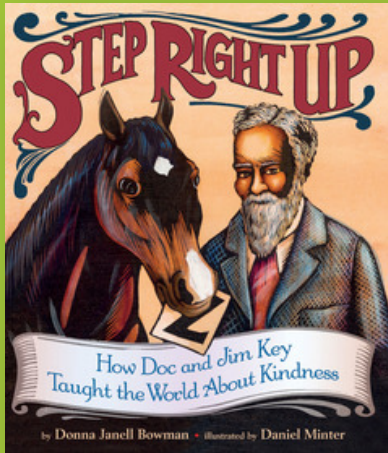


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS



# Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness

written by Donna Janell Bowman

illustrated by Daniel Minter

## About the Book

**Genre:** Nonfiction/Biography

**\*Reading Level:** Grades 4

**Interest Level:** Grades 2–6

**Guided Reading:** Q

**Lexile™:** N/A

**Accelerated Reader®**

**Level/Points:** N/A

\* Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** Animals (Horses), Slavery, Education, Discrimination, Overcoming Obstacles, Kindness/Caring, Friendship, Persistence/Grit, Animal Rights and Humane Treatment of Animals, United States History, Biography, African American Interest

## SYNOPSIS

A horse that can read, write, spell, and do math? Ridiculous! That's what people thought in the late 1800s—until they met Jim Key.

Born a weak and wobbly colt in 1889, Jim was cared for by William “Doc” Key, a formerly enslaved man and self-taught veterinarian who believed in treating animals with kindness, patience, and his own homemade remedies. Under Doc’s watchful eyes, Jim grew to be a healthy young stallion with a surprising talent—a knack for learning! For seven years, Doc and Jim worked together perfecting Jim’s skills. Then it was time for them to go on the road, traveling throughout the United States and impressing audiences with Jim’s amazing performances. In the process, they broke racial barriers and raised awareness for the humane treatment of animals.

Here is the true story of an extraordinary horse and the remarkable man who nurtured the horse’s natural abilities. Together they asked the world to step right up and embrace their message of kindness toward animals.

Additional titles from Lee & Low Books about horses:

- *What’s The Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?* written by Richard Van Camp, illustrated by George Littlechild  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2859>
- *The Last Black King of the Kentucky Derby* written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Robert McGuire  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2697>
- *Vanishing Cultures: Mongolia* by Jan Reynolds  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2470>
- *Horse Song: The Naadam of Mongolia* by Ted and Betsy Lewin  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2512>



## BACKGROUND

**From the Afterword:** William “Doc” Key was born in Winchester, Tennessee. When William was a small child, he and his enslaved family were inherited by John W. Key of Shelbyville, Tennessee. Although he was enslaved, William had a surprisingly close relationship with the Key family. He was encouraged in his studies and is believed to have sometimes joined the Keys’ sons for lessons. William was also allowed to travel alone, away from the Keys’ farm, to provide medical care to other enslaved people and to help with animals. During the Civil War, Doc was among thousands of African Americans who served on the Confederate side in noncombat roles such as servants, cooks, and laborers, even though he was opposed to helping the forces that could ensure the continuation of slavery. Because of his skills, Doc worked as a medic and surgeon, treating wounded confederate soldiers and horses. Once he was freed, Doc was eager to support the Union cause.

When the war ended in 1865, Doc worked hard and saved his money. Despite having no formal education, he became a wealthy and respected businessman. Doc read widely, took a keen interest in politics, and became a self-taught veterinarian. His greatest financial success was Keystone Liniment, a medicine he formulated. Doc frequently traveled around the country with his medicine wagon, lecturing on horses and selling his liniment. It was during one of these trips that Doc purchased an Arabian horse named Loretta, Jim’s mother. Little did Doc know that he and Jim would change the world.

Over the course of nine years of performing, approximately ten million people witnessed the loving bond between Doc and Jim Key. Money from ticket sales helped support humane societies across the United States. After President McKinley raved to the press about Jim’s performance at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition of 1897, Albert Rogers, a promoter, introduced himself to Doc and was able to gain Doc and Jim access to stages that did not normally allow African American performers. Additional notable guests at Jim’s shows included educator Booker T. Washington, bandleader John Phillip Sousa, future

president William H. Taft, and Alice Roosevelt, daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt.

