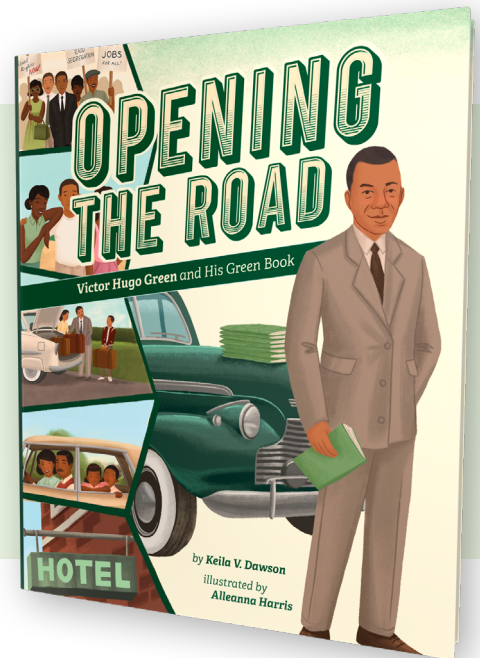


OPENING THE ROAD: VICTOR HUGO GREEN AND HIS GREEN BOOK

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE CREATED BY KEILA V. DAWSON
ILLUSTRATED BY ALLEANNA HARRIS



INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

As gatekeepers of information presented to children, it is imperative that we adults *mind the gap* of our own knowledge and awareness. For your reference, in the back matter of *Opening the Road* is an illustrated timeline of events that influenced, affected, and motivated Victor Hugo Green during his lifetime. The author's note addresses historical events but also current events. To understand the present, we study the past. The knowledge passed on to youth, including truthful accounts of harsh history, will better prepare them to plan for a kinder, more equitable, and inclusive future.

Victor Hugo Green opened the road for Black motorists. Books open hearts and minds. Our country is at a crossroads. The road is under construction and we the people are the engineers who will determine where it leads. The destination is ours to choose.

Keila V. Dawson

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ABOUT THE BOOK

After the United States built highways, anyone with a car had the freedom to hit the open road. But in a segregated America, getting from one place to another was not easy or safe for Black travelers. To address the problem, Victor Hugo Green created the Negro Motorist Green Book travel guide.

This book explores how Green and a community had the ingenuity, courage, and resilience to circumvent the roadblocks of injustice and discrimination during legal segregation.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide offers activities to help teachers integrate *Opening the Road* into the classroom. It's designed to engage students in discussions about Black travel in America—past and present—and challenge them and their communities to work toward change for a better future. Discussion and activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core Standards and other relevant content standards.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



KEILA V. DAWSON is an author and former educator, community organizer, educational consultant, and advocate for children with special needs. She is a New Orleans native and the author of *The King Cake Baby* and co-editor of *No Voice Too Small: Fourteen Young Americans Making History*. As an educator, she has worked in the U.S., the Philippines, Japan, and Egypt. Dawson lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. www.keiladawson.com



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PRE-READING DISCUSSION

THE BOOK COVER

Show students the cover and ask:

- What are the people doing in each picture? What makes you think that?
- Do you think this story is set in the past or the present? Explain.
- Looking at the pictures, what do you think this book is about?
- What do you see happening that you have seen or done yourself? Explain.
- Who is the main character in this book? Where did you find that information?
- What do you think “hit the road” means?
- What do you think opening the road means?
- Have you ever heard of Victor Hugo Green?

BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- Where have you and your family traveled to on road trips?
- What routes do you think concerned the adult driving you? Why?
- Was the trip or route you took planned around whether you could...
 - find food?
 - find gas for the car?
 - use the restroom when needed?
 - find a hotel room if your family needed to stop and rest?
- How would you feel about traveling without knowing if you could find food or use the restroom or find a hotel room if you or the person driving got tired?
- Do you think the road was always open and safe for all Americans who wanted to travel?

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary needed to understand the concepts presented in this story.

ACTIVIST

A person who joins a movement and/or takes committed action to solve a problem and/or improve a community.

