MRS. PETERS-BRYANT ELA RESOURCE PRESENTS

Warriors Don't Cry

A memoir by Melba Pattillo Beals

CHAPTER 1 · EPISODE 1

Born Into a Fight

Vocabulary · Comprehension · Close Reading · Storyboard · Writing

10 vocabulary words | Event sequence | Says, Means, Matters | 6-panel storyboard | Personal narrative | Answer key

Grade 7 · Supports for mixed levels

CCSS RI.7.1 · RI.7.3 · RI.7.6 · L.7.4 · W.7.3

LITTLE ROCK · 1957

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WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Teacher Guide

Born Into a Fight
4 class periods

About this chapter

Melba previews the year she and eight other Black teenagers integrated Central High in 1957: the National Guard turning them away, the mob at the side door, and the 101st Airborne walking them through the front door. She explains how that year made them warriors, looks back from a 1987 reunion, and then tells the story of her birth on Pearl Harbor Day, when a janitor's tip saved her life.

WHERE IT STARTS

Chapter 1 opens in 1957, as Melba compares her teenage years with those of other girls her age. It comes right after the Author's Note.

Lesson flow

DAY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	PAGES
1	Watch Episode 1. Preview the 10 words, then complete the word bank.	Vocabulary: word bank
2	Read the chapter. Vocabulary practice, then the event sequence and short answers.	Vocabulary practice · Comprehension
3	Find the three quotes and analyze them. Partners build the storyboard.	Close reading · Storyboard
4	Plan and draft a personal narrative about a time they showed courage.	Writing: My Warrior Moment

Standards

RI.7.1 Cite evidence to support analysis

RI.7.3 How people and events shape each other

RI.7.6 Author's point of view and purpose

L.7.4 Determine word meaning from context

W.7.3 Write narratives about real experiences

Supports for mixed levels

Read aloud the vocabulary sentences and quote stations.

Word bank stays out during every page.

Timeline years (1941, 1954, 1957, 1987) help with the event order.

Storyboard lets students show understanding by drawing first, writing second.

Shorten short answers to questions 1, 2 and 4 when needed.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

The chapter describes a lynch mob, dynamite and acid attacks, and a hospital nurse refusing care to a Black baby, including a racial slur. Preview it and set norms: we discuss the words' harm, we do not read slurs aloud. The close reading boxes are left blank so you can choose the exact lines and page numbers from your copy.

WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Vocabulary Word Bank

Born Into a Fight
L.7.4

Name _____ **Date** _____ **Period** _____

Read each word, its meaning, and how it fits Melba's story. Then **sketch it**: draw a quick picture or symbol that helps you remember the word.

#	WORD	MEANING · IN THE CHAPTER	SKETCH IT
1	**segregated** *adjective*	kept apart by race Melba's schools were segregated, so Black and white students learned apart.	
2	**integrate** *verb*	to open a place to people of all races Nine Black students were chosen to integrate Central High.	
3	**defy** *verb*	to openly refuse to obey Governor Faubus chose to defy the Supreme Court's ruling.	
4	**mob** *noun*	a large, angry crowd that is out of control A mob broke through the police lines outside the school.	
5	**compel** *verb*	to force someone to do something The violence compelled President Eisenhower to send soldiers.	
6	**quell** *verb*	to calm or put an end to violence or trouble The 101st Airborne was sent to quell the violence.	
7	**warrior** *noun*	a brave person who keeps fighting for what is right The hard year turned the nine students into warriors.	
8	**indestructible** *adjective*	impossible to break or destroy Melba came away with a faith in God that nothing could break.	
9	**unequivocally** *adverb*	completely, with no doubt at all Asked if she would do it again, Melba said yes, with no doubt.	
10	**destiny** *noun*	what is meant to happen in a person's life Grandma believed destiny had given Melba a special task.	

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Vocabulary Practice

Born Into a Fight
L.7.4

Name _____ **Date** _____ **Period** _____

Part A: Match It

Write the letter of the correct meaning in the box next to each word.

☐	1 segregated	A completely, with no doubt at all
☐	2 integrate	B to force someone to do something
☐	3 defy	C kept apart by race
☐	4 mob	D what is meant to happen in a life
☐	5 compel	E to openly refuse to obey
☐	6 quell	F a large, angry crowd
☐	7 warrior	G impossible to break or destroy
☐	8 indestructible	H to calm or end violence
☐	9 unequivocally	I to open a place to all races
☐	10 destiny	J a brave person who keeps fighting

Part B: Fill It In

Use each word from the box once.

defy **mob** **quell** **indestructible** **destiny** **segregated**

1. The coach stepped in to _____ the argument before it became a fight.
2. My grandmother's love for me feels _____.
3. She believed it was her _____ to become a doctor.
4. A _____ of angry fans rushed onto the field.
5. In 1950, many buses and lunch counters in the South were _____.
6. He chose to _____ the unfair rule and speak up.

PART C: WHICH WORD FITS?

Choose a word from the word bank that best describes each moment. Write it on the line.

1. Governor Faubus refusing to follow the Supreme Court _____
2. Melba's faith in God, which nothing could break _____
3. How Melba answers "Would you do it again?" _____

WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Comprehension Check

Born Into a Fight
RI.7.1 · RI.7.3

Name _____ **Date** _____ **Period** _____

Part A: Put It in Order

Number the events 1 to 6 in the order they really happened.

a	☐	The 101st Airborne walks Melba through the front door.
b	☐	Melba is born on Pearl Harbor Day.
c	☐	Governor Clinton welcomes the nine to his mansion.
d	☐	A janitor tells Mother about the Epsom salts.
e	☐	National Guard soldiers keep the nine out of school.
f	☐	A mob breaks through police lines after the nine go in a side door.

