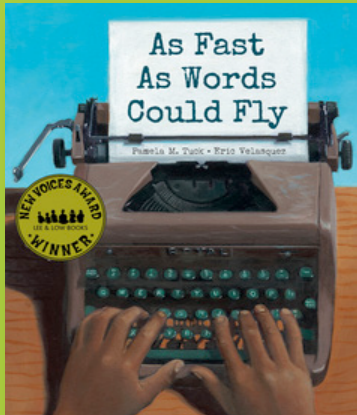


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

# As Fast As Words Could Fly

written by Pamela Tuck

illustrated by Eric Velasquez

## About the Book

**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**\*Reading Level:** Grades 3–4

**Interest Level:** Grades 2–7

**Guided Reading Level:** O

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:** 4.3/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** AD700L

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** African American and United States History, Overcoming Obstacles, Conflict Resolution, Civil Rights Movement, Adversity, Segregation/Discrimination, Courage, Human Rights, Freedom, Determination, Dreams and Aspirations, Identity/Self Esteem, Persistence/ Grit, Typing

## SYNOPSIS

Fourteen-year-old Mason Steel takes pride in turning his father's excited ramblings about the latest civil rights incidents into handwritten business letters. One day Pa comes home with a gift from his civil rights group: a typewriter. Thrilled with the present, Mason spends all his spare time teaching himself to type. Soon he knows where every letter and numeral on the keyboard is located.

When the civil right group wins a school desegregation case, Mason learns that now he will be attending a formerly all-white high school. Despite his fears and injustice from the students and faculty, Mason perseveres. He does well in school—especially in his typing class. And when he competes in the county typing tournament, Mason decides to take a stand, using his skills to triumph over suspicions and racial prejudice.

Winner of Lee & Low's New Voices Award, *As Fast As Words Could Fly* is an inspiring testament to the power of hard work, determination, and the belief in yourself to overcome life's challenges.

Awards and honors for *As Fast As Words Could Fly* include:

- **New Voices Award Winner**, Lee & Low Books
- **Land of Enchantment Book Award Masterlist**, New Mexico Library Association
- **Martin Luther King Jr. "Living the Dream" Award**, Manhattan Country School
- **Diverse and Impressive Children's Books of 2013**, International Literacy Association (ILA)



## BACKGROUND

**From the Author:** In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* that racial segregation of students in public schools was unconstitutional, and school systems around the country were ordered to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” However, the pace and method of desegregation was left to local and state authorities and district courts. Ten years later, there were still many areas of the country that had seen almost no change. It took passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to strengthen enforcement, along with the federal government’s threat to withhold funding to school districts that continued to have separate schools for black and white students. This newfound governmental support enabled substantial progress toward the desegregation of public schools.

**Civil Rights Movement in United States:** Although African American activists had been working toward desegregation and equal treatment and opportunities since the end of slavery and the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement is well known for its activity between 1954 (*Brown v. Board of Education* ruling) to 1964 (Civil Rights Act) (<http://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/modern-civil-rights-movement.htm>). The Civil Rights Movement was a loose coalition of local and national groups, often differing in strategies, around the goal of eliminating Jim Crow segregation, or “a political, economic, and social system that placed African Americans in an inferior position, disfranchised them, and was enforced by custom, law, and official and vigilante violence” (<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1917beyond/essays/crm.htm>). The movement took many forms as African Americans and other concerned citizens challenged the many forms of segregation, including bus boycotts, marches, lunch counter sit-ins, lawsuits, freedom rides, voter registration drives, and more (“The Civil Rights Movement,” an Africana Age exhibition from the New York Public Library) (<http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-civil-rights.html>).

**Southern Christian Leadership Conference:** The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is an African American civil rights organization that was established in 1957 to help coordinate protest groups and their initiatives in the South (<http://nationalsclc.org/about-us/history/>). SCLC is closely associated with the legacy of its first

president, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The formation of the SCLC began following the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which began on December 5, 1955, and lasted for three hundred eighty-one days, ending on December 21, 1956. The SCLC sought to work with local organizations to expand nonviolent efforts throughout the South. It is important to note that the SCLC was one of many civil rights organizations working toward ending the system of segregation. There were many local, grassroots groups across the country, along with other national organizations, including the Congress of Racial Equality, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/civil-rights-movement/essays/civil-rights-movement-major-events-and-legacies>).

