



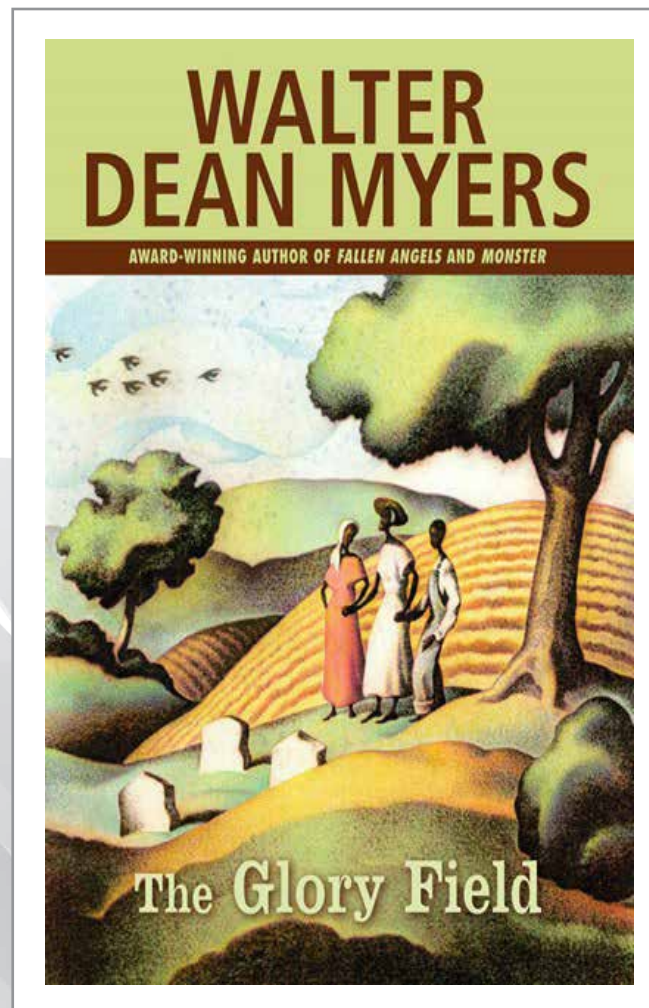
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Glory Field

Walter Dean Myers



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Glory Field

Walter Dean Myers

## TEACHER GUIDE

### NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Analysis, evaluation,  
pros/cons, problem solving

### Comprehension

Inference, prediction,  
cause/effect

### Writing

Poetry, creative writing,  
compare/contrast, dialogue,  
book review, newspaper,  
diary and journal entries,  
letter, description

### Vocabulary

Application, comprehension

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate,  
roundtable, personal  
experience, interview

### Fine Arts

Art, skit, monologue, poetry  
performance, collage,  
designing monuments

### Across the Curriculum

Music, family heritage,  
history, biography,  
geography

**Genre:** historical fiction

**Structure:** six vignettes (short stories) of the Lewis family from 1753–1994

**Setting:** Sierra Leone, Africa; South Carolina; Illinois; Harlem in New York City

**Point of View:** third-person omniscient

**Conflict:** person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. society

**Themes:** racial discrimination, injustice, courage, strength, bonds of family, love of the land, love of freedom, identity

**Date of First Publication:** 1994

## Summary

Beginning with the capture and enslavement of Muhammad Bilal in Sierra Leone, Africa, in 1753, the novel follows his descendants, the Lewis family, through 250 years of struggles with injustice, poverty, and prejudice. The Glory Field—the original land worked by Muhammad—bonds the Lewis family. Each generation endeavors to discover and understand its identity.

## About the Author

**Personal:** Born in 1937, Walter Dean Myers' early life was as challenging as the lives of many of his novels' characters. Walter's mother died when he was three years old, leaving his father to care for eight children. Walter's father sent him to live with foster parents in Harlem. His early Harlem environment—the vibrant life of artists, strong religious influences, struggling families, and a closely bonded black community—influenced and contributed to his writing. The encouragement of a teacher and the purchase of an old typewriter when he was ten years old spawned Myers' love of writing. He presently lives with his family in Jersey City, New Jersey.

**Literary Career:** Walter Dean Myers is a well-known, admired, and much-awarded author of young adult novels, primarily writing about the struggles of African-American youth as they search for lasting ideals, mature values, and positive family relationships. Myers has written over 50 books, including *Hoops* (1983), *Fallen Angels* (1988), and *Somewhere in the Darkness* (1992). He has been the recipient of the Newbery Honor Award, the Coretta Scott King Award, and the Virginia Hamilton Literary Award.

