

## Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon

written by Kelly Starling Lyons  
illustrated by Laura Freeman  
afterword by Philip Freelon

### About the Book

**Genre:** Juvenile Nonfiction/ Biography and Autobiography

**Format:** Hardcover, \$19.95  
40 pages, 9.3 x 11

**ISBN:** 9781620149553

**Reading Level:** Grade 5

**Interest Level:** Grades 1–6

**Guided Reading Level:** S

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**  
N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

**Themes:** African/African American Interest, Art, Biography/Memoir, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Collaboration, Cultural Diversity, Dreams & Aspirations, Education, History, Imagination, Leadership, Nonfiction, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, Pride, United States History

**Resources on the web:**

[leeandlow.com/books/dream-builder](http://leeandlow.com/books/dream-builder)

### SYNOPSIS

Philip Freelon's grandfather was an acclaimed painter of the Harlem Renaissance. His father was a successful businessman who attended the 1963 March on Washington, while his mother was an educator and art enthusiast. When Phil decided to attend architecture school, he created his own focus on Black and Islamic designers. He later chose not to build casinos or prisons, instead concentrating on schools, libraries, and museums--buildings that connect people with heritage and fill hearts with joy. And in 2009, Phil's team won a commission that let him use his personal history in service to the country's: the extraordinary Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

*Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* celebrates a contemporary black STEAM role model, a man whose brilliant work enabled the creation of an iconic building reflecting America's past and future. With a stirring text by Kelly Starling Lyons, vibrant pictures by Laura Freeman, and an afterword from Philip Freelon himself, it is sure to inspire the next generation of dreamers and builders.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

## BACKGROUND

### Afterword from Philip Freelon

"Growing up, I didn't know any architects. I was drawn to the arts, and the talent that I displayed as a child was encouraged and nurtured by my family. When I discovered architecture in high school, I realized that art and creativity could be used to create buildings. Over time, I learned about the achievements of African American architects, including Julian Abele and Paul Revere Williams. I was inspired.

Coming of age during the height of the civil rights movement, I felt compelled to contribute in some way to the struggle for social justice. As my career as an architect evolved, I continually sought opportunities to bring my design skills into alignment with my desire to make positive contributions to my community and beyond. With many developmental steps along the way, these parallel aspirations ultimately led to my role as Architect of Record for the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

My involvement with this amazing project was an honor and a privilege—and the pinnacle of my career. The decades-long journey leading up to the museum's opening included significant contributions from countless individuals and organizations. While the architects portrayed in *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* represent the leadership of the design team, it was Lonnie Bunch, the museum's founding director and now the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, who was the driving force behind the realization of this new national landmark.

A special thanks goes out to Kelly Starling Lyons, who conceived of the idea for *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* and wrote the story, and to Laura Freeman for her lovely illustrations. I also want to thank my wife, Nnenna Freelon, for her love and support over the years." – Philip G. Freelon, May 31, 2019

### Author's Note from Kelly Starling Lyons

"When I moved to North Carolina more than a decade ago, I heard about the Freelon Group, a Black-owned architectural firm. Over the years, its influence seemed to be everywhere I went—the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, a terminal and parking garage at Raleigh-Durham International Airport, the Gantt Center in Charlotte, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore. I was proud and intrigued.

As I learned more about the founder, Phil Freelon, I realized that along with creating important spaces, Phil built hopes and dreams. He was a founding member of the Triangle East Chapter of 100 Black Men, which focuses on uplifting and empowering youth. He worked with the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the architectural firm Perkins + Will (where he was design director of the North Carolina practice) to establish the Phil Freelon Fellowship Fund. He taught at his alma maters, North Carolina State and M.I.T., and mentored people who wanted to follow his path.

Then I read about Phil's work as the lead architect for the National Museum of African American

History and Culture (NMAAHC). I was there on the NMAAHC's opening day with my husband, children, and friends. Gazing at that bronze crown on the National Mall made us feel like kings and queens. The exhibits moved and amazed us, but we were caught in the museum's spell before we walked in the door. People had already suggested I write a picture book about Phil. Visiting the museum made me want to write one even more.

