The theme of this issue of Social Studies and the Young Learner is “Reading, Rights, and Responsibilities.” Weaving together the teaching of literacy (the ability to read) with the teaching of civic literacy (the knowledge, skills, and commitment to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship) is not a simple task. It can take “two to three years of classroom experience” for the new elementary teacher “to relate to and understand how the reading process connects” to an academic subject! Social studies can make this job easier by providing interesting, challenging, and age-appropriate content material for young learners. Real people facing real problems of their generation with their own smarts, skills, and community spirit—now what could be more exciting than that?

In the first article, “The Rosa Parks ‘Myth’: A Third Grade History Investigation,” Hillary Landor and Ethan Lowenstein revisit the well-known story of Rosa Parks’ refusal to give up her bus seat. They challenge elementary students to read different accounts of that historic event, note inconsistencies, and then discuss what they have found. Was Ms. Parks’ protest really a spontaneous act of frustration? Or was she, in fact, well prepared to wield, for a time, the cutting edge of a social revolution?

“The ABCs of Brown v. Board of Education: A Primer for the 50th Anniversary,” by Loraine Moses Stewart, is a brief, reader-friendly refresher course in the history of a landmark event for the Civil Rights Movement. The Supreme Court’s decision to end racial segregation in public space is placed in the context of contemporaneous events, forces, and the personalities of that electrified era.

In “Teaching the Mystery of History,” authors David Hicks, Jeff Carroll, Peter Doolittle, John Lee, and Brian Oliver contend that “student abilities to comprehend history and think historically are based upon a set of skills educators nurture.” They propose a classroom activity for doing just that. The Pullout, “The Mystery of Sam Smiley,” consists of handouts and instructions to accompany the “Mystery of History” article. Students can study the clues surrounding Sam’s disappearance. What ever happened to Sam? Can we ever know for sure?

“Stimulating Moral Reasoning in Children Through Situational Learning and Children’s Literature” by Nancy P. Gallavan and Jennifer L. Fabb invites teachers to explore a sample of children’s literature through the lens of character development. They categorize a set of books using psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg’s six stages of moral development. Three specific teaching strategies are recommended.

In the Children’s Literature section, George W. Chilcoat describes two picture books that relate the experiences of average citizens (not movement leaders) during the struggling for Civil Rights. His article, “Picture Yourself in Mississippi: Remembering Freedom Summer, 1962,” discusses the kind of events that, while not sensational, are quite memorable for the people who witness them.

In “The Wright Stuff: Examining the Centennial of Flight,” Robin D. Groce, Eric C. Groce, and Lisa M. Stooksberry compare and contrast several books about the famous brothers from Ohio, those “bicycle repair men” who took the terms “ingenuity” and “persistence” to new heights.