**Note to Educators:** The word “Negro” is used in the text as part of the dialogue of adults in the story. Students may need additional context and awareness around the term. For additional resources on how to talk to students in developmentally appropriate and meaningful discussions, please refer to the following resources:

- “Straight Talk about the N-Word” from Teaching Tolerance Magazine, an interview with Neal A. Lester, Dean of Humanities and Former Chair of the English Department at Arizona State University (<http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-40-fall-2011/feature/straight-talk-about-n-word>)
- Teaching the N Word with Socratic Seminar, video by TeachingChannel.org (<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-the-n-word>)

### Additional titles to teach about civil rights:

**John Lewis in the Lead** written by Jim Haskins, Kathleen Benson, illustrated by Benny Andrews  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2413>

**Paul Robeson** written by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by George Ford  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2703>



## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

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

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. 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

sit-in, nonviolence, typewriter, business letter, tobacco, mule cart, typing class, SCLC, segregation, civil rights group, protest, field secretary, Golden Frinks, Board of Education, Negro, noways (no way, y'all (you all), ain't (are not), tournament, auditorium, electric typewriter, manual typewriter, Neighborhood Youth Corps, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Greenville, North Carolina

### Academic

brewing, rambled, boasted, weary, stammered, disbelief, trudged, furious, widened, stumbled, hustled, barricaded, snapped, thrust, stormed, grimaces, strict, sponsored, bulged, relieved, tinkling, fumed, coordinated, threatened, fiercely, blurted, glance, recalled, considered, echoed, applauded, complimented

## 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 knowledge 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 clues do the author and illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
2. What do you know about segregation in the United States? How did racial segregation affect where students went to school?
3. What is racism? What is prejudice? How does racism differ from prejudice?
4. What are civil rights? What do you know about the Civil Rights Movement? What issues did the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s–1960s address?
5. What do you know about typewriters? Have you ever seen or used a typewriter? How is a typewriter similar to or different from a computer?
6. What is perseverance? What does it mean to persevere? Share a time you faced a challenge and did not give up.
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, *As Fast As Words Could Fly*, means. Then ask them what and who they think this book will most likely be about. What 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, endpapers, dedications, title page, illustrations, and author's note.



## Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out:

- why typewriting is important to Mason
- how perseverance and self confidence are important in overcoming challenges
- how ordinary people can make a difference
- to what the book title, *As Fast As Words Could Fly*, refers

Encourage students to consider why the author, Pamela M. Tuck, 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)

- From what point of view or perspective is this story told?
- How does Mason help Pa's civil rights group? What does Mason do? How does Mason feel about helping the civil rights group?
- What kind of work does Pa's civil rights group do?
- Why does the civil rights group give Mason a typewriter?
- What is the first letter that Mason types with the typewriter?
- What kind of work do Mason and his two older brothers do in the summer?
- Why does Mason's father want Mason and his brothers to go to Belvoir High School instead of Bethel Union High School?
- What does the driver of the school bus do when he first sees Mason and his brothers waiting at the bus stop? Why do you think he does this?
- What happens when Mason and his brothers see Patrick and Daniel on the bus? Why do you think Patrick and Daniel ignore Mason and his brothers?
- How do the students, teachers, and administrators treat Mason when he first arrives at Belvoir High?
- Why does Mason need an after-school job? What type of job does he get? What does he do at this job?
- Mason surprised Mrs. Turner by typing more than one hundred cards in a short period of time. Why was Mrs. Roberts, the typing teacher, grateful toward Mason? How did she reward him?
- What does Mason miss about the manual typewriter?
- Why was Mason fired from his job? What does the investigation conclude?
- What is the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)? What do they do?
- Who is Golden Frinks? How does he help Mason get rehired? Ultimately, why is Mason rehired?
- Why does Mr. Bullock allow Mason to represent Belvoir High in the typing tournament?
- Which kind of typewriter does Mason use in the typing tournament? Why?
- How many words per minute could Mason type when he started to work at the library? How many words per minute does he type at the tournament? What do you think accounts for the difference?
- What happens when Mason wins the typing tournament? How does the audience react? Why does the audience respond that way?
- Provide three to four examples of discrimination and racism that Mason experiences in the story.



“A tribute to her father, Tuck’s school desegregation story highlights an African-American boy’s triumph in a typing tournament. . . . A warm. . . title about the struggle for equality.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

“Tuck lays bare the challenges that faced Mason and black students like him, but she also tempers the story’s cold realities with moments of hope.”