**Humane Society:** A humane society is an organization that aims to stop and prevent animal cruelty and deals with issues such as animal rescue, placement, advocacy, legislation, and shelter services ([www.adoptapet.com/blog/shelter-sPCA-humane-society-or-rescue/](http://www.adoptapet.com/blog/shelter-sPCA-humane-society-or-rescue/)). In 1866, Henry Bergh founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in New York City. The ASPCA’s mission remains unchanged since its founding, which is “to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States” ([www.asPCA.org/about-us](http://www.asPCA.org/about-us)). In 1868, George Angell founded the Massachusetts SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and later the American Humane Education Society. The first SPCA was founded in England in 1824 to prevent the abuse of carriage horses ([www.sPCA.org/about-sPCA/our-history/](http://www.sPCA.org/about-sPCA/our-history/)).

### Additional titles to teach about kindness, compassion, and friendship with animals:

***A Man Called Raven*** written by Richard Van Camp, illustrated by George Littlechild  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2810>

***Puffling Patrol*** written by Ted and Betsy Lewin, illustrated by Ted and Betsy Lewin  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2766>

***Buffalo Song*** written by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by Bill Farnsworth  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2511>

***Featherless/Desplumado*** written by Juan Felipe Herrera, illustrated by Ernesto Cuevas, Jr.  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2777>

***Parrots Over Puerto Rico*** written by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore, illustrated by Susan L. Roth  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2835>



## VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

racehorse, Tennessee, mare, masters, blacksmith, wagon, circus, Mississippi, purebred, Arabian, breed, stallions, offspring, colt, stable, stall, sugar cube, blackboard, promoter, ambulances, St. Louis, spelling bees, coliseums, music halls, mobs, Harvard, fairgrounds, Broadway play, humane societies, President McKinley, entertainers

### Academic

stretched, barely, paced, fidgeted, expectant, spindly, slavery, tamed, enslaved, ornery, neglected, gentle, distill, remedies, reputation, clumsy, ailments, racism, prejudice, limp, rundown, wealthiest, clattered, scrawny, condition, intelligence, champion, vanished, urged, misery, scraggly, mulled over, fame, wobbly, curiosity, proceeded, on cue, capable, trickery, heartbroken, orphaned, obey, coaxed, imitate, handsome, ruckus, frisky, official, transformed, identify, kindness, remarkable, hoax, strutted, echoed, requests, pledge, stubborn, arrange, admiring, portion, discrimination, committed, prestigious, segregated, enthusiastic, skeptics, conclusion, record-breaking, worn out

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What evidence do you see in the pictures and text features that supports your claim?
2. What does it mean to be kind? How do people show kindness? Do you think it is important to teaching others kindness? Why or why not?
3. What do you know about humane societies? What do they do? What is the goal or mission of a humane society? Do you think humans have a responsibility toward animals? Why or why not? Do you think organizations set up for the protection of animals are necessary today? Why or why not?
4. What do you know about the United States Civil War? When was the Civil War? Who was involved? What were the goals of each side? What was the outcome?
5. What do you know about: racism, segregation, and discrimination? Are they still issues today? Why do you think so?
6. What was life like in the South in the late 1800s? What would people do for fun and entertainment? How was life then different from life today? How were people treated differently during that time? What was life like for African Americans during that time?
7. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title, *Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness*, means. Then ask students what and who they think this book will most likely be about. What places or situations might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, quote on the back cover, title page, acknowledgments, dedications, illustrations, afterword, photographs, author's sources, and author and illustrator bios (on the jacket back flap).



### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- the legacy of Doc Key and Jim Key
- the methods Doc uses to teach Jim
- how Doc breaks racial barriers and confronts stereotypes
- how Doc and Jim raise awareness for the humane treatment of animals
- what Doc teaches people about the value of kindness (toward humans and animals) and the power of education

Encourage students to consider why the author, Donna Janell Bowman, would want to share this story with young people.

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 4)

1. When was William Key born? Where did he live? Who did he live with and why?
2. Why is William allowed to join the Keys' sons for lessons?
3. Who teaches William to make homemade remedies?
4. Why does everyone call William "Doc Key," or just "Doc"?
5. What medicine does Doc create?
6. How does Doc confront the prejudice he encounters?
7. Describe the condition of the horse named Laretta when Doc finds her.