A couple years ago, I got my chance. My agent let me know that an editor at Lee & Low Books was interested in publishing a story about an architect who designed the NMAAHC. I immediately suggested Phil. When I reached out to him, Phil graciously responded that he was happy to participate in the project, seeing it as a way to inspire more kids of color to consider architecture as a career.

Over a series of meetings, I interviewed him and his wonderful wife, Grammy-nominated jazz singer and composer Nnenna Freelon, in their home. Slowly, a story began to take shape of a young artist who found his calling and used it to honor Black contributions and culture. Phil was proud of his partnership with Sir David Adjaye, the museum's lead designer, and architectural pioneer J. Max Bond Jr., who died in 2009. I asked Phil how it felt to be the NMAAHC's lead architect. "It was a dream," he said. "The commission of a lifetime."

With every project, Phil showed all of us how to dream bigger and bolder. He was a man of integrity, talent, and vision. I mourned with people around the nation when Phil passed away in July 2019 from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). His brilliant legacy lives on in his wife, Nnenna; in his children, Deen, Pierce, and Maya, and his grands; in the stunning museums and spaces he designed; and in everyone he touched. This book is a tribute to Phil and all of the dream builders around the world.

I'm so honored that Phil and Nnenna entrusted me with his story. Thank you to both of them for opening their home and hearts. Thank you to my agent Caryn Wiseman, editor Cheryl Klein, the Lee & Low family, and illustrator Laura Freeman; Carole Boston Weatherford; Bridgette A. Lacy; Judy Allen Dodson, Shelia Reich, Susan Taylor, and Dominique Brown; and my husband and children, always.

The next time you pass or read about something Phil created, think about the incredible man who made it. He was once a kid just like you with a big heart and big dreams. You can be a dream builder too. Believe in yourself, work hard, and use your gifts to help our world gleam." –Kelly Starling Lyons August 1, 2019

### About Philip Freelon

Philip Freelon was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 26, 1952. The son of Allan R. Freelon Jr. and Elizabeth N. Freelon, Phil Freelon grew up surrounded by Black art and activism. His grandfather was Allan R. Freelon, Sr., an impressionist painter during the Harlem Renaissance. Inspired by his family and his love of art, Phil graduated from North Carolina State University's College of Design and earned his master's degree in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He founded his own architectural firm, the Freelon Group, in Durham, North Carolina in

1990. Through his firm and later as design director of the North Carolina practice of Perkins + Will, he created many notable museums, libraries and other public buildings and spaces around the nation, including:

- The Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise (<https://www.nccu.edu/research/brite>) (BRITE) Facility at North Carolina Central University
- The North Carolina A&T State University Proctor School of Education (<https://www.archdaily.com/134571/north-carolina-at-state-university-proctor-school-of-education-the-free-lon-group-architects>)
- The Anacostia Library in Washington, D.C. (<https://www.archdaily.com/139967/anacostia-library-the-freelon-group-architects>)
- The Tenley-Friendship Library in Washington, D.C. (<https://aasarchitecture.com/2013/08/tenley-friendship-library-by-the-freelon-group-architects.html/>)
- The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture in Charlotte, North ([https://www.archdaily.com/140195/harvey-b-gantt-center-for-african-american-arts-culture-the-freelon-group-architects?ad\\_medium=widget&ad\\_name=more-from-office-article-show](https://www.archdaily.com/140195/harvey-b-gantt-center-for-african-american-arts-culture-the-freelon-group-architects?ad_medium=widget&ad_name=more-from-office-article-show))
- National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta
- Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco
- Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture in Baltimore
- Emancipation Park in Houston
- Durham Bulls Athletic Park
- Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, Miss.

Freelon achieved a new level of prominence with the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. The museum was created after decades of efforts to highlight the contributions of African Americans; indeed, as far back as 1915, African American Civil War veterans pushed to commemorate Black soldiers and sailors with a memorial on the National Mall. The NMAAHC was established through an act of Congress in 2003, and on September 24, 2016, the museum opened to the public as the nineteenth and newest museum of the Smithsonian Institution. To read more about the long history of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, please visit the Smithsonian Institution Archives. (<https://siarchives.si.edu/history/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture>)

An instrumental part of bringing African American history and culture to life through his architecture, Philip Freelon died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) on July 9, 2019. Remembered as a much-admired award-winning architect, Freelon's legacy lives on.

