

The Carnegies



The Carnegie Longlist 2026 Shadowing Resources



Freedom Braids

Carnegie Medal for Illustration

Illustrator: Oboh Moses

Age range: 5+

Description:

Life on the plantation is strict and harsh for Nemy. However, messages are woven into the braids of the characters whose strength and beauty are highlighted through radiant skin tones. There's a strong sense of place throughout the book. Light and shadow is used to great effect and use of guttering provides a powerful separation between those who are enslaved upon the plantation and those who are enslavers. Subtle details throughout reward rereading.

Themes:

- Enslavement
- History
- Africa
- Freedom
- Hair

Shadowing Ideas:

1. Explore some of the different braids and hair styles mentioned in the book by downloading Lantana's official colouring sheet here:-
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6600017613bb95575cebfcd/t/66eed612d468c6dbbe270fe/1726934371751/Freedom%2BBraids%2Bcolouring%2Bsheet.pdf>
2. In Freedom Braids, we learn about how enslaved people used different braids and hairstyles to send warnings and messages to others, or as maps and guides to danger. Find out about other ways of signalling and sending messages. Could you lay a tracking trail for your friends to follow? Find out about 'dead drops' or a 'dead letter box'. Try using one to pass messages between the different members of your shadowing group.
3. Learn or practice a simple piece of braiding. Learn to plait, make friendship bracelets or make a simple braided paper bookmark like this one:-
https://youtu.be/cYJPddSI4_U?si=RMVsHa5PVBbdamwK