8. Why does Doc decide to purchase Laretta?
9. Why does Doc pair Laretta with one of the fastest racing stallions in the country? For what is Doc hoping?
10. How does Doc react to the sight of Laretta's newborn colt? Why?
11. What does Doc do to help nurse the colt, Jim, back to health?
12. Why does Jim move into the house with Doc?
13. How does Jim begin to imitate Doc?
14. Why does Doc begin sleeping on a cot next to Jim's stall?
15. How does Jim help Doc sell Keystone Liniment?
16. What skills does Doc teach Jim? What does Jim learn to do?
17. How does Doc teach Jim to identify letters and eventually write words? What does Doc emphasize in his teaching style?
18. What happens when Doc exhibits Jim at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition?
19. Who helps spread the word about Doc and Jim Key across the country?
20. Why are Doc and Jim sometimes not allowed to perform?
21. How does Doc take a stand against segregation? What does he refuse to do? What does he request? Why is this important to him?
22. Why are the humane societies interested in Doc and Jim Key?
23. How does Doc use the performances to support the humane societies and promote kindness toward animals?



★ “The strong, black lines of Minter’s prints give the book an old-time-y feel. . . . An incredible story that ought to be widely known—a must-read.”

–*Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review*

★ “Stunning hand-painted linoleum block print illustrations by CSK Award winner Minter. . . . This beautiful, picture-book homage to Doc and Jim is nothing short of enthralling.”

–*Booklist, Starred Review*

★ “Themes of racial injustice and the harsh treatment of animals offer a poignant supplement to the main narrative. . . . A substantial afterword will leave children eager to learn more.” –*Publishers Weekly, Starred Review*

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6, & Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

1. What does the phrase “spindly, shank-legged animal” mean?
2. Why would slave owners not want their enslaved people to be educated? Why might some places in the United States make it a crime to educate enslaved people? What is powerful about education?
3. How are John and Martha Key different from other slave masters? Why do you think they decide to educate William?
4. During the Civil War (1861–1865), Doc served in noncombat roles on the Confederate side as a medic and surgeon (see the Afterword for more detail). Why do you think Doc served on the Confederate side? How do you think he and thousands of other African Americans felt while aiding the confederates? Why?
5. The end of the Civil War led to the abolition of slavery. Do you think African Americans at the time felt completely free? Why or why not?
6. How does Doc’s early experience as an enslaved person influence his compassion for working animals?
7. What do you think motivates Doc to become a successful businessman? How does success in business help combat some of the prejudice Doc experiences?
8. Why do school districts request Doc and Jim to perform? What lesson do the adults hope children take away from these performances?
9. How does Doc and Jim’s early experience traveling with the medicine wagon prepare them for their future stage performances?
10. Describe Doc and Jim’s relationship. What does Doc provide for Jim? What does Jim provide for Doc? How does their relationship change throughout the story? What does their relationship teach about the power of kindness?
11. How does Doc use positive reinforcement to teach Jim to identify letters and combine letters to spell words? What is the positive reinforcement for Jim?
12. Why is President McKinley’s presence in the audience at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition of 1897 significant? How do you think his attendance influenced public perception of Doc and Jim’s performance act and the types of audiences they perform to?
13. If Doc was alive today, what do you think he would say about our current treatment of animals? Do you think he would be impressed or disappointed in how animals are treated today? Do we treat all animals with kindness, only some, or not enough? Which animals do you think still need better protection?
14. How does Doc use his performances with Jim to break racial barriers? How do you think he changes white people’s minds about African Americans and



their humanity? How might Doc's message about the treatment of animals extend to the treatment of all people?

15. How do you think Doc feels about the Harvard University professors' conclusions? Do you think he feels validated? Why or why not?
16. Do you think Doc's race and/or background influences the amount and intensity of criticism and skeptics? Why or why not? For example, do you think he would have had a different reception if he were white and/or formally educated?
17. Do you think the Harvard University professors' findings may have helped the humane society organizations gain supporters? Why or why not? What do the professors' conclusions suggest about Doc's training of Jim?
18. What kinds of entertainment do you enjoy? How are those similar to or different from entertainment in the late 1800s? Why do you think Doc and Jim's shows were so popular at the time? If Doc and Jim performed today, do you think they would be popular? Why or why not?
19. What does this story say about the power of learning and perseverance?
20. Why do you think Doc's kind and humane treatment of Jim is significant in the late 1800s? Why did so many animals, such as Lauretta the horse, experience mistreatment?
21. Why do you think animals, such as horses and other livestock, were the focus of the earliest humane societies advocating efforts in the late 1800s?
22. How is Jim a symbol for humane societies? How did Doc and Jim's story impact people's opinions about the humane treatment of animals?
23. Do you think Jim is an appropriate symbol for humane societies? Why or why not? Put another way, do you think a performance animal today would be a symbol for humane societies? Why or why not?