ACTIVISM

Actions such as speaking, demonstrations, or protests that challenge existing rules or laws as ways to achieve common goals.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Organized actions by a large group of people to end racial discrimination under the law and demand equal rights for Black Americans.

COMMUNITY

A social group of any size living in the same place or who share the same attitudes, interests, and goals.

DISCRIMINATION

When a person is treated unfairly because of some of their identity.

INJUSTICE

When the rights of a person or a group of people are disrespected or ignored.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary needed to understand the concepts presented in this story.

JIM CROW

The name given to laws passed in Southern States that forced separation between white and Black Americans.

PROTEST

When people come together after something happens that they don't like and want things to change.

SEGREGATION

A system of forced separation based on race by law or social custom.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

When people are respected and treated fairly and allowed the same rights as others no matter the community they belong to.

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

The law that legalized separating white and Black U.S. citizens as long as services were equal.

SUNDOWN TOWN

A city, town or neighborhood that required Black Americans to leave before sunset.

PICTURE WALK

Before reading the story, look at each page and introduce students to the concepts and vocabulary needed to understand the story. Ask students:

PAGE/S:

- 2-3** How do you think the two people driving in the car feel? Why?
- 4-5** What do you see happening in this picture? What makes you think that?
- 6-7** How are the two water fountains the same? How are they different?
- 8-9** What do you think it's like to be on a road trip and drive at night?
- 10-11** Do you think the man in the car is welcome in this city? Why or why not? Why do you think the children are watching instead of playing the park?
- 12-13** Who do you think the man is in this picture? Describe his expression.
- 14-15** What is the job of the man at the bottom of the steps in this picture? What tells you that? How do you think the man feels in the next picture?
- 16-17** What does the first picture on this page show? What is the man doing in the next picture? Where could the group of people be gathered together?
- 18-19** Describe what you see in these two pictures.
- 20-21** What are the children doing in this picture? What are the adults doing?
- 22-23** Describe what you see in this picture. Where are they? What tells you that?
- 24-25** What do you think this family is doing in this picture? What makes you think that? Why?
- 26-27** What do you see happening in these pictures?
- 28-29** What do you think these are pictures of? What makes you think that?
- 30-31** What are the people doing in this picture? Describe what you see.
- 32-33** How do you think the man and woman feel in this picture? Why?
- 34-34** What is the family doing in this picture? Compare and contrast it to the other pictures of families on road trips. What's the same about it? What's different?
- 36-37** Why do you think there's an author's note in the back of the book?
- 38-39** Why is the timeline in the shape of a road? What do you think the numbers mean next to where each car stopped?

POST-READING DISCUSSION

STORY DISCUSSION

- Do you think the road was open and safe for all American who wanted to travel? Explain.
- What is segregation?
- What do you think “separate but equal” means?
- Where did Victor Hugo Green get the idea to write his Green Book travel guide?
- Why did Victor Hugo Green add more states to his book?
- How did Victor Hugo Green find businesses to put in his travel guide?
- In cities where hotels refused to give rooms to Black travelers, where did they stay at night?
- What is a sundown town?
- What was the purpose of Jim Crow laws?
- How did Victor Hugo Green sell his books?
- What happened that helped Victor Hugo Green sell a lot more books?
- What made traveling difficult for Victor Hugo Green and other Black travelers?
- How did the Green Book make traveling easier for Black motorists?
- Was Victor Hugo Green an activist? Why or why not?
- In what ways did legal segregation harm Black people in everyday life?
- In what ways did legal segregation harm white people?
- Were things “separate but equal” for Black Americans during legal segregation?
 - Why or why not?
- Why did Black motorists drive at night, all night?
- How did the Black community help Victor Hugo Green?
- Were Black residents better off in states like New York that had laws to protect their rights?
- Why do you think there are laws today to protect Black citizens?
- Why is it important to learn about what happened to Black travelers a long time ago?
- How is what happened to Black travelers during Victor Hugo Green’s lifetime relevant today?
- Who else is taking action like Victor Hugo Green to make life better for Black Americans?
 - What are they doing?
 - What could you do?

