

# ◀ FINDING NORTH

# Study Guide

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# FINDING NORTH

**Finding North is a one-man play drawn from historical research that brings to the stage a daring adventure of African-American Underground Railroad hero John P. Parker. Parker's tale is intercut with interview material from people who tell their stories of searching for haven in modern day America. Commissioned to celebrate the opening of the Underground Railroad National Freedom Center, Finding North is performed by Daniel Carlton, with guitar accompaniment by the play's author, David Gonzalez.**

# National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, in Cincinnati, Ohio, is a world-class museum that stands as a monument to freedom. Through telling the story of the Underground Railroad it brings to life the importance, and relevance, of struggles for freedom around the world. FINDING NORTH was written to celebrate its opening.

[Visit Website](#)



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VIDEO



# John P. Parker

- John P. Parker was an American abolitionist, inventor, and industrialist.
- Parker, who was African American, helped hundreds of slaves to freedom in the Underground Railroad resistance movement based in Ripley, Ohio.
- He saved and rescued fugitive slaves for nearly fifteen years.



# How FINDING NORTH Came To Be



SCAN TO GO TO VIDEO



Finding North began with an invitation from The Underground Railroad National Freedom Center and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park to write a play to commemorate the opening of the museum and, in particular, the story of conductor John P. Parker.

# David Gonzalez

- David is an award-winning writer, storyteller and musician.
- He received his doctorate from New York University's School of Education.
- Besides Finding North David has written plays, musicals, poetry, and even an opera libretto.
- He plays and writes music for the guitar and piano.
- David enjoys hiking, and in 2006 he climbed to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro - the highest mountain in Africa..
- [www.davidgonzalez.com](http://www.davidgonzalez.com)



# Daniel Carlton

- Daniel is an actor, director, poet, storyteller and playwright.
- He creates stories and remixes existing folktales and myths.
- Daniel writes poetic plays that look at history, particularly African American history, in highly interactive, fun, and deeply detailed ways.
- [www.danielcarlton.com](http://www.danielcarlton.com)





# FINDING NORTH: CHARACTERS

- John P. Parker - Guides the McDowell Family to freedom
- Sylvia - A Guatemalan woman tells of crossing the border
- Yusuf - A Pakistani teen shares what happened to him after the 9/11 attacks
- Erika - A Hungarian Jewish woman tells a Holocaust story
- Grandpa - Recounts what he saw when a mob attacked his family
- Daniel - Shares what happened to him on the streets of New York City

# Follow up Activities

Discuss, Create and Advocate

**FEEL**

**THINK**

**ACT**

**FEEL**

# Match the Stories to the Feeling that the Characters' Journeys Encompassed

## Stories

1. John P. Parker
2. Sylvia (Guatemalan American)
3. Yusef (Pakistani American)
4. Erika (Jewish American)
5. Grandpa (African American)
6. Daniel Carlton (African American)

## Finding North Feelings

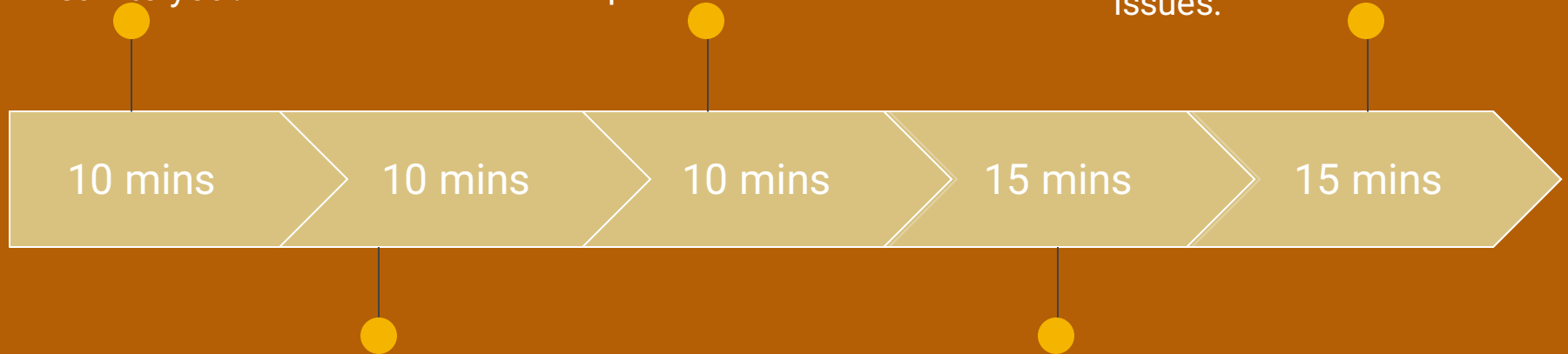
- \_\_\_ Vigilance
- \_\_\_ Self- Empowerment
- \_\_\_ Kindness
- \_\_\_ Goodness
- \_\_\_ Safety
- \_\_\_ Freedom

# DISCUSS FINDING NORTH USING THIS MAP

What does Freedom mean to you?

Discuss the social justice issues that were highlighted in the performance.

Identify communal assets you have to address contemporary social justice issues.



Which story resonated with you the most?  
Share why.