24. Horses were critical working animals and faced difficult working conditions in the 1800s. What animals today still face difficult or dangerous working conditions? What animal would you want to change people's minds about?
25. What does Doc mean when he says, "The whip makes horses stubborn and they obey through fear"?
26. Doc practices kindness in his teaching. Do you think kindness is an effective method in teaching a person or an animal? Why or why not?

### Reader's Response

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)*

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Teaching Jim to identify letters, spell, write, and count involves a lot of hard work and perseverance. Have you ever been challenged or experienced difficulty when learning something new? Describe this time and how you felt. Did you want to give up? Why or why not? What helped you stay motivated? How did you feel after you learned the new skill? What advice do you have for someone who faces challenges in achieving a goal?
2. How would you define the word kindness? Who is someone in your life that you think is kind? What does this person do or say that makes you think so? Think of a time when someone was kind to you. How did it make you feel? How did this person's kindness help or affect you? How can you reciprocate kindness?
3. Doc is a kind and patient teacher to Jim. What qualities make someone a good teacher? Describe a time that a teacher helped you learn or grow. What did the teacher do that was



- effective? How did she or he help you overcome obstacles? How did she or he motivate you to learn?
4. Jim develops into a skillful performer under Doc's kind teaching methods. Do you think anyone can learn a new skill with enough perseverance, practice, and mentorship? Why or why not? What do you think discourages people from trying or learning something new and how can we change this?
  5. Doc and Jim face many obstacles from racial segregation to skeptics. Think of a time that you faced an obstacle that made it difficult to reach your goal. How did you feel? How did you eventually overcome the obstacle? Are some obstacles too big for people to overcome? Why or why not? Who did you ask for help to reach your goal?
  6. Some people, including Harvard University professors, were skeptical about Doc and Jim's performances. Do you think the skeptics were wrong or right to doubt Jim's talents? If you were alive during the time Doc and Jim were performing, how would you have reacted to their performances? Would you have believed in Jim's talents without seeing documented evidence of Jim's abilities? Why or why not?

### ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)*

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.

3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about Doc and Jim use their performances to both overcome and advocate for different issues, or what they admire about Doc's treatment of Jim.
5. The story contains some content-specific words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

*(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)*

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.



## Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

- Using a map of the United States, have students identify the division of the states during the United States Civil War (1861–1865) and find and mark the Union states in one color and the Confederate states in another color ([www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war/war/maps/#/detail/the-confederate-states-of-america](http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war/war/maps/#/detail/the-confederate-states-of-america)). Have students discuss the challenges of Tennessee being on the border between states that sympathized with the North and those that sympathized with the South. How might being on the border have benefited enslaved people during the Civil War?
- Ask students to research the Reconstruction Amendments: the Thirteenth Amendment (1865), Fourteenth Amendment (1868), and Fifteenth Amendment (1870), and represent their results in a graphic organizer ([www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/CivilWarAmendments.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/CivilWarAmendments.htm)). What was the intention or purpose of the Reconstruction Amendments? What did each amendment protect or guarantee? What obstacles did the promise of these amendments face? After research, have students write an essay explaining how these amendments would have benefited Doc Key and enabled him to be successful.
- Have students research the cause and effect of the Jim Crow laws on African Americans in the late 1800s to the mid 1900s, and show their results using a graphic organizer. (Check out Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site’s information on Jim Crow Laws to get started: [www.nps.gov/malu/learn/education/jim\\_crow\\_laws.htm](http://www.nps.gov/malu/learn/education/jim_crow_laws.htm).) What did the Jim Crow laws restrict or deny? How did the laws affect everyday life for

African Americans? How did life for African Americans change after the Civil War? How did life for African Americans stay the same? How do these laws compare to the rights guaranteed in the Reconstruction Amendments (activity 2 above)? Explore the Jim Crow and Segregation Primary Source Set from the Library of Congress for more information:

[www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights/](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights/).

