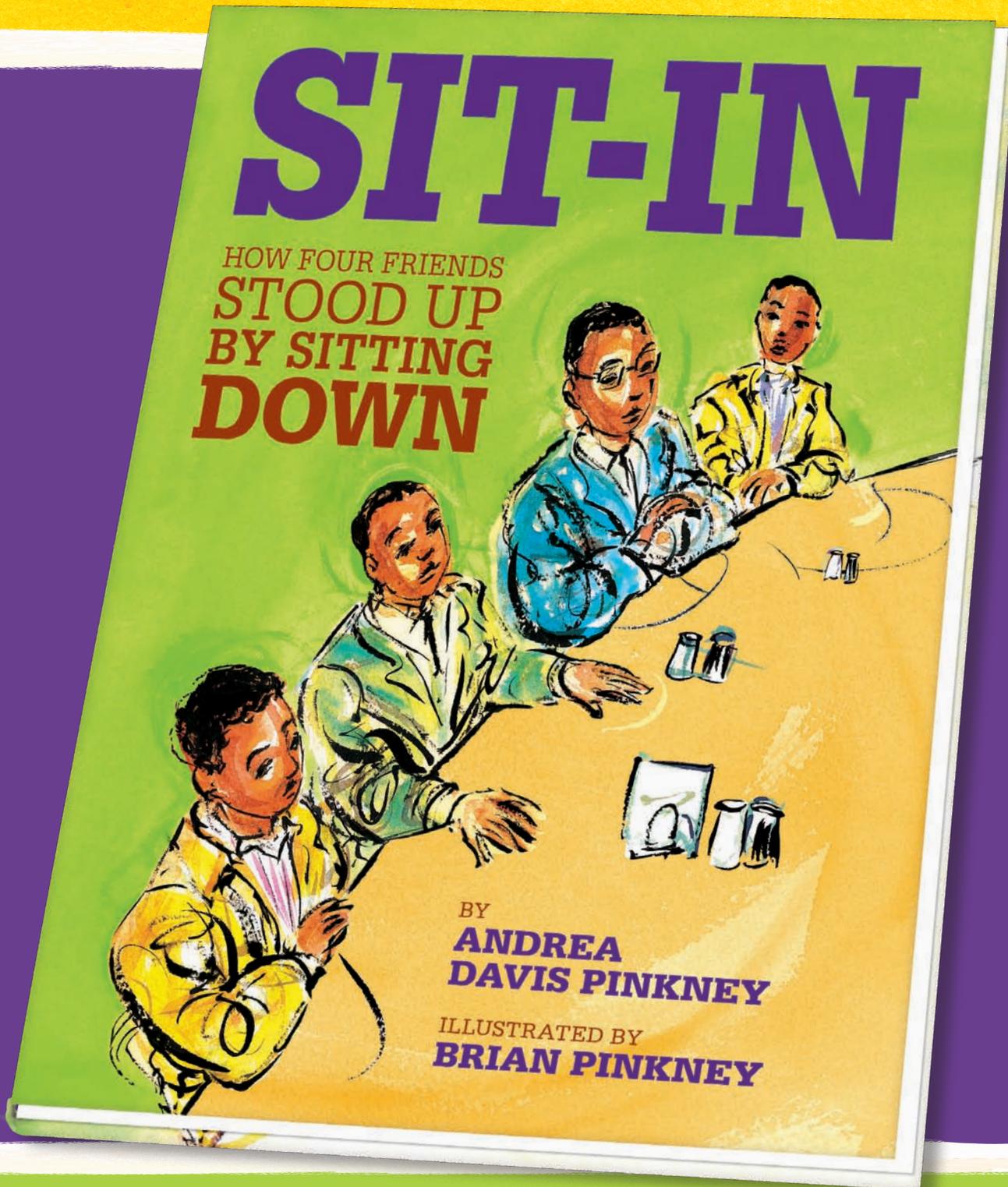


# Educator's Guide



## Curriculum Connections

Writing • Reading • Social Studies • Mathematics • Music • Art • Ages 3 – 6

SIT-IN: written by Andrea Davis Pinkney • illustrated by Brian Pinkney

## Across the Curriculum:

Today teachers are asked to get so much done during a standard school day: expand student's understanding of the world, build their fluency and comprehension of texts, and prepare for high stakes tests. Adding children's literature to your classroom is the perfect way to do all three at once. The lyrical quality of picture books makes them perfect for discussing literary elements like conflict and character and for more language oriented goals like identifying similes and metaphors. In addition, the connections that can be made to real-world people and events in non-fiction picture books provide substance and depth for the social science curriculum. If the book is too complex for students to read independently, then read it aloud and conduct a class discussion. Use the following discussion questions and projects as a guide for your exploration of the early stages of the Civil Rights Movement in the South. The combination of storytelling and illustration in this book from an award-winning team will make it easy to weave this compelling story into your curriculum.

### Discussion guide:

1. Do you think David, Joseph, Franklin, and Ezell expected to get a doughnut and coffee when they went to Woolworth's that day? Why or why not?
2. Why were they so patient and silent? Would you be able to sit without complaining like that?
3. How were they treated like the hole in a doughnut at first? Why do you think it changed?
4. What did the laws of segregation expect people to do (and not do)? Do you think this was fair?
5. How were the students encouraged by Dr. King's words? Whose words encourage you?
6. Could you sit all day long without anything to eat? How did the first day end?
7. Why do you think more students showed up at Woolworth's the next day? Why do you think they wore their best clothes?
8. How did the students pass the time? What do you do to pass the time?
9. What does the author mean when she says that lunch counter protests "spread faster than a grease fire?"
10. What was tougher than any school test? Do you think you would pass or not? Why?
11. Describe how hatred was served to the students. How did some people show their support for the students?
12. Besides lunch counters, where else was segregation enforced each day?
13. Why were some students arrested? How did they react?
14. Explain what you think "We are all leaders" means. How can you be a leader in your own community or school?
15. In the end, what was the result of those brave students' actions? How can a few people end up making such a big difference?



# Across the Curriculum:

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Reading:

Being able to distinguish what is important and what is extraneous can be difficult for young readers. Help your students build this pivotal skill by teaching them to read with a purpose. Have your students fill out the following graphic organizer as you read the story aloud (or for independent readers on their own). Students should list important facts they hear on one side and, on the other, write questions they have about the text. Afterwards, discuss student responses and see if any of the questions are answered in the extensive back pages of timelines and historical information.

Important Facts:	Questions about the text:
Ex: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words got them started	I wonder if they knew Dr. King or all went to hear him speak together?

### Writing:

Andrea Davis Pinkney uses the language of a recipe to bring this story to life. Now you cook up your own ideas and write a recipe for a topic that is important to you or your community. First, have your students bring in copies of their favorite recipes from home. Then, in pairs have them highlight or circle all the verbs in it. Next, brainstorm ideas for a recipe topic (a few to get you started: friendship, love, fairness, a great school year, sportsmanship, etc.) and add them to a chart so children can explore other topics as the year progresses. After that, have children take their recipes through the entire writing process. Note how recipes use the fewest words possible, but everything must make sense! When complete, have children copy their words onto a recipe card and display the cards outside your classroom (or in a recipe box)!

### Listening:

The four students who began the sit-in were inspired by the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Have your students listen to his speeches (provide a printed copy too) and then discuss why some people have the power to inspire others. Allow students to highlight or underline the part of a speech that means the most to them. Then, let them turn and talk to a partner about their selection.

### Speaking (or not):

The four cornerstones of language arts are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. But in the book the students spoke the loudest by not saying anything at all, they let their actions and their silence speak volumes. Have children brainstorm situations where doing or saying nothing takes more courage than acting out. Have them role play these choices in pairs or small groups.

### Art:

Revisit the book and discuss each page of the art. Have children discuss why they think Mr. Pinkney made the choices he did to bring the story to life. Be sure to point out the loose lines and the changes between blurred figures and detailed portraits. Ask the children: Why do you think he focused on these figures? Why do you think he chose these colors? Which illustration is your favorite? Why? How do some pictures depict movement? Then, inspired by the art from the book, have children illustrate another scene from the Civil Rights Movement.