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- How can math, science and art influence someone's life?
- What kinds of qualities are important for a person to have if they want to achieve an important goal?
- Both the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement influence the main figure, Philip Freelon, in the story. What is significant about the Harlem Renaissance? What is significant about the Civil Rights Movement? Who were some important figures in each movement? What are the legacies of the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement today?
- What are your dreams? What kind of future do you imagine for yourself?
- As a hook for readers, consider showing students Philip Freelon discussing the Smithsonian National Museum for African American History and Culture, posted on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW7Gw4cb7nA>

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Walk:** Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, afterword, illustrations, and author's note at the end. Display the book and read aloud the title. If students are unfamiliar with Philip Freelon, share information from the Background section of this guide or have them do some preliminary research on their own.
- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that? Discuss the cover illustration and have students talk about how the picture might relate to the title of the book.
- **Author/Illustrator:** Introduce students to Kelly Starling Lyons (the author) and Laura Freeman (the illustrator). You can find information in the "About the Author" and "About the Illustrator" sections of this guide.
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their notebooks when they: Learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.
- Have students read the question on the back of the book: "What does it take to build a dream?" What are some answers students have to this question?

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how does the title fit the theme of the story?
- who is Philip Freelon and how did he become an important figure?
- how did art influence Freelon's life?
- how did race, cultural connection and pride shape Philip Freelon's family and his experiences?

Encourage students to consider why the author, Kelly Starling Lyons, would want to share this story with young people. The students can also write down some questions of their own that they think the story might answer.

## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word. (Many of the Spanish words can be found in the book glossary, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.)

### Content Specific

splatter, canvases, Harlem Renaissance, studio, pastel, harbors, palettes, crooning, scampering, fragrance, Shakespeare, portraits, media, balsa wood, battleships, sculptures, porters, chorus, machine, industrial design, snapshot, architect, soar, aces, unsung, solar, glistens, Civil War, memorial, phoenix, pride, commission, preliminary, body language, unite, ironwork, structure, Contemplative Court, pinnacle

### Academic

harbors, scampering, fragrance, formulas, recite, mottoes, justice, equality, greenhouse, heritage, achievement, resilience, deferred, collaboration, generations, artisans, century

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How does the story begin? How does the story introduce Philip Freelon?
2. What are the different art forms Phil sees in his life?
3. What subject does Phil have trouble with?
4. What do Phil's parents do for a living?
5. Who is Pop Pop? Why is he important in Phil's life?
6. What different art forms/media does Phil explore for himself?
7. What stories does Phil's father share with him?
8. Which of Phil's family members attends the March on Washington?
9. What high school class does Phil become the top student in?
10. What buildings does Phil design?
11. What is the name of the Historically Black College that Phil attends?
12. Which School of Architecture does Phil attend?
13. What architects are left out of Phil's studies?
14. What is Phil's goal as an architect?
15. What buildings does Phil refuse to design? Why?
16. What building did "Phil and architects around the world" want to design?
17. What elements of Black life was the museum intended to honor?
18. Who are the members of the "dream team" Phil assembles to create the National Museum of African American History and Culture? What are each of their roles?
19. What inspirations do Phil and his collaborators draw upon to create the museum?
20. What year does the museum open?
21. Whose words does Phil return to in the Contemplative Court?

## Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. After reading the book, what is the significance of the title *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon*?
2. What characteristics of art excite Phil?
3. How does Phil's family influence his life?
4. Why is it significant that art is a part of Phil's life at an early age? What was the significance of African American artists during the 1950s and 1960s?
5. When the author writes, "Phil is seeing the world with an artist's inner eye," what do you think this means?
6. How does Phil feel about being an African American? How does this influence his sense of self and his work?
7. Why is Martin Luther King Jr. a source of inspiration for Phil?
8. Why does Phil decide to become an architect?
9. How do you think going to a Historically Black University influenced Phil's trajectory in life?
10. How does Phil feel not learning about other Black architects? Why is this important considering the career path he chooses?
11. We read that Phil "wants to make the world better through what he creates." How does Phil's identity shape this desire? What is the significance of the kinds of buildings Phil creates?
12. Why is Phil passionate about the National Museum of African American History and Culture?
13. Why was Barack Obama's presidency important to the National Museum of African American History and Culture?
14. What evidence in the book demonstrates Phil's dedication and passion?
1. What is the role of community and collaboration in helping Phil become who he is?

## Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What do you think the author's message to the reader is? Think about possible motivations behind Lyons's intentions to write the book and Freelon's afterword. What do you think they wanted to tell young readers?
2. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Phil's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?



Do you have a dream that is meaningful to you, like Phil? What forms of expression do you use to showcase your dream?

3. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon*? Why did you make those connections?
4. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* make you think of that?
5. How has reading *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* influenced your understanding of dreaming? What does it take to see a dream through?
6. Racism results in the mistreatment and isolation of people based on their race and the color of their skin. Have you or someone you know ever been treated differently based on race or the color of one's skin? How did you feel experiencing this or witnessing it? How did you react? What can we do to confront this?
7. Phil's parents and Pop Pop serve as inspirations to Phil at different points in the story. What does "community" mean to you? Think of the people in your life whom you look to for guidance and support. How do these people support and help you? How have these people helped you believe in yourself?

### ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about why Philip Freelon is an important figure and why they admire him.
5. Have students illustrate a goal or dream of their own they have.
6. Have students give a short talk about what they think the message of the story is.
7. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose

English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

8. Link concepts of persistence, such as Phil having trouble with reading but continuously seeking to find ways to read, to the student's learning of a new language.
9. Complete frequent checks of understanding.
10. Read aloud a sentence and have students repeat the sentence after you, pointing to each word as they speak.

### Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Phil's father experienced racism and prejudice because of his race. How do you respond to racism or discrimination? When you experience it yourself, and/or when you see it happening to others?
2. In what ways was Phil able to be persistent and resilient to reach his ultimate goal?
3. Which illustration in *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* best shows an emotion? Explain which emotion you think it is. How does it portray that emotion?
4. How did Phil deal with his difficulties reading? How did people in Phil's life support him when he needed help? What did you learn about dealing with having learning difficulties from Philip's experience? Describe a time when someone special in your life was supportive. How did they demonstrate their support? How did their support make you feel? Do you think everyone needs someone who believes in them? Why?
5. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, hope, perseverance and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon*.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Ask students to use the Bio Cube tool** (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/cube-30057.html>) **from ReadWriteThink.org to write a biography based on *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon*.** Consider using *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* as an anchor text to teach students about biography writing. The “Our Journey Westward” blog has tips and step-by-step instructions on how to ease students into writing biography and the different techniques and strategies that are used to make engaging and informative stories (<https://ourjourneywestward.com/picture-books-teach-biography-writing/>).
- **Have students write an essay or reaction to two mottoes that Philip Freelon learned: “Black is Beautiful” and “Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud.”** What do students think of when they read these statements? Have students discuss Philip’s identity. How might these mottoes have contributed to his success in life? How was he inspired by Black family members and historical figures throughout his life? How did they influence his work?
- **How was reading a picture book different from reading a newspaper article about Philip?** Have students read the article, “The legacy of America’s most prominent black architect, Phil Freelon.” Then, students can create a Venn Diagram with the headings, “Picture Book Nonfiction: *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* and Expository Nonfiction: “The legacy of America’s most prominent black architect, Phil Freelon” (<https://abcnews.go.com/US/legacy-americas-prominent-black-architect-phil-freelon/story?id=61082128>). Students can compare and contrast the different formats of the texts and the information they learned in both.
- **Challenge students to explore the characters more deeply with writing tasks that require perspective-taking:**

  - Choose a period from Philip Freelon’s life. Write a journal entry from his point of view. Take into account the time period; historically, what was happening? Use your imagination to describe what he was experiencing, thinking, and/or feeling.
  - Write a letter to children who have a dream that they are not sure they can accomplish. What advice would you give to encourage them?