- Have students explore the issues facing African Americans following Reconstruction with the “After Reconstruction: Problems of African Americans in the South” lesson plan from the Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/reconstruction/](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/reconstruction/).
- Have students research and create an informational presentation about a historical figure whose kindness or compassion helped pave the way for positive change. Who was the person? What did he or she do that influenced others? How did the person use kindness to impact change? Why was his or her work or efforts important? What should people know about the person?

## English Language Arts/Writing

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9)

- Ask students to imagine they were in the audience at one of Doc and Jim’s performances. Have students write a friendly letter to Doc describing their reactions to the performance, including a detailed description of what they saw, heard, or felt. Students should include questions they would want to ask Doc regarding Jim, Jim’s training, or the performance.
- Doc and Jim Key showed the world that with kindness anything—well, a lot of learning—is possible. Encourage students to write a poem about the power of kindness. What does





- kindness mean to you? How does kindness transcend differences and open doors? How does it make others feel? How does it make you feel?
3. Ask students to write a detailed review or critique of Doc and Jim’s performance for their school or local newspaper. Students must support their opinions with detailed reasoning and examples. What did you see at the performance? What sights, smells, noises, or other things did you experience? What, if anything, was unique or surprising about the performance? Did you like or dislike the performance? Why or why not? Should people attend? Why or why not? Encourage students to read other music and art performance reviews in the local newspaper to get a sense of the tone, style, and format of a formal review.
  4. Toward the end of the school year, have students write a friendly letter to an incoming student in next year’s class, and if possible, assign each student the name of an incoming student. In their letter, have students offer words of encouragement, support, and helpful advice about being in that class or grade. What do you need to know about being a student in your class/grade? What should the incoming students be excited about? What do you wish you knew? What is a useful strategy or helpful tip that you would recommend?
  5. Many school districts across the country referred to Doc and Jim Key as the “perfect examples of education and kindness.” Ask students to imagine that they have the opportunity to invite someone in history who has demonstrated the importance of education and kindness in their life to visit their school, and write a persuasive essay explaining why this person is the best choice. How does she or he embody kindness? How does she or he stress the importance of education? Why is this person the best choice to visit your school?
  6. Have students select one of the following animal cruelty issues to research and write a persuasive essay to convince readers to take action against it: inhumane factory farming, animal entertainment, or animal testing. How does the practice endanger animal welfare? What are common misconceptions about the practice? What are the humane alternatives and their benefits? What is the call to action?
  7. Have students research their school or school district’s food service policy. What role can students play in advocating for humane animal practices? Ask students to write a persuasive letter to their principal explaining why their school should adopt humane practices for the school cafeteria, such as not using meat, eggs, or dairy from factory farms ([www.humanesociety.org/issues/campaigns/factory\\_farming/?credit=web\\_id83620033](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/campaigns/factory_farming/?credit=web_id83620033)) or instituting Meatless Mondays ([www.meatlessmonday.com/start-a-campaign/](http://www.meatlessmonday.com/start-a-campaign/)). How could these humane practices be adopted in the cafeteria? What choices should be considered? What are the benefits for animals, students, the school, and the environment? Students can draft a proposal to submit to their principal or superintendent.
  8. Have students read *Lend a Hand: Poems About Giving* ([www.leeandlow.com/books/2849](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/2849)), written by John Frank and illustrated by London Ladd, and *The Can Man* ([www.leeandlow.com/books/2714](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/2714)), written by Laura E. Williams and illustrated by Craig Orback. Ask students to compare and contrast each book to *Step Right Up*. What is the central idea of each book? How are the books connected? What themes or ideas do they share?
  9. Ask students to imagine that they are going to interview the author and illustrator of *Step Right Up*. Students should write interview questions they would ask if they were on a talk show, news show, or radio show. What do students want to learn more about in terms of the writing process,



the illustration process, inspiration for the story, Doc, Jim, humane societies, and any other topics of interest related to the story?