–*Publishers Weekly*

“Velasquez’s vibrant paintings animate this earnest story. . . . This well-crafted tale would be an excellent complement to overviews of the Civil Rights Movement.”

–*School Library Journal*

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

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

- The book begins with the sentence, “Trouble was brewing in Greenville, North Carolina.” To what kind of trouble is the sentence referring?
- What do you know about the group to which Mason’s father belonged? What kind of work do you think they did?
- Why do you think Mason writes letters for Pa’s civil rights group? Why doesn’t his father write the letters?
- What information does the author, Pamela M. Tuck, provide the reader that helps build the setting of the story? Using this information, estimate the time period in which the story takes place.
- How do you think Mason and his brothers feel when their father tells them that they will be attending Belvoir High, a formerly all-white school? How would you feel in this kind of situation, and why?
- Pa tells Mason that “Whittaker’s Restaurant refused to serve Matt Duncan’s boys.” Why do you think the restaurant refused to serve them? What can you infer about Matt Duncan’s boys?
- How do you think Mason’s skill in typing might help him in the future?
- Mason and his brothers go to school twelve miles away at Bethel Union High School, but Belvoir High is only three miles away. Why do Mason and his brothers go to the school that is further away?
- What do you think Pa means when he tells Mason and his brothers “Somebody’s got to make a change”? How can Mason and his brothers make a change?
- Do you think Pa wants the best for Mason and his brothers? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the bus driver slows down and then drives away? What is his intention in doing this?
- The teachers, students, and administrators are unkind to Mason and his brothers when they arrive at Belvoir High. What do you think they hope to achieve by acting this way?
- How does Mason know that the seat in the back corner of the classroom is his?
- When Mason is chosen to represent Belvoir High at the typing tournament, a student asks “How can a Negro represent our school”? How do you think this made Mason feel?
- Pa tells Mason that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. selected Golden Frinks. Why is this significant? Who was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and why is he important?
- Why do you think Mr. Bullock looks directly at Mason when he says, “We can’t afford any more trouble with the Board of Education”? What trouble



is he referring to? What is Mr. Bullock afraid might happen?

17. Mason's father's civil rights group used nonviolent approaches to fight for equal rights. Do you think Mason's decision to represent Belvoir High at the typing tournament is a nonviolent approach to combat discrimination and prejudice? Why or why not?
18. When Mason wins the typing tournament, no one in the audience cheers. Why does the audience respond this way?
19. After the tournament, Mason does not speak much but knows that "his words typed on paper had already spoken for him—loud and clear." What message do you think his words sent?
20. How is using the manual typewriter at the tournament significant and meaningful to Mason? What advantages does an electric typewriter have over a manual typewriter? Why does Mason end up choosing a manual typewriter? Do you think it was a smart decision? Why or why not?
21. Do you think Pa is proud of Mason for competing in and winning the tournament? Why or why not?
22. Do you think Mrs. Roberts and Mr. Bullock's treatment of Mason changed after he won the tournament? Why or why not?
23. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court Case of *Brown v. Board of Education* declared racial segregation of public school students unconstitutional. In the beginning of the story, why do Mason and his brothers still attend a segregated school? What law was passed in 1964 that helped strengthen enforcement of desegregation and combat resistance in the South?
24. In the Author's Note, the author explains that Mason's story is based on the experiences of her own father, Moses Teel Jr. Did it surprise you to find out that many of the events in the book really happened? Why or why not? If you could say something to Moses Teel Jr. or ask him a question today, what would it be?

### 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. Mason has a great responsibility to write letters for his father's civil rights group. Describe a time you were given an important responsibility. How did you feel in that situation? What did you learn?
2. On the bus, Patrick and Daniel ignore Mason and his brothers despite acting friendly to them during the summer. Have you ever experienced something similar to what Mason experienced? What happened? How did you react?
3. Mason decides to take a brave stand at the county typing tournament, using his skills to triumph over racial prejudice. Have you ever used your talents or skills to make a difference? What was the outcome?
4. Despite the injustice Mason experiences from the students and faculty at Belvoir High, he shows great perseverance by doing well in school and competing in the typing tournament. Describe a time that you relied on courage, determination, and self-confidence to persevere in a challenging situation. How did you feel? What or who motivated you to keep going?
5. When Mason hesitates to represent Belvoir High at the typing tournament, he thought about what Pa had told him: "Somebody's got to make a change." What does this phrase mean to you and why do you think it inspired Mason?
6. Mason faced several situations in which he was treated unkindly by a large group of people and made to feel unwelcome. Can you think of any situations in which someone might experience something similar today? What do you think you would have done if you had been in Mason's situation?



## ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(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 story 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 story. 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 story 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 what they admire about Mason, what the author's message in the book is, or what talents or hobbies they have of their own.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic 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

### English Language Arts

(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)

1. Using the Civil Rights Movement (1954–1968) as a starting place, have students brainstorm a list of civil rights issues that are important to them today. After brainstorming, have students work in pairs or small groups to investigate one issue further. After learning about the issue, students should propose a way to improve or solve the issue. In a letter to the editor of a newspaper, students may write why this civil rights issue is important and what can be done to change things for the better. Alternatively, students may prepare a speech or a mock public service announcement to present to the class.
2. Have students write a journal entry from the point of view of Mason after his first week of school at Belvoir High. What were some of the difficult experiences he faced? How was he treated? How did he feel? What or who motivated him to keep going?
3. Have students compare and contrast business and friendly letters. What are the parts of a business letter? What are the parts of a friendly letter? Encourage students to explore the Letter Generator from [ReadWriteThink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter_generator/) and practice writing their own business and friendly letters ([http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter\\_generator/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter_generator/)).
4. Ask students to write a persuasive business letter from the future to Mason's principal, Mr. Bullock,



or typing teacher, Mrs. Roberts, in support of desegregation. Using examples from their own lives, ask students to explain how desegregation has positively influenced their lives. How would going to a segregated school or place of business negatively impact you today?

5. Have students read *The Bus Ride* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2369>) and *John Lewis in the Lead* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2413>), which are books about aspects of the Civil Rights Movement. As students reflect on each story, ask them to compare and contrast what each book teaches about perseverance, courage, nonviolence, and civil rights. What is the central idea of each book? How are racial prejudice and discrimination portrayed in each story? How do these books compare to *As Fast As Words Could Fly*?
6. Have students read the interview with the author's father, Moses Teel Jr., and the author's note about her father in the back of the book ([https://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/moses\\_tuck\\_interview.pdf](https://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/moses_tuck_interview.pdf)). What aspects of Moses' life did the author, Pamela M. Tuck, use as inspiration for the story? How are Moses Teel Jr.'s and Mason Steele's experiences similar? How are they different? Encourage students to write a friendly letter to either the author or her father.

### 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)

1. Have students research the Civil Rights Movement (1954–1968) and create a timeline of the major events. Then have students research the historical events in North Carolina during the same time period and plot them along the timeline. Discuss how the history and politics of North Carolina influenced and affected Mason and his family's life. To help students get started, check out the Civil Rights Movement timelines from The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History ([http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/1945-present/civil-](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/1945-present/civil-rights-movement/timeline-terms)

[rights-movement/timeline-terms](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/1945-present/civil-rights-movement/timeline-terms)) or International Civil Rights Center & Museum (<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/1945-present/civil-rights-movement/timeline-terms>).

2. Nonviolence was at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. Have students research the nonviolent approaches and strategies used. Why did many civil rights activists choose nonviolence as a way to pursue equal rights? What effect did these strategies have on segregation? Ask students to create a list of nonviolent tactics used in the Civil Rights Movement, describe the strategy, and provide one event where each tactic was used.
3. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* declared racial segregation of public school students unconstitutional. Have students research the cause and effect of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. How did it impact public education? In an essay, ask students to argue whether they think schools are less, more, or still just as segregated as before the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.
4. Ask students to research the cause and effect of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. What did the law prohibit? What events led up to the Civil Rights Act (1964)? How did this act affect African Americans? How was the law significant in the desegregation of schools?
5. Have students research and learn about Ruby Bridges and her historic role in the civil rights movement. In a Venn Diagram, compare Ruby Bridges and Mason. What challenges did they face? What changes did they help make?
6. Have students learn more about the history of the Civil Rights Movement with “Eyes on the Prize: The Story of the Movement” from PBS ([http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/story/03\\_schools.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/story/03_schools.html)).
7. Have students learn more about the Civil Rights Movement and social justice issues with the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) “Looking Back Reaching Forward” unit (<http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/looking-back-reaching-forward.html?referrer>).