ACTIVITIES

VOCABULARY SENTENCE OR STORY

- **VOCABULARY SENTENCES:** Select words from the vocabulary list. Ask students to write a sentence using each word. Underline the vocabulary word.
- **VOCABULARY STORY:** Select several words from the vocabulary list. Ask students to write a story using those words. Underline the vocabulary words.

PICTURE THIS!

MATERIALS:

- Vocabulary words and definition worksheets

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Make a vocabulary card deck from the words and definitions.
- Divide the class into small group teams.
- The teacher will pull one card from the deck, read the word and the definition to the class.
- Each team will discuss and decide on a scene from the book that describes the word given.
- The first team that signals they have an answer goes first.
- Teams may challenge each other.
- Each team earns one point for every correct answer.
- The team with the most points is declared the winner.

OPENING THE ROAD CAUSE AND EFFECT BINGO

Explain that *cause* is why something happens and *effect* is what happened as a result. The word *because* is a signal word to show *cause*, the word *so* is a signal word to show effect.

MATERIALS:

- Purple Cause Cards worksheets cut into 8 separate statements (p. 15-16)
- Effect Bingo Cards 1-5 worksheets (p. 17-21)
- Answer key (p. 22)
- Something to use as a marker

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Watch this short video, [Cause and Effect for Elementary aged Kids](#) on YouTube. Find a list of more signal words at [Literacy Ideas for Teachers and Students](#).
2. Divide students into small groups and give each group a different Bingo card.
3. The caller reads one of the purple *cause* cards and students mark the correct *effect* answer on their bingo cards. The first to get three in a row calls out BINGO!
4. Check the key for correct answers (p. 22).

ROAD TRIP RESEARCH

The first picture in the book is an illustration of Victor and Alma Green in a car. They took road trips from New York, NY to Richmond, Virginia to visit family. In this activity, students will use research skills to understand the obstacles Black motorists faced and what they had to consider when planning a road trip during segregation.

PRE-ACTIVITY DISCUSSION:

To make a road trip safe and comfortable, what do you think...

- a car needs?
- a driver needs?
- the passengers need?

How far have you traveled in a car before stopping to get food or use the bathroom or asking, “Are we there yet?”

ACTIVITY 1: MAP A TRIP

Look at this [Google map](#) with driving directions from New York, NY to Richmond, VA.

- How many hours does it take to drive from New York, NY and Richmond, VA today?
- The roads we use today, (the interstate and superhighways) didn’t exist for Victor and Alma to use. They were built in 1955. Do you think Victor and Alma Green’s trips would have taken the same time as today? Why or why not?
- Cars were slower, too. The speed limit was 45 miles per hour in most states compared to 65 and 70 miles per hour today. How do you think the speed limits affected the time it took for Victor and Alma Green to travel by car?
- When driving from New York to Virginia, do you think Victor and Alma Green needed to eat? Use the restroom? Get gas?
- If they didn’t have many places where they could stop, what did they do?
- Why do you think Black people preferred to travel by private car rather than faster transportation like a Greyhound bus or by train?
- How did Black motorists plan road trips differently from white motorists during segregation?

ACTIVITY 2: WERE BLACK MOTORISTS ABLE TO STAY IN YOUR CITY DURING SEGREGATION?

Using the New York Public Library [DIGITAL COLLECTIONS of the Green Book](#), choose one of the guide covers.

Click “View as a Book” and use the arrows to turn the pages. Have students go to the index and search for answers to the questions below.

- Do you live in the North, South, East or West part of the United States?
- What year did you choose?

- Is the state where you live included in the Green Book that year?
- If your state is included, is the city where you live listed?
- If so, how many businesses were listed in the city where you live?
- What kind of businesses were included in the Green Book?
- What do you think this information tells you about the city in that year?
- Would Black motorists have felt welcome in your city, in that year?
- Share what you found in class.

MAKE A REAL-LIFE CONNECTION

Listen to first-hand accounts of driving in a segregated America by watching this short video, [An African American's travel guide for survival in segregated America](#).

