# Introduction: The Life of David Drake

## Standards

**National Council for the Social Studies Standards**

1. Culture & Cultural Diversity

Assist learners to apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns

5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Help learners analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture in both historical and contemporary settings

**Common Core Standards**

Key Ideas and Details – CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Craft and Structure – CSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

**National Core Arts Standards**

Anchor Standard #4 (Performing/Producing/Producing): Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard #11 (Connecting): Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

## Lesson Outline

Lesson Focus/Warm-Up (10 minutes)

* Upon entering the classroom, Jonathan Green’s painting, “Sir Dave,” will be projected on the SmartBoard.
* Students will have three minutes to come up with a list of items, colors, details, emotions, etc. that they see in the painting. Create a class list for each category.
* Students will then have one minute to come up with a caption for the painting. Ask for a few students to volunteer their ideas.
* Tell students that today we will be learning about the life of David Drake, a an enslaved person from Edgefield, South Carolina who was both a potter and a poet.

Developmental Section

**Myth vs. Fact Anticipatory Activity** (15 minutes)

* Distribute Myth vs. Fact worksheets. The worksheet includes ten statements about American slavery that are either true or false.
* Students will have eight minutes to individually determine whether each statement is true or false. Students also must provide a rationale for each of their answers.
* While reviewing the activity as a class, students will hold up either a green (true) or red (false) notecard to indicate their answer.

**Poetry Activity** (30 minutes)

* Students will count off by five. According to the student’s number, he/she will receive one of five poems by David Drake: “All My Relations,” “Pretty Little Girl,” “I Made This Jar,” “I Saw A Leppard,” or “Ladys and Gentlemans Shoes.”
* Working individually, each student will come up with a 3-4 sentence explanation of what the poem means, why Dave would have written it, and what it reveals about slavery broadly.
* Students will then get in groups of five (so that each poem is represented) to share their ideas.
* Each group will create a mural of their interpretation of what Dave’s life was like. They will then share these with the class. Students should be prepared to explain how their choices in two or three elements of art reflect Dave’s poetry.
  + Elements of art include: shape, value, texture, form, line, color, space

***Twelve Years a Slave*/Cotton Slavery Activity** (30 minutes)

* Each student will receive an excerpt from Solomon Northup’s memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave*, that details what cotton slavery was like.
* Students will read the excerpt individually, and will highlight words/phrases that describe the physicality/sensations of picking cotton.
* Students will get into groups of three. In their groups, students will share which words/phrases they chose from the excerpt.
* Students will then create original choreography for their own “cotton dance.” Each group will give a “performance” for their class. After the performance, a representative from each group will briefly explain how the group made decisions in their choreography.
* The class will watch the “Cotton Dance” from the Dave the Potter Dance Showcase and will answer the following questions:
  + How does this dance compare with the choreography your group created?
  + How does this choreography/your choreography compare with Solomon Northup’s account of cotton slavery?

Wrap-Up/Culminating Experience (5 minutes)

* Students will respond to the following prompts, which will be collected as an exit slip:
  + How did physicalizing picking cotton contribute to your understanding of slavery?
  + What does David Drake’s poetry tell us about slavery?