgets for items that they believe would improve education in their school and city. They could write a song based on the book (Music), and even do some research on basketball, since it's Obama's favorite sport (P.E.). There's no limit!" – Barbara Taylor Cook, Teacher, New Orleans, LA

"My 8-year-old daughter could not put the book down. It was visually fascinating to her. She seemed to really enjoy the illustrations and the way the book read in rhyme. We read it together and it created a dialogue between us that was quite interesting. It is a beautiful book, very educational. I am excited to recommend it." - *Mother of an 8-year-old daughter*

"Caroline Brewer has written a timely and accurate portrait of the first African-American President of the United States. The writing is uplifting and encouraging to children of all ages. This book is a must-read for anyone who seeks hope, unity and change. The artwork is vivid and amazingly beautiful and it makes the story come alive. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and I guarantee that others will too. -- *Frankye Regis, teaching assistant and mother of 10-year-old Marc*