

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan library programs as well as activities for family time, day care, or the classroom.

Meet Ohio native Oge Mora, who writes and illustrates picture books, and Tennessee-based author and educator Rita Lorraine Hubbard.

Engage children in conversations and activities that explore creativity, ambition, and perseverance.

Explore fun activities that align with Ohio's Learning Standards for kindergarten through grade 3.

The Oldest Student How Mary Walker Learned to Read

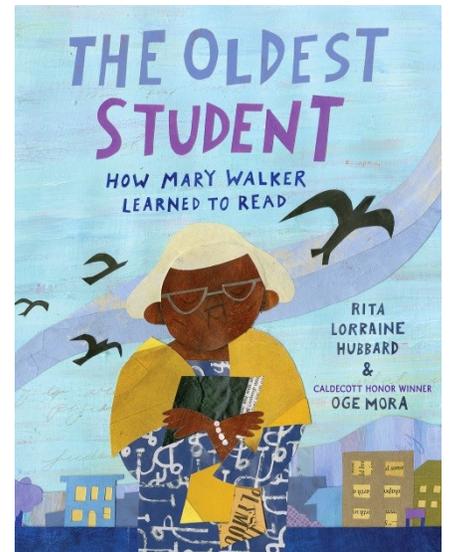
By Rita Lorraine Hubbard (author)
and Oge Mora (illustrator)



About the Book

Imagine learning to read at the age of 116! Discover the true story of Mary Walker, the nation's oldest student who did just that, in this picture book from a Caldecott Honor-winning illustrator and a rising-star author. In 1848, Mary Walker was born into slavery. At age fifteen, she was freed, and by age twenty, she was married and had had her first child. By age sixty-eight, she had worked numerous jobs, including as a cook, cleaner, babysitter, and sandwich seller. At 114, she was the last remaining member of her family—she had outlived her children. And at 116, she learned to read.

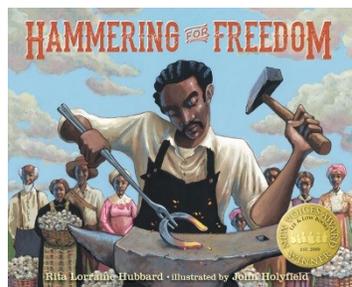
From Rita Lorraine Hubbard and Oge Mora comes the inspirational story of Mary Walker, a woman whose long life stretched from the Civil War to the civil rights movement, and who—with perseverance and dedication—proved that you're never too old to learn.



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Leveled Reading: AR Points 0.5. ATOS Book Level 4.6. AD830 Lexile.
www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/557388

Available as an eBook through the Ohio Digital Library: ohiodigitallibrary.com



Rita Lorraine Hubbard's other books include **Hammering for Freedom**, winner of Lee & Low's New Voices Award.

Oge Mora's other books include **Thank You, Omu!** which won a Caldecott Honor, Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award, and Floyd's Pick Book Award.





Illustrator photo and biography courtesy Penguin Random House; used with permission. Additional biographical information provided by the Ohioana Library.

About the Illustrator

Oge Mora was born and raised in Columbus and now lives in Providence, Rhode Island, where she earned a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. Her debut picture book, **Thank You, Omu!**, received a Caldecott Honor and the Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent. It was selected as a *New York Times* Notable Book and was chosen by both *Publishers Weekly* and *School Library Journal* as a Best Book of the Year. It is also the 2020 Floyd's Pick Book Award winner. Oge's second picture book, **Saturday**, won the 2020 Ohioana Book Award for juvenile literature. The *New York Times* says that Ms. Mora's illustrations "will have toddlers reaching out to grab them."

Illustrator Resources

Oge Mora's official website

www.ogemora.com

An interview with Oge Mora from the *Ohioana Quarterly*

www.ohioana.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/OQ-Winter-low-res.pdf

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

Contact Lisa McClatchy, Author Appearances, Penguin Random House Children's Books, at liske@aol.com

"Mary didn't know what civil rights were. She only knew from top to bottom, front to back, that book was filled with words. I'm going to learn to read those words, she vowed. But not today. Today there was work to be done."

Talk About It!

Open a conversation with children to increase comprehension and spark creativity.

- As you read this book with a child, pause and talk about what is happening on the pages. Why are there squiggles on signs instead of letters? How do you feel when you read "slaves should not be taught to read or write"?
- After reading this book, ask the children what words were unfamiliar to them. Make a list of these words. Ask for thoughts on the meanings of those words. Compare their ideas to the actual definitions.
- Reading and riding in an airplane were two things Mary always wanted to do. Ask the children to talk about some things they have always wanted to do or something they have always wanted to learn.
- What would life be like if you were an adult who couldn't read? Ask the children to take notice of how important reading is in everyday life. Share specific examples, and talk about situations when reading is required, when it is useful, and when it is enjoyable. If the children are prereaders, share examples of times when they have observed adults or older children reading.
- Mary said that reading, like flying, "made a body feel as free as a bird." Ask the children what activities or thoughts make them feel as free as a bird. After everyone shares, space permitting, have the children stand up, stretch their wings, and pretend to be birds in flight.