### Music:

Listen to songs that inspired a generation to stand up against injustice. As people protested or were hauled off to prison, they often sang together to show unity and remain peaceful. It's easy to find recordings of them on the internet but be sure to provide your students with the lyrics if you can. Use them as a springboard for discussion. Some of the most popular titles include: "We Shall Overcome," "Oh Freedom," "I Shall Not Be Moved," "When Will We Be Paid For the Work We've Done?" and "Going Down to Mississippi."

**Math:**

Research the average price today for the following goods compared to their price in 1961. Have the older students calculate the percentage of change.

Prices in 1961	Prices today	Difference or % of increase
Bread: 25 cents		
New car: \$ 2,850.00		
Eggs per dozen: 30 cents		
Gallon of gas: 27cents		
New house: \$ 12,500.00		

**Social Studies:**

Include *Sit-In* as part of a larger unit on peace or as part of your study of the Civil Rights Movement itself. Have children create a bulletin board display titled Portraits of Peace by painting, drawing, or using collage to show important leaders in history who promoted peace. You could extend the lesson by having children create portraits of scenes where children create peace with each other at school or play. Under each portrait have students write on an index card explaining why this person was included in the gallery.

**Timeline Project:**

Using the timeline in the back of the book as a springboard, assign small groups of students to each major event. Have them answer the five journalistic questions (who, what, when, where, why) and create a poster or PowerPoint presentation about what they learned. Present projects in chronological order and share with parents or other classes.

**About the book:**

Courageously defying the Whites Only edict of the era, four young black men took a stand against the injustice of segregation in America by sitting down at the lunch counter of a Woolworth's department store. Countless others, of all races, soon joined the cause—following Martin Luther King Jr.'s powerful words of peaceful protest. By sitting down together they stood up for civil rights and created the perfect recipe for integration not only at the Woolworth's counter, but on buses and in communities throughout the South.

Poetic storytelling and exuberant illustrations combine to celebrate a defining moment in the struggle for racial equality.

**About the author:**

Andrea Davis Pinkney is the author of many acclaimed picture books and young adult novels, and she received a Coretta Scott King Book Award Author Honor for *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*. She is a children's book editor at a major publishing company.

**About the illustrator:**

Brian Pinkney has illustrated numerous books for children, including two Caldecott Honor books, and he has written and illustrated several of his own books. Brian has received the Coretta Scott King Book Award for Illustration and three Coretta Scott King Award Honor Medals.

Andrea and Brian are a husband-and-wife team who have collaborated on a number of books for children including the Caldecott Honor and Coretta Scott King Book Award Illustrator Honor book *Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra*. They live with their children in New York City.

For more information and to view the Sit-In book video please go to: [www.sitinbook.com](http://www.sitinbook.com).

# Questions for Andrea Davis Pinkney

## 1. What are the ingredients for a perfect picture book?

Like baking a cake, creating a picture book requires a good recipe. For me, the ingredients are simple, but it's the "stir" that makes or breaks the story. My picture books always start with an idea. This is the first and main ingredient — a topic that grabs me by the sleeve, and won't let go. I figure if an idea's got me in its grip, there's a good chance others may also find it intriguing. (I get my best ideas while daydreaming on the subways of New York City, where I live.)

The remaining ingredients follow — a clearly defined setting, intriguing characters, and when the story takes place. Next comes "the telling." This is perhaps the most important element of all — how I decide to **write** the story, and what I choose to do with the characters and their surroundings. Here's where "the stir" comes in.

For SIT-IN, I made a deliberate choice to focus on the four friends who sat at the Greensboro, North Carolina, lunch counter in 1960, and how important it was for them to **sit**, while chaos and prejudice swirled all around them. Because the primary purpose of those students was to remain still and quiet in the face of hatred, I "stirred up" the story by offering readers a narrative that underscores the squalor around them. The story's refrain and the use of food metaphors add to the mix.

## 2. How much research goes into a book?

As a writer of non-fiction, I'm always striving for accuracy in my books. I conduct extensive research before I actually sit down to write the story. It's always my hope to present the facts as thoroughly as I can, down to the smallest detail.

While working on SIT-IN, we consulted with the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in

Greensboro, North Carolina, to make sure the details surrounding the Greensboro sit-ins are accurately reflected in the book.

