



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2021 Volume I: The Social Struggles of Contemporary Black Art

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## **Contemporary Black Picture Book Artists: Families of Illustrators**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.01.02  
by Carol Boynton

This three- to four-week visual literacy unit for primary students focuses on children's book illustrators who are from families of African American artists and authors. It uses a new lens and approach to bring the picture book art to students through literature throughout the year. This artist/author study includes the works of Leo and Diane Dillon, a husband and wife team that has been creating art together since they met at the Parsons School of Design in 1953; Jerry and Brian Pinkney, father and son, who have earned between them dozens of awards and recognitions for their work on children's books; and, Donald Crews, Ana Jonas, and their daughter, Nina Crews, all authors and illustrators of a great variety of picture books and stories.

The students will participate in five illustrator studies as they learn the bibliographies of the artists and the methods and styles of their work. After practicing the many ways picture books are illustrated, students will illustrate a book of their own based on a story they know very well – a fairy tale, a folk tale, or a family story of their own. The class will celebrate all of the artists at a class wide publishing party.

(Developed for Reading and Writing, grade K; recommended for Reading and Writing, grades K-2)

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