10. Organize a class or school-wide spelling bee. Teach students meaningful word study ([www.readingrockets.org/article/word-study-new-approach-teaching-spelling](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/word-study-new-approach-teaching-spelling)) and vocabulary strategies ([www.readingrockets.org/article/teaching-vocabulary](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/teaching-vocabulary)) to help master grade-appropriate study words or the vocabulary words listed in this teacher's guide.
11. Encourage students to write an imaginary diary entry from the perspective of Jim. Students should include multiple dates and passages as Jim chronicles his feelings about training, working with Doc, being on the road, and performing. How does Jim feel about overcoming being a sickly colt? About Doc's mentorship and friendship? About the skeptics?

### Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

1. In small groups, have students explore the “Photographs of Signs Enforcing Racial” ([www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/o85\\_disc.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/o85_disc.html)) “Discrimination and Jim Crow and Segregation Primary Sources” ([www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights/](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights/)) from The Library of Congress. What powerful words and ideas are expressed? What messages do the text and images in these pictures give? What do these primary sources say about the treatment of African American civil rights? How did life for African Americans change after the Civil War? How did life for African Americans stay the same? How do you feel looking at these pictures and documents? What questions do you have?
2. Ask students to imagine that they are one of the early founders of a humane society in the late 1800s or early 1900s. In small groups, have

students design and create a poster for their humane society using Jim Key's image. Each group should discuss how they want to use Jim's image to promote and support their humane organization. What is each group's organization's mission? What are the organization's goals? Then have each group present its poster design to the class.

3. Encourage students to design an advertisement to showcase Doc and Jim's next performance coming to their town or school. Students should think about how much to charge for a ticket and what acts in the show will persuade people to attend this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

### Home-School Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

1. Help spread kindness and take the Random Acts of Kindness pledge for Random Acts of Kindness Week (in February) ([www.randomactsofkindness.org/](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/)). As a class, brainstorm a list of kind acts that they would like to perform and encourage in their school, home, or community, and challenge them to complete at least two random acts of kindness from the list each week. Encourage students to document their acts of kindness in a reflective journal, and record how they felt when they performed or witnessed an act of kindness. What did you do, say, or see, and why? What, if any, was the reaction of the recipient of the act of kindness? How did you feel?
2. Have students interview a parent or guardian about kindness. How has someone's kindness helped or encouraged the person? How does the person use kindness to help or encourage others? How does receiving kindness compare to giving kindness? How does being kind make the person feel? Does the person ever find it difficult to be kind? If so, why? What can the person do to encourage the spread of kindness in the future?



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Donna Janell Bowman** grew up on a quarter horse ranch where she trained for horse shows and developed her passion for writing. When she first heard about Doc and Jim Key, Bowman was skeptical about Jim's "education." But after doing her own research, she was inspired to share Doc and Jim's fascinating story with young readers. Bowman lives in Texas with her family and their rescue animals. This is her debut book. Visit her at [www.donnajanellbowman.com](http://www.donnajanellbowman.com).

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Daniel Minter** is the illustrator of several award-winning picture books, including *Ellen's Broom*, for which he won a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Honor. He is also an adjunct instructor of art at the Maine College of Art. Minter finds inspiration for his work from observing the natural world and thinking about history and science. He is the founding director of Maine Freedom Trails, an organization dedicated to identifying sites related to the Underground Railroad and the abolitionist movement. Minter lives with his family in Portland, Maine. Visit him at [www.danielminter.net](http://www.danielminter.net).

Awards and honors for *Step Right Up* include:

- Junior Library Guild selection
- Starred review, *Kirkus Reviews*
- Starred review, *Publishers Weekly*
- Starred review, *Booklist*

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

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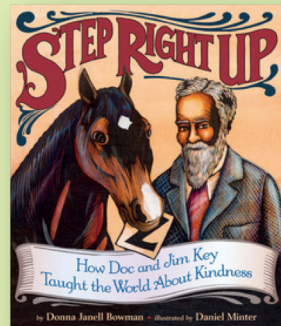
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## Book Information for *Step Right Up*



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Interest Level: Grades 2–6  
Guided Reading Level: Q  
Lexile™: N/A  
Accelerated Reader®  
Level/Points: N/A  
\*Reading level based on the Spache  
Readability Formula

**THEMES:** Animals (Horses),  
Slavery, Education,  
Discrimination, Overcoming  
Obstacles, Kindness/Caring,  
Friendship, Persistence/Grit,  
Animal Rights and Humane  
Treatment of Animals, United  
States History, Biography,  
African American Interest

## RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

Learn more about *Step Right Up*  
at:

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All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.