

Sojourner Truth Bibliography

This bibliography was updated during the summer of 2016 by Stephanie Krauss for the Sojourner Truth Memorial Committee. Please note: We are continuing to revise this bibliography, with our current priority to edit the lists of books.

Elementary

Books

Frost, Helen. *Sojourner Truth*. Mankato, Minnesota: Capstone Press, 2003. (24 p.)

Very simple biography of Sojourner for early readers. Part of the "Famous Americans" series. Includes list of words to know. For ages 6-8.

Lutz, Norma Jean. *Sojourner Truth: Abolitionist, Suffragist, and Preacher*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001. (80 p.)

This book is a biography of Sojourner Truth for more advanced readers. Its focus is on Truth's early life in enslavement and her time in New York City. Includes a timeline and glossary. Part of the "Famous Figures of the Civil War Era" series. For ages 9-12.

McDonough, Yona Zeldis. *Who Was Sojourner Truth?* Illustrated by Jim Eldridge. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 2015. (112 p.)

Part of the "Who Was?" series, this easy chapter book with simple, black and white illustrations is a comprehensive account of Sojourner Truth's life for young readers. *Who Was Sojourner Truth?* relates Truth's early enslavement, how she obtained her freedom, her sojourns in New York City and Northampton, MA, her activism on behalf of the previously enslaved after the Civil War, and her involvement in the women's right movements. Includes inserts on historical events, topics, and people of Truth's time. For ages 8-12.

McKissack, Patricia and Frederick McKissack. *Sojourner Truth: a Voice for Freedom*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002. (32 p.)

This book is an elementary biography of Sojourner Truth, with simple text accompanied by historic photos and other primary source documents from Sojourner Truth's time. It is part of the Great African Americans series from Enslow Publishers. Includes timeline, glossary, and index. For ages 8-10.

Merchant, Peter. *Sojourner Truth: Path to Glory*. Illustrated by Julia Denos. New York: Aladdin, 2007. (47 p.)

Part of Simon & Schuster's "Ready-to-Read" series, this colorfully illustrated easy-to-read chapter book tells the story of Sojourner Truth's life, with a focus on her childhood in enslavement, how she became a preacher, and her speeches about abolition and women's rights, including the "Ain't I A Woman?" speech. The prose is simple and straightforward. Includes a biographical timeline. For ages 6-8.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sojourner Truth's Step-stomp Stride*. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. New York: Disney/Jump at the Sun Books, 2009. (32 p.)

Accompanied by warm yet powerful illustrations, this picture book portrays a strong and beautiful Sojourner Truth through its poetic prose. Pinkney's narrative runs from Truth's enslavement to her travels speaking about freedom, culminating in a dramatic depiction of her "Ain't I A Woman?" speech. The motif of Truth size-twelve feet ("step, stomp, stride") runs throughout the narrative, symbolizing her lifelong strength. Includes a short biographical sketch of Sojourner Truth. For ages 5-9.

Rockwell, Anne F. *Only Passing Through: the Story of Sojourner Truth*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. (40 p.)

This boldly illustrated, dramatic picture book tells the story of Sojourner Truth's life, from her childhood in enslavement to her sojourns in New York City and Northampton, Massachusetts. Rockwell based her book mainly on Truth's narrative, so she is able to vividly depict significant events in Truth's life, while making them understandable to children. The story ends at the point when Truth is becoming nationally known as an advocate for social justice. For grades 3 and up. The Brooklyn Public Library has created a [lesson plan](#) for this book.

Slade, Suzanne. *Sojourner Truth: Preacher for Freedom and Equality*. Illustrated by Natascha Alex Blanks. Minneapolis: Picture Window Books, 2008. (24 p.)

This book's vivid, collage-style illustrations, simple storyline, and inspirational message make it a good fit for younger children. Although Slade shares Truth's achievements as a speaker, preacher, and activist, the focus of the text is on Truth's life in enslavement. It also highlights her spirituality. Includes a simple timeline, glossary, and index. For ages 6-8.