## Science/STEM

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9 and Range of Reading & Level of Text Complexity, Strand 10)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–5)

Using a Venn Diagram, have students compare and contrast a manual and an electric typewriter. Then ask students to compare a typewriter (manual or electric) to a computer. What are the features of each? How is each powered? How does each work? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type of machine? What are some jobs that use computers today? Are there any situations where typewriters would still be useful today?

## Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

1. Ask students to explore the power of photojournalism by examining photographs from the Civil Rights era from the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs archives, which feature images of nonviolent protests, sit-ins, and other activities ([http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/o84\\_civil.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/o84_civil.html)). How do these pictures make you feel? How do you think photography affected the Civil Rights Movement? How do powerful images influence society and political decisions? Do you think current social media channels, such as Instagram and YouTube, would have changed the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s? Why or why not? Can you find examples of similar powerful images today? How is social media being used today to address racism?
2. In pairs, have students participate in a classroom typing tournament using computer keyboards. Ask students to use a stopwatch and record how many words per minute they can type, check for accuracy, and then compare their results to Mason's in the story. Encourage students to continue practicing their typing skills with online typing games or typing apps.

3. Numerous songs are associated with the Civil Rights Movement. Find recordings of songs such as “We Shall Overcome” and “This Little Light of Mine” from My American Experience from PBS to play for students (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/soundtrack-lyrics/>). Print out the song lyrics for students and have them sing along as the songs play. What powerful messages does each song contain? How does it relate to the Civil Rights Movement? How might songs like these give activists hope and a sense of community? Do you ever hear these songs today?

## School-Home 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. Ask students to interview their parents or caregiver. When was there a time when they experienced prejudice or witnessed prejudice toward someone else? How did the event make them feel? How did they overcome or manage that obstacle? What changes have they seen since they were younger or hope to see in the future to make the world a fairer, more just place? Have students write down their interviewee's answers to bring to class. Ask students to reflect on these answers and write about what they learned from this interview.
2. Encourage students to ask a parent or caregiver to describe a time he or she experienced the support of someone who believed in them. How did the experience make him or her feel? Does he or she think everyone needs someone who believes in them? Why or why not?
3. Mason Steele relies on his typing skills to take a stand against racial prejudice. Have students interview a parent or caregiver about a time the person used his or her talents or skills to contribute to change or make a difference in the world. How did he or she use his or her talents or skills to make a positive impact on society? What was the outcome? Was it a rewarding experience? Why or why not?



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Pamela M. Tuck** gets her love of storytelling from her grandfather, whose “jaw-dropping, eye-popping” stories enchanted her as a child. She began writing poetry in elementary school, then later ventured into writing short stories and plays. Tuck was inspired to write *As Fast As Words Could Fly* by her father’s experiences growing up in the 1960s in a family of civil rights activists. Tuck won Lee & Low’s New Voices Award for this story, her first picture book. She lives in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. Her website is <http://www.pamelamtuck.com/>

**Eric Velasquez** has illustrated numerous award-winning books for children, and has authored some picture books as well. Among the awards he has received for his work are the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award, the Carter G. Woodson Award, an NAACP Image Award, and the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent. When not illustrating book projects, Velasquez teaches book illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. He lives in Hartsdale, New York. His website is <http://www.ericvelasquez.com/>

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children’s book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, “about everyone, for everyone,” is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company’s goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

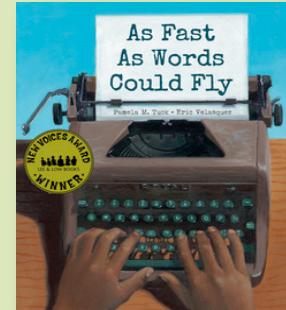
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## Book Information for *As Fast As Words Could Fly*



\$18.95, HARDCOVER

978-1-60060-348-8

40 pages, 8-1/2 X 10-1/2

\*Reading Level: Grades 3–4

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades 2–7

Guided Reading Level: O

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:  
4.3/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD700L

**THEMES:** African American and United States History, Overcoming Obstacles, Conflict Resolution, Civil Rights Movement, Adversity, Segregation/Discrimination, Courage, Human Rights, Freedom, Determination, Dreams and Aspirations, Identity/Self Esteem, Persistence/ Grit, Typing

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2817>

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