| **Pacing:** One class period  |
| **GRADE:** 6–8 |

**LESSON ACTIVITY TITLE:** The Story in Paintings

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**  
• How do readers use strategies to comprehend content in various formats?

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:** Readers use appropriate strategies to integrate and evaluate content that appears in a variety of media and contexts.

**PICTURE THE DREAM REFERENCE BOOK:** Heart and Soul by Kadir Nelson

**SOCIAL STUDIES GSE TO ADDRESS IN ACTIVITY:**

- **L6-8RHSS7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

- **SS8H6:** Analyze the impact of Reconstruction on Georgia.

**MAJOR CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY:**

- Reconstruction
- Freedmen’s Bureau
- Ku Klux Klan
- sharecropping
- Jim Crow laws

**DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING (OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCAFFOLDING AND EXTENSION):**

**SCAFFOLDS:**

- Students may need additional prompts to analyze the illustrations for additional information. (e.g., What do the colors, facial expressions, gestures, etc. tell us about the emotions of the characters or the mood of the setting?)
- Students may work in pairs or small groups to complete the handout.

**EXTENSIONS:**

- Students may create their own illustrations inspired by Kadir Nelson to accompany Chapter 5, “Reconstruction.”
- Students may create an illustration inspired by Kadir Nelson specific to Reconstruction in Georgia, based on their knowledge from the curriculum.
- Students may read another chapter and analyze the illustrations included in that chapter.
MATERIALS:

STUDENT SUPPLIES:
• Image from Picture the Dream: Burning Cross
• Student handout

TEACHER SUPPLIES:
• Heart and Soul by Kadir Nelson
• Picture the Dream image, Burning Cross (included on PPT resource at high.org)
• Student handouts if desired (these could also be created electronically)

OPENING

Display the Picture the Dream image, Burning Cross, from the PPT resource.

Discuss the image with students:
• What’s going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?
• What prior knowledge do you have that contributes to your interpretation of the picture?
• What mood or tone does this image evoke? What details make you say that?

Discuss with students what they know about the Reconstruction period in the United States and how it relates to the image of the burning cross.

Read aloud Chapter 5, “Reconstruction,” in Heart and Soul by Kadir Nelson.

Show students the oil paintings as you read the chapter.

Explain to the students that the author of this book is also the illustrator.

WORK PERIOD

STUDENT AND TEACHER PROCEDURES:

Teacher displays the image from Picture the Dream.
• Students write responses to the prompts on the handout.
• If time allows, students may include responses based on all images in the chapter.
• Students share what they wrote in small groups.

Regroup as a class and share thoughts/ideas about what students learned through Kadir Nelson’s paintings and what they added to his story of Reconstruction in Heart and Soul.

Encourage students to finish these sentences to highlight how their knowledge of Reconstruction has evolved: “I used to think _______. Now I think_______.”

For additional research, ask students to dig deeper into Kadir Nelson’s work and life. For example, see https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cover-story/cover-story-2020-06-22 and https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/kadir-nelson-cover-artwork-july-2020-1014011/.
The Story in Paintings

Name ___________________________________________________________ Date _______________________________

After reading “Reconstruction” in Heart and Soul, look closely at the paintings from Chapter 5.

• What stands out to you in the illustrations?

• What do you think Kadir Nelson is trying to tell us through these illustrations? What moods, messages, or themes do they evoke?

• What can you infer from the illustrations that isn’t included in the text in the chapter? Include details in the image to back up your inferences.

• What, if anything, in the illustrations surprises you or contradicts your prior knowledge?

Get together with a group.

• What ideas did your groupmates have that you thought were worth noting?

Class Discussion

• What class ideas did you think were worth noting?

Mary Uszynski graduated from Purdue University with Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Education. She has been teaching for eighteen years and has taught Pre-K through eighth grades. She began teaching in Indiana before spending the next nine years teaching in Long Island, New York. After a ten-year break to spend time with her two children, she returned to teaching in Peachtree City, Georgia, where she now lives. She currently teaches eighth grade Gifted Georgia Studies at JC Booth Middle School.