- What is segregation?
- What are some examples from this video?
- What are some examples from *Opening the Road*?
- Why was the Green Book necessary for Black motorists?
- Do you think Black motorists were eager to use the Green Book? Why?

INTERVIEW AN ELDER

Invite a Black adult to your classroom who remembers living during segregation.

Or interview an elder adult friend, relative, or neighbor who lived during segregation.

Before the visit or interview, brainstorm questions students could ask such as:

- What were some things you could and couldn't do during segregation?
- Why do you think things were the way they were?
- Did your family use the Green Book?
- Did things change after segregation ended?
- If you still travel or drive, how are things the same or different today?

CREATE YOUR OWN GUIDE TO BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES

This activity could be an individual or class project.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS:

- Read samples of the [Green Book at the New York Public Library Digital Collections](#)
- Microsoft Word or another bookmaking program
- Index cards.

GETTING STARTED:

- Where can you find information about Black-owned businesses where you live?
- Ask for help. Contact friends, neighbors, community organizations like Victor Green did and collect the names of Black-owned businesses near you.
- On index cards, write the name of the business and owner, the physical address. Add details such as the website and phone number.
- Sort into categories such as Food, Sports, Entertainment, Personal Care, Bookstores, Healthcare, and Banking
- Visit the business website, print or draw a picture of it, and write advertisements for each business.
- In Microsoft Word, click the “File” tab, select “New” and then click the “Books” file folder icon. Select the Scrapbook Page Collection (travel design). Or use another bookmaking program to create a book.
- Name your book.
- Discuss your research.
 - How many Black-owned businesses did you find?
 - In what neighborhoods are these businesses located?
 - What kind of businesses did you find?

BEYOND THE BOOK

MAKE A TIMELINE

Most events in the illustrated timeline happened during Victor Hugo Green’s lifetime.

- In what directions are the cars driving? Why?
- Look at the dates of each event. If you know anyone who lived during that event, talk with them about it.
- Pick one of the historical events listed in the timeline, research to learn more about it.
- The last entry on this timeline ends in 1966-67. Continue the road and include events after 1967 that are important to the civil rights movement.
- Make your own road timeline adding important events that have happened during your lifetime necessary to understanding civil rights today.

FURTHER STUDY FOR OLDER STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADULTS

Find more resources at the author’s Green Book [Pinterest page](#).

1. [THE GREEN BOOK: GUIDE TO FREEDOM](#)—SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL (PG)

In the 1930s, a black postal carrier from Harlem named Victor Green published a book that was part travel guide and part survival guide. It was called The Negro Motorist Green Book, and it helped Black Americans navigate safe passage across America well into the 1960s. Explore some of the segregated nation’s safe havens and notorious “sundown towns” and witness stories of struggle and indignity, as well as opportunity and triumph.

2. [DRIVING WHILE BLACK: RACE & SPACE & MOBILITY IN AMERICA](#)

This timely documentary closely examines how the fundamental right to travel without restriction in America collides with the harsh reality of systemic racism, which has often set limits on the mobility and freedoms of certain of its citizens.

3. [TRAVELS WITH THE “GREEN BOOK” DURING THE JIM CROW ERA](#)

Racism was a chilling fact of life that, in 1936, inspired “The Negro Motorist Green Book,” a guide to businesses that welcomed African American travelers who faced being turned away or threatened in a time of segregation. Martha Teichner talks with cultural historian Candacy Taylor about the importance of this guide to safe travels in the Jim Crow South.

4. [NYPL NAVIGATING THE GREEN BOOK](#) AND THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY [DIGITAL COLLECTIONS OF THE GREEN BOOK](#)

The New York Public Library has copies of the Green Book for public view. The NYPL Labs has extracted the data from the Green Books themselves, allowing users to explore its contents state by state.

5. MAPPING THE GREEN BOOK

National Geographic Grantee Candacy Taylor is working to show the importance of the “Green Book” to the next generation. Find out how Candacy Taylor is doing this, and why it is important to keep these historic sites alive.