About the Author

Rita Lorraine Hubbard is a retired special education teacher of 20 years with an MS in school psychology. She now writes books for children that highlight unsung African Americans who are heroes in their own right. She runs the children's book review site Picture Book Depot and The Black History Channel, a website celebrating black businesses, books and culture. She lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee.



*Author photo courtesy
Penguin Random House.
Biographical information
provided by
Rita Lorraine Hubbard.
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Author Resources

Rita Lorraine Hubbard's official website
ritahubbard.com

An Interview with Rita Lorraine Hubbard by Nancy Churnin
www.nancychurnin.com/thekidsareallwrite/xl58nms8yf62hmk4d8hh49zmd3j2sc

An interview with Rita Lorraine Hubbard by Julie Danielson
chapter16.org/the-nations-oldest-student

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Get Ready To Read!

Encouraging early literacy skill-building in young children.

Multiply the benefits of sharing books by incorporating the **five early literacy practices**, everyday activities that help children get ready to read. These practices are:

Reading - Writing - Talking - Singing - Playing

Reading to and with children is the most effective way to support reading readiness. Reading aloud develops comprehension and vocabulary, builds familiarity and comfort with books, and is fun for adult and child.

Writing (or drawing and scribbling) helps children learn about print, letters, and vocabulary, and supports fine motor skills.

Talking helps children learn oral language—a critical early literacy skill—and increases vocabulary and comprehension.

Singing slows language down so children can hear the different sounds that make up words, and helps develop vocabulary and phonological awareness.

Playing teaches children to think symbolically, practice self-expression, and put thoughts into words.

All of these practices lead to children being ready to learn how to read when they begin school.

Parents, teachers, and librarians can share these practices with children at home, in the classroom, or at the library. For more information, visit ohreadytoread.org.

Tie It In!

Using this book with Ohio's Learning Standards.

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards also apply. These activities using **The Oldest Student** align with Ohio's Learning Standards for Kindergarten – Grade 3.

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, education.ohio.gov. From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

These activities are also great for library programs, family time, and playgroups.

Fine Arts: Visual Arts

Producing/Performing and Responding/Reflecting. Oge Mora is an accomplished collage artist. The collages in **The Oldest Student** use colored pencil, paint, china markers, and colored and patterned papers, some with words on them. The pictures show objects from everyday life. Invite the children to spend time studying the illustrations closely and then make their own collages. Have available various craft papers, magazines and newspapers, and other materials. Encourage the children to create collages modeled after Oge Mora's work, depicting a scene from the world around them.

Social and Emotional Development

Self Management: Perseverance. Gather a spoon and a ball or egg for each child. Have them place their object on their spoon and try to carry it from one place to another and back without dropping the object. Encourage them to keep trying until they have accomplished the challenge! Another activity: Gather a bucket and bean bags or balls. Place the bucket and have the children step back and throw the balls into the bucket. Ask each to set a goal by asking "How many balls in a row can you get into the bucket?" As an alternate, or if these physical challenges are not suitable for your group, have each child talk about something they learned that took time to accomplish – like tying shoes or counting to 100 – or something they're still working on, but are getting better at.

Social Studies

Historical Thinking and Skills. Ask the children to talk to an adult member of their family, asking questions such as "Where were you born?" "What is your first memory?" "Did you have chores to do?" "What were your favorite school subjects?" "Who was your favorite teacher, and why was that teacher special?" and "What did your family do for fun?" If possible, have the children write down the responses and share with the class.

Social Studies

Geography: Spatial Thinking and Skills. Mary Walker lived in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as does author Rita Lorraine Hubbard. Locate Chattanooga on a map, then ask the children to find Ohio. Ask, "If you traveled from your home to Chattanooga, what states would you drive through?" Share that the word Chattanooga means "rock rising to a point" and ask why the city may have been given that name. Use online resources available to students through INFOhio (infohio.org) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (ohioweblibrary.org) to learn about Chattanooga's past and present. Find historical images: www.loc.gov/search/?fa=location:chattanooga&sp=1&st=gallery.

Discover more activities using the educators' guide for **The Oldest Student**, provided by Penguin Random House:

images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9781524768287_6788.pdf

The reading discussion question and collage activity in this toolkit are adapted from the educators' guide and are used with permission.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: library.ohio.gov/ctro.

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STATE  LIBRARY OF OHIO

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