We also relied on first-person accounts and interviews with folks who were actively involved in marches and sit-ins during the 1960s.

Research reveals some of the most fascinating details. Through research, we know, for example, that the four students who sat at the Greensboro Woolworth's lunch counter actually ordered a doughnut and coffee. This element became the narrative refrain for the story — "***They sat straight and proud. And waited and wanted. A doughnut and coffee with cream on the side.***" We took these details, and wove them in a way that will help young readers remember the impact of this historic event.

## 3. What advice do you have for young people who write?

Write every single day. That's what real writers do. Writing is a craft, and to master it, you have to take it seriously, and work at it. Think about the skilled people you admire — athletes, musicians, dancers, even fashion models. They practice, practice, practice to do their best.

I carry a notebook with me wherever I go and make a habit of writing something — anything — daily. Sometimes it's just a few scattered words. Sometimes it's a short story, an idea for a book, or an entire chapter for a novel. The main thing is to keep the commitment to writing, and to make it a daily practice. Also, don't be afraid of revision. That's what writing really is — **re-writing**, refining, re-working, and reaching for the best story you can create. I sometimes write five or more drafts before my stories are ready for publication. It can be hard at times, but always worth it.

## Questions for Brian Pinkney

### 1. What is your process for bringing a picture book to life?

Whenever I start a book, I go into a place I call “the abyss.” I become **obsessed** with the topic. I read everything I can about it, see films relating to it, listen to music from the time period. When I worked on *SIT-IN*, I immersed myself in images of the civil rights movement and watched many hours of documentary film footage and news coverage of the Greensboro, North Carolina’ sit-ins.

Then I took a break, and let these images percolate. I soon started dreaming of the sit-ins, and would often wake with scenes from 1960 dancing in my head. When this happens, I know it’s time to start sketching.

I always start my sketches from memory, rather than trying to copy a picture. This allows me the freedom to play with compositions and to render the images in ways that excite me. I often prepare up to twenty sketches for each image in the book.

Once I have sketches I like, I narrow them down to my favorites, and refer back to my research to check for accuracy in the depictions of people and places. I then enhance these images using a paint brush and a kind of dye known as India ink. The finished illustrations are rendered with watercolor paints and India ink on Arches rough 300lb water-color paper.

### 2. How do you decide on a palette?

Each book’s palette is different, depending on the subject. For *SIT-IN*, I studied the colors used on diner menus from the 1960s. I also focused on the decor of eating establishments, stores, and lunch counters from that time period. There were other inspirations, too. These included the colors of clothing, upholstery, street signs, storefronts, buses, and cars.

### 3. Does your wife and creative partner become part of your illustrating process?

Andrea and I have published more than 50 books together. We love working as a creative team, and have developed a good system for doing this, while staying happily married. My illustration studio is outside of our home. This is so that we can keep work and family separate. Andrea rarely visits my studio. She leaves me alone to do my best creative work. Similarly, I don’t spend much time noodling around Andrea’s home office. That’s her space to write freely, without my watchful eye. Once I have a series of sketches I like, I show them to Andrea at our dining room table. Because Andrea works as a children’s book editor, she has a very keen eye and makes wonderful suggestions for improving my sketches. I always listen to Andrea’s advice. Sometimes I take it, other times I don’t. Once I’ve prepared the completed illustrations, Andrea and I meet at the dining room table again and review the images before I deliver them to our publisher. Andrea’s very good at bringing out the best in me.

### Andrea Davis Pinkney & Brian Pinkney

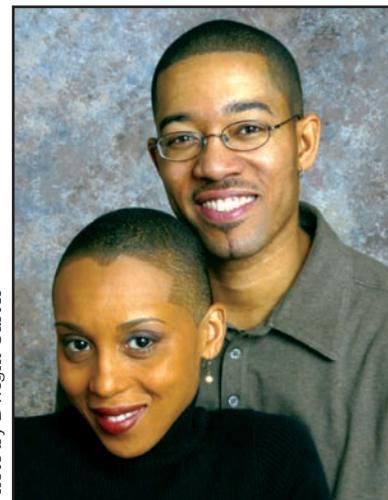


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