

The Watsons Go to Birmingham -1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

Final Project Ideas

1. Prepare a news broadcast from the scene of the church bombing in Birmingham. Write a script and be prepared to act it out. Interview both African American and white bystanders for their reactions. (Individual or pair)
2. Prepare a sales campaign extolling the virtues of the car the Watsons drive to Birmingham. Look up the statistics- horsepower, gas mileage, engine, etc. What other cars were on the road at the time? Put your ad campaign on a presentation board and be prepared to sell one to the class. (Individual or pair)
3. You are a social worker who has been called in because a neighbor complained about Byron and his activities. Fill out a report on him, create a form) and discuss the probable options if he continues making the same types of choices in life. (Individual)
4. Recreate momma's notebook with the travel route, instructions, menus, and rest stops all written down (two-three pages). On a map, trace the route they took from Flint to Birmingham. (Individual)
5. The climate in Flint and Birmingham is very different. Find examples in the story of how the climate affects the Watsons. Make a poster for each city, and put the appropriate quotes on the posters. Use the Internet to research the average temperatures over a year's time and chart it for each. Add your charts to the posters. How would this difference affect the lives of the people who lived there? Take on the role of a real estate salesperson and convince us to live in either city. Consider cost of living, proximity to places of interest, etc. Research to find out why so many African Americans moved north during the period following the Great Depression. (Individual or pair)
6. Write and illustrate a 2-3 page diary that Rufus might have written after his first week in the new school. (Individual)
7. Write a two page monologue that Kenny might have while he is behind the couch. (Individual)
8. Illustrate one scene when Byron is friendly to Kenny or helps him in some way and one scene when he is mean. Write a paragraph explaining why you think that Byron switches from being mean to Kenny to being kind and back again. Add a second paragraph explaining this question: Can you both love and dislike someone at the same time? How or why. Has this ever happened to you? Are you still friends with that person/ are you related in some way? (Individual)
9. Find a song with a similar theme to one of the ones we identified in the Watsons. Write out the lyrics and discuss the similarities and differences between the song and the book. (Individual)