- The rich, varied, and poetic language used in *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon* provides an opportunity for students to develop their vocabulary skills in authentic contexts. Challenge students to learn and practice using the academic and content-specific words listed in this teacher's guide:**

  - Before reading: Provide students with a list of the vocabulary words to sort into categories (e.g. very familiar, somewhat familiar, unfamiliar).
  - During reading: Have students make note of the vocabulary words as they encounter them in *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon*. They can underline, highlight, or keep a log. Have students predict what the words mean based on context clues.
  - After reading: Have students work in pairs to look up the definitions of the “unfamiliar” words on their combined lists. Were their predictions correct? Post the new vocabulary words on your word wall.
- Tell students to imagine they will be interviewing Phil Freelon for a local newspaper or talk show.** Ask students develop a list of five interview questions they want to ask. What do they want to learn about the Civil Rights movement, architecture, forms of expression, and so on? Lead a class discussion, creating a combined list of questions and then narrowing that list down to ten questions.
- Generate a discussion about how we learn about the past.** When students volunteer that we read books, ask them about other ways to learn about history, such as songs, poems, interviews, or family stories. Discuss oral histories and interviews as a way to learn about times and events. Have students use oral histories to find out more about their own family history.
- Have students read “Harlem”** (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46548/harlem>) **by Langston Hughes where the poet asks, “what happens to a dream deferred?”** Have students analyze the poem and make connections to Phil’s own dream and the dream of an African American museum.
- Have students read *In Her Hands: The Story of Sculptor Augusta Savage*** ([leeandlow.com/books/in-her-hands](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/in-her-hands)) **and *Paul Robeson*** ([leeandlow.com/books/paul-roberson](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/paul-roberson)), **which are both biographies of African American creatives who use artistic expression to fight racial injustice.** As students reflect on each story, ask them to compare how each figure stayed dedicated to their dream. What is the central idea of each book? How do these stories reveal the impact that African American forms of artistic expression can have on the world around them? What does each story demonstrate about persistence and passion?
- Come up with questions to interview the author, Kelly Starling Lyons.** What was her process behind creating *Dream Builder: The Story of Architect Philip Freelon*? What was her inspiration for writing a biography about renowned architect Philip Freelon? Read the Author’s Note with students and have them discuss what they learned and how it made them think about the book differently. Why did she write this book for young readers? Consider reaching out to Kelly Starling Lyons for a virtual author visit (<https://www.kellystarlinglyons.com/>).

## Social Studies/Civics

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Design a lesson or unit on Black architects in the United States and internationally.** Consult Architectural Digest's article, "Barrier-Breaking African American Architects We Should Be Celebrating" (<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/gallery/barrier-breaking-african-american-architects>). Learning goals should highlight key aspects of their biographies such as their origins, time period, organizational affiliations, core beliefs, critiques, and media coverage, as well as their connections to organizations and other activists. What challenges did they face due to race, gender, class, sexuality or other factors?
- **Encourage students to research the Harlem Renaissance (1920s) and its effects on people of the United States.** What caused the Harlem Renaissance? How did the movement affect African American communities? In a graphic organizer, have students list important figures of the Harlem Renaissance and its effects on Americans overall and African Americans specifically. Check out the National Museum of African American History and Culture for more information about the Harlem Renaissance (<https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/new-african-american-identity-harlem-renaissance>).
- **Encourage students to research the Civil Rights era and its effects on people of the United States.** What caused the Civil Rights movements? How did the Civil Rights Movement affect African American communities? What were the different political positions of the Civil Rights Movement? In a graphic organizer, have students list the cause and effects of the Civil Rights Movement on Americans overall and African Americans specifically. For more resources on teaching about Civil Rights, consult the following sources:
  - Teaching Tolerance has a unit called "Civil Rights Done Right," which offers a detailed set of curriculum improvement strategies for educators who want to apply these practices in their own work. Consult the different lessons for culturally responsive, accurate ways of teaching about the Civil Rights Movement with engaging primary source documents and more (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/civil-rights-done-right>).
  - "Civil Rights Teaching" is a project of Teaching for Change that provides lessons, news, and resources about the role of everyday people in the Civil Rights Movement (<https://www.civilrightsteaching.org/>).
  - Facing History and Ourselves has units, lessons, individual readings, interviews, videos, and more about the Civil Rights (<https://www.facinghistory.org/topics/race-us-history/civil-rights-movement>).
  - Edutopia's article "A Better Way to Teach the Civil Rights Movement," by Melinda D. Anderson, describes different ways of teaching about Civil Rights that improve history lessons on the period and emphasize activists, churches, schools, and women (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/better-wayteach-civil-rights-movement>).
- **Have students research the history and mission of the National Organization of**

**Minority Architects** (<https://noma.net/>). Who was involved? Why was it started? What is its mission?

- **Ask students to create a timeline from the dream of a National Museum for African American History and Culture to the actual opening of the building.** What were the important events along the way? Who was involved? Have students find photographs or videos to accompany the timeline and present it in small groups or to the whole class.