6. DRIVING THE GREEN BOOK

A living history podcast that preserves a powerful legacy and honors the stories of those who lived through the era, supported and uplifted each other, and fought for equality. (Grades 9 and up because of language).

7. AMERICAN SEGREGATION. MAPPED AT DAY AND NIGHT

This video shows footage of people who lived in Sundown towns. It also compares segregation in the workplace and in neighborhoods from the past to the present.

OPENING THE ROAD CAUSE & EFFECT BINGO

CAUSE CARDS

Because many white businesses refused to sell Black travelers food and gas or rent hotel rooms to them.

Because some towns only allowed white people in their neighborhoods after dark.

Because there were Jim Crow laws.

Because Jewish people couldn't go anywhere they wanted and only vacationed in Jewish-owned hotels.

OPENING THE ROAD CAUSE & EFFECT BINGO

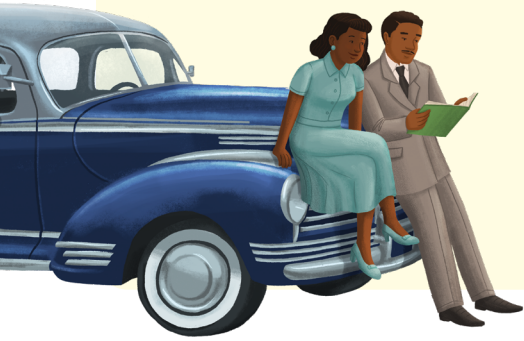
CAUSE CARDS

Because Victor Green wrote letters asking mail carriers all over the country for help.

Because there were cities with hotels that refused to rent rooms to Black travelers.

Because Black Americans wanted to take road trips to different states, but travel safely.


Because gas stations started selling the Green book.

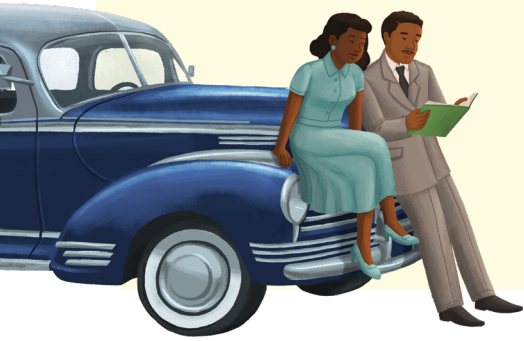


BINGO

Effect Card #1




<p>Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.</p>	<p>Black travelers were afraid of getting lost.</p>	<p>Black women rented rooms in their homes to Black travelers.</p>
<p>Victor sold a lot of his travel guides.</p>		<p>Black and white Americans could not drink from the same water fountains or use the same bathrooms.</p>
<p>The Green Book added more places across America that welcomed Black travelers.</p>	<p>Black travelers had to pack food to eat, and sleep in their cars.</p>	<p>The Green Book more than doubled in size.</p>

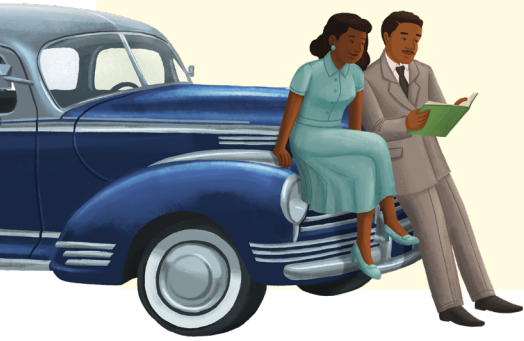


BINGO

Effect Card #2

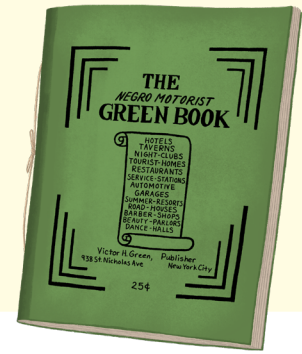



<p>Black and white Americans could not drink from the same water fountains or use the same bathrooms.</p>	<p>The Green Book more than doubled in size.</p>	<p>Black women rented rooms in their homes to Black travelers.</p>
<p>Victor sold a lot of his travel guides.</p>		<p>Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.</p>
<p>The Green Book added more places across America that welcomed Black travelers.</p>	<p>Black travelers had to pack food to eat, and sleep in their cars.</p>	<p>Black travelers were afraid of getting lost.</p>