Identify and discuss how the assets of the character and/or community addressed the challenges/issues.

**THINK**

# Examining Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things. As a literary device, metaphor creates implicit comparisons without the express use of “like” or “as.” Metaphor is a means of asserting that two things are identical in comparison rather than just similar. This is useful in literature for using specific images or concepts to state abstract truths.

“Finding North” is a metaphor for the characters' search for Freedom. What is a metaphor for something you might want to accomplish? How can you incorporate that metaphor in a story you might like to tell?”

Examples:

1. The taste of Dino’s bread was the warmth of home.
2. The shouting was a raging fire of hatred.

# Write a Finding North Monologue

A dramatic monologue is a speech in which a character reveals their feelings, inner thoughts, or motivations. Unlike a soliloquy, which is a private speech in which a character addresses themselves, a dramatic monologue is addressed to another character or to the audience.



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VIDEO



## Five Elements of a Good Monologue

### Instructions

- Identify your Finding North metaphor
- Listen to David's Five Elements
- Complete the [graphic organizer](#) identifying your five elements
- Write a short monologue
- Share



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose your collage or writing program
  - a. <https://www.fotor.com>
  - b. <https://www.pizap.com>
  - c. Word, Google Docs, etc.
1. Choose a primary image either based on one of the stories Daniel shared in Finding North, or an image that represents a social justice issue that is important to you. It can be a video clip, photograph, styled lettering, hand-drawn, etc.
1. Center your image. Create a collage surrounding the image with words or other images that express your connection to it. These words and/or images may:
  - a. represent your feelings about the issue
  - b. demonstrate assets that can help resolve the issue
  - c. exemplify impacts of victorious resolution

## 4 Corners of Connection Collage



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VIDEO

# FEELINGS

- FEAR
- COURAGE

# DISCOVERY

- INSPIRATION
- DETERMINATION

# ISSUES

- HUMAN RIGHTS

# ASSETS

- COURAGE
- STRENGTH
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS

**ACT**

# Create an Advocacy video

1. Pick a Social Justice issue that resonates with you.
2. Conduct research on the issue: Identify the underlying causes; its history and its present existence in your community or the world.
3. Create a (3-4 min.) “What you Should Know About...” Video to advocate for social transformation on [Flipgrid](#) or your mobile device.

Try using these leading statements and prompts to help create a script:

1. I am...(say something about who you are)
2. I care about... (describe the issue)
3. Add information on what you care about...
4. Tell a story of what people are doing, and what you can do to make change.

Use the five senses to engage your audience. The goal is to build awareness through more than statistical facts. Advocate by having them connect through the senses. Appeal to the humanity of your audience to champion the “North” you are seeking, and to encourage involvement.

# Group Project: WRITE A FREEDOM SONG

Songs have been written to advocate for freedom throughout history, including biblical times, the enslavement period, the civil rights movement, the Chicano Movement, and the BLM movement.

## Instructions

1. Collectively, choose a melody to a familiar song or create an original rhythmic beat.
2. Review “Finding North” feelings you discussed or discovered during your THINK activities, including: metaphors, issues, assets and impacts.
3. Create a freedom song with new chorus and verses.

# Group Project: CREATE A CLASS PROVERB BOOK

Yusef's grandmother said,  
*"Throw yourself into  
goodness with abandon.  
Keep love in your heart."*

## Instructions

1. Identify family proverbs, or sayings, that speak to your family and community values.
2. Collect these proverbs to create a Book of Proverbs.
3. Share with friends and family.

# SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

**Video  
Links**

**READING**

**Website  
Links**

## RISE FOR FREEDOM VIDEO

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQWaCAHi3a8&t=108s&ab\\_channel=DavidGonzalez](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQWaCAHi3a8&t=108s&ab_channel=DavidGonzalez)

## JOHN P. PARKER VIDEO #1

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leWFO\\_s6La8&ab\\_channel=AishaAbdul](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leWFO_s6La8&ab_channel=AishaAbdul)

## JOHN P. PARKER VIDEO #2

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxRkm9GtVC4&ab\\_channel=cetconnect](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxRkm9GtVC4&ab_channel=cetconnect)

## HARRIET TUBMAN VIDEO

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bduwBNoB-Mw&ab\\_channel=Biography](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bduwBNoB-Mw&ab_channel=Biography)

## SLAVE NARRATIVE VIDEO

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3Fk9pqybCA&ab\\_channel=EyeFletch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3Fk9pqybCA&ab_channel=EyeFletch)

# Video Resources



# Reading Resources

HIS PROMISED LAND: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN P. PARKER, *John Parker*

NINTH WARD, *Jewell Parker Rhodes*

A LONG WALK TO WATER, *Linda Sue Park*

BROWN GIRL DREAMING, *Jacqueline Woodson*

MAUS: A SURVIVOR'S TALE, *Art Spiegelman*

MALCOLM X: BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY, *Walter Dean Myers*

## WEBSITE LINKS

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

[www.Tolerance.org](http://www.Tolerance.org)

[Teaching Social Justice in Theory and Practice](#)

### LANGUAGE ARTS

[Teaching Through Metaphor and Analogy](#)

[Monologue Unit](#)

### A BIT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUN

[8 Metaphors for a Teacher](#)