### Art, Media & Music

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Have students map the location of buildings Philip Freelon and his team designed throughout the book.** Students can create and write their own postcards from one of those places using the Postcard Creator from [ReadWriteThink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/postcard-creator-30061.html). (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/postcard-creator-30061.html>)
- **Put students in small groups where each group is assigned to create a poster on one of Philip Freelon's buildings to the rest of the class.** What are the different elements of the building that they want to showcase? What's important about this particular building? How is it essential to the community? Why do students think Phil chose to design the building that way? Have students discuss what they liked or did not like about the building and its design.
- **Ask students to write a poem about a cause they care about or dream they have.** Encourage students to have their poems reflect their personal experiences and/or their feelings and opinions. Have students perform their work. Refer to [ReadWriteThink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-write-poem-30317.html?main-tab=2) (<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-write-poem-30317.html?main-tab=2>) for more ideas and details.
- **Have students research and compare different architecture styles across the world.** Where/when did these design forms originate? What do they have in common? What makes them different? What materials are used in each? What are some famous buildings in each form?
- **Have students create a dream building and have them explain the function of the building (i.e. a home, library, shelter, etc.).** Provide students with time and materials to create their dream building and display the results in your classroom or hallway. Have students share and explain why they chose to create that building.

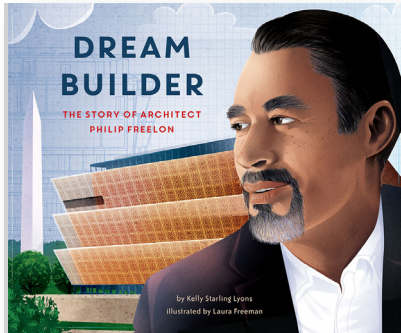
### School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Ask students to create portraits of people who are their personal role models through drawing, collage, or photograph.** In writing, students should describe what actions and qualities they admire about this person.
- **Have students interview a parent, guardian, or adult mentor about their experiences with fighting for something they believe in or going through a hardship (perhaps someone alive during the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s).** How did this person react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles? What do they remember about the political climate during their youth? What advice do they have for someone trying to take up a cause and stand up for justice? What advice do they have for someone who has been abused or silenced?
- **If accessible, have students and families research other titles featuring African American artists and creators.** What did they learn about these historical figures?
- **Invite students to research an architect (past or present) from their community, city, or state.** What type of buildings does the architect create? What challenges did the architect face? Create a timeline of major events in the artist's life and career.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kelly Starling Lyons** is the author of multiple award-winning picture books and chapter books, most recently *Sing a Song: How "Lift Every Voice and Sing" Inspired Generations*, illustrated by Keith Mallett, and the *Jada Jones* series, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley Newton. Like Philip Freelon, Kelly grew up in Pennsylvania in a family that prized creativity, and now lives in North Carolina with a family of her own. Please visit her website at [kellystarlinglyons.com](http://kellystarlinglyons.com) and follow her on Twitter at @kelstarly.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Laura Freeman** has illustrated more than thirty picture books, including the picture-book edition of *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly, which won both the NAACP Image Award and a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Award, and *Jazz Baby* and *Bedtime Fun*, both published by Lee & Low's Bebop Books imprint. Laura lives near Atlanta, Georgia, and you can find her on the web at [lfreemanart.com](http://lfreemanart.com).

## REVIEWS

"...With the exposure gained from biographies such as Lyons's, his work and life story can inspire young readers to follow in his footsteps." —*School Library Journal*

"The achievements of award-winning architect Philip Freelon (1953–2019) are detailed and celebrated in Lyons's carefully crafted picture-book biography." —*The Horn Book*

"Both an inspiration and an excellent companion for a trip to the museum its subject designed." —*Kirkus Reviews*

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).