BINGO

Effect Card #3

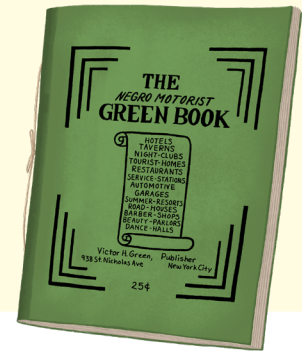



<p>Black travelers had to pack food to eat, and sleep in their cars.</p>	<p>Black travelers were afraid of getting lost.</p>	<p>Black women rented rooms in their homes to Black travelers.</p>
<p>Victor sold a lot of his travel guides.</p>		<p>Black and white Americans could not drink from the same water fountains or use the same bathrooms.</p>
<p>The Green Book added more places across America that welcomed Black travelers.</p>	<p>Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.</p>	<p>The Green Book more than doubled in size.</p>

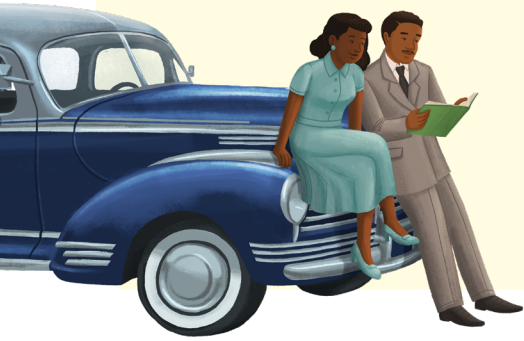


BINGO

Effect Card #4




<p>The Green Book more than doubled in size.</p>	<p>Black travelers were afraid of getting lost.</p>	<p>Black women rented rooms in their homes to Black travelers.</p>
<p>Black travelers had to pack food to eat, and sleep in their cars.</p>		<p>The Green Book added more places across America that welcomed Black travelers.</p>
<p>Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.</p>	<p>Black and white Americans could not drink from the same water fountains or use the same bathrooms.</p>	<p>Victor sold a lot of his travel guides.</p>



BINGO

Effect Card #5



<p>Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.</p>	<p>Black travelers were afraid of getting lost.</p>	<p>Victor sold a lot of his travel guides.</p>
<p>Black women rented rooms in their homes to Black travelers.</p>		<p>The Green Book added more places across America that welcomed Black travelers.</p>
<p>Black and white Americans could not drink from the same water fountains or use the same bathrooms.</p>	<p>Black travelers had to pack food to eat, and sleep in their cars.</p>	<p>The Green Book more than doubled in size.</p>

OPENING THE ROAD CAUSE & EFFECT BINGO

ANSWER KEY

CAUSE:

1. Because many white businesses refused to sell Black travelers food and gas or rent hotel rooms to them.
2. Because some towns only allowed white people in their neighborhoods after dark.
3. Because there were Jim Crow laws.
4. Because Jewish people couldn't go anywhere they wanted and vacationed in Jewish-owned hotels.
5. Because Victor Green wrote letters asking mail carriers all over the country for help.
6. Because there were cities with hotels that refused to rent rooms to Black travelers.
7. Because Black Americans wanted to go on road trips, but travel safely.
8. Because gas stations started selling the Green Book.

EFFECT:

1. Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.
2. Black travelers were afraid of getting lost.
3. Black and white Americans could not drink from the same water fountains or use the same bathrooms.
4. Victor Green got his idea to write a book for Black Americans to use.
5. The Green Book more than doubled in size.
6. Black women rented rooms in their homes to Black travelers.
7. The Green Book added more places across America that welcomed Black travelers.
8. Victor sold a lot of his travel guides.