Turner, Ann. *My Name is Truth: The Life of Sojourner Truth*. New York: Harper, 2015.

Other Resources

"A Must See Sojourner Truth for Kids Biography!" *Fesberg*.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrVek_dWsmg

This short biographical video clip gives younger students basic information about Sojourner Truth. The video mostly focuses on her early life and escape from slavery. The clip also notes Truth's importance in establishing rights for women and African Americans. The video is narrated by a cartoon and includes animations, which will be intriguing for younger children.

Ashley, Martin L. and Butler, Mary G. "Sojourner's Amazing Life...and Beyond." *The Sojourner Truth Institute of Battle Creek*. <http://www.sojournertruth.org/History/Biography/Default.htm>

This webpage provides an extensive timeline of the life of Sojourner Truth. While the timeline mostly focuses on Truth herself, the page also includes major events happening throughout the United States. Many of these events revolve around the abolition and women's rights movements. The timeline will be helpful for younger students; it will allow them to understand the different events that influenced Sojourner Truth's life and work.

Accompanying lesson plan:

<http://www.sojournertruth.org/Tests/LessonPlans/3rd-grade-01.htm>

"Sojourner Truth Timeline."

http://www.softschools.com/timelines/sojourner_truth_timeline/57/

This interactive timeline provides basic information for elementary school students about Sojourner Truth's life. The timeline includes pivotal moments in her life and career, including her life in slavery and her life as a free woman. The timeline mentions her escape from slavery, her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech, and her work with the Freedmen's Bureau. The timeline is helpful to younger students who are learning about slavery and abolition.

"The Child Anti-Slavery Book." African American Odyssey. *Library of Congress*.

https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=ody_rbcmisc&fileName=ody/ody0313/ody0313page.db&recNum=0&itemLink=r?ammem/aaodyssey:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28rbcmisc+ody0313%29%29&linkText=0

This resource will be interesting to elementary school audiences, as they were the target audience of this book when it was originally published in 1859. The book tells several stories of enslaved children, in hopes of promoting sympathy in young minds. By contrasting the lives of enslaved children to their own, school children will be able to learn about the true horrors of slavery. While the book does not mention Sojourner Truth individually, the resource is interesting for children, as there are very few primary sources that were geared toward children during their time of creation.

Middle School

Books

Butler, Mary G. *Sojourner Truth: From Slave to Activist for Freedom*. New York: PowerPlus Books, 2003. (112 p.)

This biography of Sojourner Truth is part of the Library of American Lives and Times. Biographical details are accompanied by historical context (in particular, background on slavery in America and the Civil War) and historic documents and photographs. Of note to those in the Pioneer Valley, one chapter is devoted to Truth's time in Northampton. Includes a detailed timeline and glossary. For ages 9-14.

Clafin, Edward Beecher. *Sojourner Truth and the Struggle for Freedom* (Henry Steele Comager's Americans series). New York: Barrons Publ., 1987.

Krass, Peter. *Sojourner Truth: Antislavery Activist*. New York: Chelsea House, 2005.

Kudlinski, Kathleen V. *Sojourner Truth: Voice for Freedom*. New York: Aladdin, 2003.

Leebrick, Kristal. *Sojourner Truth*. Mankato, Minn.: Bridgestone Books, 2002.

McKissack, Pat. *Sojourner Truth: a Voice for Freedom*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002.

Ortiz, Victoria. *Sojourner Truth a Self-Made Woman*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1974

Roop, Connie and Peter. *Sojourner Truth*. New York: Scholastic, 2002. (128 p.)

Part of the "In Their Own Words" series, this biography of Sojourner Truth tells Truth's story with excerpts from her narrative and other works about her. The introduction defines primary and secondary source materials, and the book calls upon these resources to relate anecdotes about Truth's life and provide historical context. One chapter is dedicated to Truth's time in Northampton. Includes a timeline and bibliography. For ages 9-13.

Other Resources

"African American Odyssey." *Library of Congress*. March 21, 2008.