WHO'S WHO

Melba the narrator, age 15 in 1957
Grandma India her grandmother
Mother Lois her mother, a teacher
Gov. Orval Faubus fought integration
Pres. Eisenhower sent the 101st

Part B: Think About It

Answer in complete sentences. Use details from the chapter.

1. Why did President Eisenhower send the 101st Airborne to Little Rock?

2. Melba says the nine "paid" for integrating Central High. What did they pay with?

3. Why didn't Mother Lois talk back to the nurse at the hospital?

4. How did the janitor help save baby Melba's life?

5. Grandma India said God spared Melba so she could "carry this banner for our people." What did she mean?

WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Says · Means · Matters

Close Reading
RI.7.1 · RI.7.6

Name _____ **Date** _____ **Period** _____

Find each moment in the chapter. Copy one sentence that shows it in **It Says**, with the page number. Then explain it in your own words and tell why it matters to Melba's story.

STATION 1

Becoming warriors: Melba explains how that year turned the nine into warriors who did not dare to cry.

IT SAYS	IT MEANS	IT MATTERS BECAUSE
Page _____		

STATION 2

Would she do it again? Melba answers whether the fight to integrate Central High was worth it.

IT SAYS	IT MEANS	IT MATTERS BECAUSE
Page _____		

STATION 3

Watch, fight, and pray: Grandma India explains what a true warrior does when the path is long.

IT SAYS	IT MEANS	IT MATTERS BECAUSE
Page _____		

SENTENCE STARTERS

It Means
In other words, ...
Melba is showing that ...

It Matters
This is important because ...
This connects to the title ...

Author's view
Beals wants readers to feel ...
This shows Melba believes ...

WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Storyboard: Born Into a Fight

Partner task
RI.7.3

Name _____ **Partner** _____ **Period** _____

Draw each moment. Underneath, write **what this moment shows about courage**, in one sentence.

1 Born on Pearl Harbor Day, 1941

2 The janitor's tip about Epsom salts

3 Soldiers block the school, 1957

4 The mob at the side door

5 The 101st Airborne and the front door

6 The 1987 reunion at the governor's mansion

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WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Writing: My Warrior Moment

Personal narrative
W.7.3

Name _____ **Date** _____ **Period** _____

YOUR PROMPT

Melba says the hard year at Central High turned her into a warrior. A warrior is not someone who is never afraid, but someone who keeps going anyway. Think of a time **you** were brave: you stood up for yourself or someone else, tried something scary, or kept going when it was hard. Write a true story about that moment. Like Melba, show it with details, dialogue, and your thoughts.

Plan Your Story

1 · SETTING AND PEOPLE

Where were you? How old were you? Who was there?

2 · THE CHALLENGE

What was hard or scary? What did you see, hear, or feel?

3 · WHAT I DID

What did you choose to do? What did someone say?

4 · WHAT IT TAUGHT ME

How did it change you? What would you tell someone else?

STORY STARTERS

My heart was pounding when …
I wanted to give up, but …
I took a deep breath and …
That day I learned that being brave means …

CHECKLIST

- [ ] A clear beginning, middle and end
- [ ] Sensory details: see, hear, feel
- [ ] At least one line of dialogue
- [ ] My thoughts and feelings
- [ ] An ending that tells what I learned

Start your draft here. Continue on lined paper.

WARRIORS DON'T CRY · CHAPTER 1

Answer Key

TEACHER ONLY

VOCAB · PART A

1 C · 2 I · 3 E · 4 F · 5 B
6 H · 7 J · 8 G · 9 A · 10 D

VOCAB · PART B

1 quell · 2 indestructible
3 destiny · 4 mob
5 segregated · 6 defy

VOCAB · PART C

1 defy
2 indestructible
3 unequivocally

COMPREHENSION · PART A: ORDER

a 5 · b 1 · c 6 · d 2 · e 3 · f 4

Order: born on Pearl Harbor Day (1941), janitor's tip, National Guard blocks the school (1957), mob at the side door, 101st Airborne and the front door, reunion at the governor's mansion (1987).

COMPREHENSION · PART B: SAMPLE ANSWERS

1. Governor Faubus defied the Supreme Court, and a mob turned violent. Eisenhower sent the 101st to uphold the law and protect the students' lives.

2. They paid with their innocence. They faced harsh rejection and physical and emotional attacks just when they needed friends and approval.

3. She was afraid that speaking up to a white nurse could cost Daddy his job with the railroad.

4. He had overheard the doctor order Epsom salts and warm water. He told Mother, she started the treatment, and Melba got better.

5. Grandma believed Melba survived for a purpose: to lead and stand up for Black people, as she later did at Central High.

CLOSE READING · WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Station 1: The nine had to hide their pain to survive. Strong answers connect this to the book's title.

Station 2: Melba says yes, without doubt. Strong answers note she believes the nine pushed the civil rights movement forward, even though the fight is not over.

Station 3: A warrior never gives up, even on a long, steep path. Strong answers link Grandma's advice to how Melba faces Central High.

STORYBOARD · SAMPLE SENTENCES

1 Melba was born into danger and survived. · 2 One person's small act of courage saved a life. · 3 The nine faced armed soldiers and did not quit. · 4 Courage means going forward even when a crowd is against you. · 5 Doing what is right can need protection. · 6 Courage can change people's minds over time.

WRITING · QUICK RUBRIC (4 POINTS EACH)

Clear event and sequence · Details and dialogue · Thoughts and feelings shown · Ending reflects on what courage taught them · Conventions

Thank You!

Thank you for teaching with this resource. I hope Melba's story moves your students as much as it moves mine.

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CREDITS

Created by Ms. Lisa Peters-Bryant, Special Education Teacher, for educational purposes.

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