## Characters

**July 1753, Sierra Leone, West Africa**

**Muhammad Bilal:** 11-year-old African captured in 1753 in Sierra Leone; patriarch of the Lewis family; first Lewis to wear the symbolic shackles

**March 1854, Live Oaks Plantation, Curry Island, South Carolina**

**Lizzy:** 13-year-old slave on Live Oaks Plantation; lives with Moses and Saran Lewis

**Joe Haynes:** overseer on Live Oaks Plantation

**Moses Lewis:** great-grandson of Muhammad Bilal; slave on Live Oaks Plantation

**Lem Lewis:** 16-year-old son of Moses; a runaway from Live Oaks Plantation

**Joshua Lewis:** brother of Moses; a runaway from Live Oaks Plantation

**Saran:** wife of Moses; mother of Lem

**Grandma Dolly:** Moses' mother

**Miss Julia:** 17-year-old daughter of Old Master Lewis, the plantation owner

#### **April 1900, Curry Island, South Carolina**

**Elijah Lewis:** 15-year-old son of Richard and Lizzy

**Abby Lewis:** 14-year-old cousin to Elijah

**Goldie Paige:** Elijah's love interest

**James Foster:** telegraph operator; known alcoholic

**David Turner:** young blind boy

**Hamlin Turner:** widower; David's father

**Sheriff Glover:** sheriff of Johnson City

**Frank Petty:** bigoted white man who threatens Elijah

#### **May 1930, Chicago, Illinois**

**Luvenia Lewis:** 16-year-old daughter of Elijah and Goldie Lewis

**Miss Etta:** godmother and good friend of Luvenia

**Mr. and Mrs. Deets:** wealthy white couple; Luvenia's employers

**Florenz Deets:** the Deetses' capricious 17-year-old daughter

#### **January 1964, Johnson City, South Carolina**

**Tommy Lewis:** grandson of Abby Lewis; 16-year-old basketball player recruited by a primarily white college

**Leonard Chase:** wealthy Johnson City resident; wants Tommy to go to college

**Mandy McKinnon:** Tommy's girlfriend

**Robert Lewis:** Tommy's father

**Skeeter Jackson:** white friend of Tommy; beaten for marching in a black demonstration

**Jennie Epps:** young girl in love with Tommy

**Reverend McKinnon:** pastor of the church; organizer of the black demonstration

**Miss Mary:** Tommy's grandmother

**Sheriff Moser:** sheriff of Johnson City

#### **August 1994, Harlem, New York–Epilogue**

**Luvenia Lewis:** great-aunt of Malcolm and Shep; owner of a cosmetics company

**Malcolm Lewis:** 15-year-old boy; leader of a musical band; proud of his black heritage, but confused about its implications

**Sheppard Lewis:** Malcolm's 15-year-old cousin; drug addict living in a rescue shelter

**Planter Lewis:** great-uncle of Malcolm and Shep; wise and proud man



**Teacher Note:** *The Glory Field* contains derogatory (slang) terminology in some areas, especially when referring to blacks. Please consider your particular community and group of students prior to reading and discussing *The Glory Field* with your class.

## July 1753, pp. 1–8

Eleven-year-old Muhammad Bilal is confined in the hold of a slave ship following his capture in Sierra Leone, Africa. He is shackled at the ankles, as are most of his fellow captives. Muhammad notes the sounds of the tortured black men and women who share his uncertain fate—the cries at night, the gasps as people struggle to breathe aboard the crowded ship, the prayers to Allah. As people die all around him, Muhammad thinks of his mother and father, searches for a glimpse of his homeland, longs for his freedom, and vows to live.

### Vocabulary

shackle (3)  
grating (3)  
stifling (3)  
ebony (4)  
mooring (4)  
wrenched (4)  
appease (5)  
Allah (6)

### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the terrors that Muhammad witnesses aboard the slave ship. (*people being chained and put in pens, trapped like wild animals; seeing white men for the first time; men and women beaten and forced into the ship's smothering hold; cries and screams of terror and agony; fear of death; inability to breathe or move; filthy conditions, pp. 3–8*)
2. Analyze possible reasons for the Africans' inability to avoid or escape capture. (*Answers will vary. Suggestions: white men caused fear in the slaves through punishment and cruelty; the Africans were removed from their familiar surroundings; there were many different languages spoken among the captives; they were shackled and beaten into submission, starved, and not given water, pp. 3–8*)
3. How might Muhammad's vow to die like a warrior actually save his life? (*Answers will vary. Suggestions—Muhammad refuses to cry or exhibit fear to his captors. By remaining quiet and unnoticed he can avoid the tyranny and punishments of the white men on the ship. p. 4*)
4. **Prediction:** What will happen to Muhammad?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Writing: Write a journal entry such as Muhammad might have written after his first night on the slave ship.
2. Research: Research slave ships on the Internet. Based on the layout of the ship, and paying particular attention to the hold of the ship, make a list of the unfavorable conditions you think the Africans may have endured.
3. Speaking: With a partner, create a dialogue between Muhammad and another captured slave expressing their shock and surprise at their present situation.

## March 1864, pp. 9–44

While the field hands are working on Sunday, the patrollers are searching for 16-year-old Lem and his uncle, Joshua, runaway slaves from the Lewis plantation. The patrollers return with Lem, and his family is terrified of what will happen to him. Miss Julia invites Lizzy to the big house for tea and asks Lizzy to tell her if the slaves are planning to cause any trouble. When Lizzy learns Lem is tied to a tree at the edge of the plantation, she decides to find him in order to say goodbye. As Lizzy is dressing Lem's wounds, Joe Haynes, the plantation overseer, appears. He accuses Lizzy of trying to set Lem free and begins to whip her. Suddenly, Joshua appears and wrestles Haynes to the ground while Lem screams for Lizzy to get Haynes' rifle.