<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aointro.html>

This fully digitized exhibit was created by the Library of Congress. The exhibit includes artifacts and written sources regarding African American history from slavery to the Civil Rights movement. The sections "slavery" and "free blacks in the antebellum period," can give students a chance to analyze the context surrounding Sojourner Truth's life. The section entitled "abolition" provides digital pictures of a variety of materials relating to the fight to end slavery

in America. Included are two pictures of Sojourner Truth and a short summary of her influence on the abolition movement.

"From Slavery to Civil Rights, A Timeline of African American History." *Library of Congress*.
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/civil-rights/>

This digital resource, provided by the Library of Congress, is an interactive timeline for African American history from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement. One section on the timeline is entitled Abolition. While this timeline does not focus on Sojourner Truth's individual accomplishments, it provides social, political, and economic context for her time period. The major factions of the timeline link out to a variety of digital collections and objects relating to the different historical periods, all with a focus on African American history.

History.com. "Ain't I a Woman?" Online video, 3 min.
<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/womens-history-month/videos/aint-i-a-woman>.

This resource provides a video of actress Kerry Washington reciting Sojourner Truth's famous "Ain't I A Woman?" speech. Instead of simply reading the speech in print, students are able to understand the power of Truth's words through this live performance. The video also includes a short background on Truth's life and work, which will provide students with context for the speech.

Knower, Rosemary H. "Teaching with Documents: Woman Suffrage and the 19th Amendment. Failure is Impossible. *National Archives*. 1995.
<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage/script.html>

This resource is a script of a play that was originally performed on August 26, 1995, in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment. The script includes roles for several prominent feminists, from the pre-Civil War era to the passage of the 19th amendment. The play mentions Sojourner Truth, as well as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Carrie Chapman. The play is a fun way for students to learn not only about the roles of individual women, but of the longevity of the women's rights movement.

"Sojourner Truth, African American Woman of the 19th Century." *Learning to Give*.
www.learningtogive.org/units/women-industrial-era/sojourner-truth-african-american-woman-19th-century

This online resource is a lesson plan geared towards grades 6, 7, or 8. The lesson plan asks students to analyze Truth's "Ain't I A Woman?" speech. The speech brings up important messages for both the abolitionist and the feminist movements. The class will also be able to draw similarities between the women's rights movement and the abolition movement. Lastly, the lesson helps students understand how average American citizens can influence the government.

"Sojourner Truth: Ain't I A Woman?" *Teaching a People's History, The Zinn Education Project*. 2016. <http://zinnedproject.org/materials/sojourner-truth-aint-i-a-woman/>

This resource is a simple web page, but an effective way to teach students about Sojourner Truth's power. The web page includes a short description of Sojourner's life. The main focus on the web page is video clip, where Alfre Woodard recites Truth's famous speech.

"The Collection, 1850s." *National Museum of African American History and Culture*. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection>

This interactive exhibit features a variety of items housed in the new Smithsonian Museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture. By searching by year, students can explore different items relating to enslaved and free blacks in the 1850s, when Truth was very active in her fight for abolition and women's rights. The collection includes clothing, pamphlets, personal letters, and a variety of tintypes, among other items. These items allow students to utilize primary sources in the study of history. In addition, these sources are not solely print by nature, but introduce students to the study of material culture. Overall, the wide variety of sources will give students insights into the political and social culture of Sojourner Truth's time period.

General/Adult

Books

Bernard, Jacqueline. *Journey Toward Freedom: The Story of Sojourner Truth*. New York: Feminist Press, 1990.

David, Linda. *Glorying in Tribulation: The Lifework of Sojourner Truth*. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994.

Fitch, Suzanne & Roseann Mandziuk. *Sojourner Truth as Orator*. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1997.

Mabee, Carleton. *Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend*. New York: New York University Press, 1993.

Painter, Nell Irvin. *Sojourner Truth: a Life, a Symbol*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996.

Painter, Nell Irvin, ed. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Bondswoman of Olden Time with a History of Her Labors and Correspondence*. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.

Washington, Margaret. *Sojourner Truth's America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Other Resources

"Abolition and Slavery." in "From Slavery to Freedom: The African American Pamphlet Collection." *Library of Congress*. <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aapchtml/aapchome.html>

This resource, compiled by the Library of Congress, focuses on the lives of the enslaved and the fight for freedom. The collection contains a wide variety of digitized primary sources; however, the collection's featured items provide a glimpse into the lives of some of Sojourner Truth's contemporaries. Reading and analyzing first-hand accounts of life in slavery will allow students to understand the brutality of the institution, contrasted by individuals who spoke out for abolition.

Gilbert, Olive. *Sojourner Truth's Narrative and Book of Life*. Battle Creek: Michigan. 1878.
<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/truth/1850/1850.html>

This digital version of her autobiography was originally dictated by Sojourner Truth to Olive Gilbert. She writes about all aspects and times of Truth's life. The chapters include a myriad of details about her life, including her childhood in slavery, her relationships with her family, children, and owners, and her religious convictions. The book also includes transcripts of several speeches, including her famous "Ain't I A Woman?" speech. While the whole book is quite lengthy, specific chapters may correlate with different lesson plans, aiding students in their understanding of Sojourner Truth's importance.

"Sojourner Truth." *Fremont Weekly Freedman*. (Sandusky County, Ohio), July 19, 1851.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026051/1851-07-19/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1836&index=17&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=Sojourner+Truth&proxdistance=5&date2=1860&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=Sojourner+Truth&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=2>

In this newspaper article, the unidentified authors summarize a speech that Truth gave at a convention in Ohio. In her speech, Truth usurps the common mid-19th century idea that woman caused the downfall of Adam, and are therefore regulated to second class citizenship. She uses biblical evidence to argue for the equality of the sexes.

"The Women's Conventions." *Weekly National Intelligencer*. (Washington, D.C.), November 9, 1850. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress*.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045784/1850-11-09/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=%20&index=0&date2=&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&lccn=sn83045784%20&words=Sojourner+Truth&proxdistance=5&state=District+of+Columbia&rows=20&ort%20ext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=Sojourner+Truth&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=%201>

This newspaper article reflects the animosity towards women's rights movement in the mid-19th century. The author mentions Truth and her appearance at the women's convention, where she argued for women's equality. The article asserts that women are more suited to housework and raising children than appearing in the public sphere.

"Female Suffrage." *The Evening Telegraph*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). May 11, 1867. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress*.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025925/1867-05-11/ed-1/seq-7/>

This newspaper article from 1867 highlights the first anniversary of the American Equal Rights Association. The article introduces Truth and then prints her speech from the anniversary meeting. Her speech focuses on women's place in society. She equates the role of woman to the status of a slave; women do not have any rights around the tutelage of their husbands. Truth states that she dreams of the day that women can hold powerful positions and earn personal incomes. This speech is important, as it encourages students to study Sojourner Truth not only as an abolitionist, but as a feminist as well.

"Local Affairs." *Daily National Republican*. (Washington, D.C.). September 22, 1865. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress*.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86053570/1865-09-22/ed-1/seq-3/>

This newspaper article from 1865 details an assault on Sojourner Truth that occurred in 1865, when she was 80 years old. Train conductor John C. Weeden brutally seized Truth's arm when she attempted to board a train car. While the article is short, it gives students insights into the daily struggles black women faced in the mid 1800s.

"Women's Rights Convention." *Antislavery Bugle*. (New Lisbon, Ohio), June 21, 1851. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress*.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1851-06-21/ed-1/seq-4/>

This newspaper article includes a speech Sojourner Truth gave at a women's rights convention. In the speech, Truth questions the religious basis for societal hierarchies between men and women. The speech is important because it exemplifies how feminists and abolitionists utilized religious discourses to fight for equality. This speech also gives students insight into the arguments of the early feminist movement.



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