

JOHN, PAUL, GEORGE AND BEN

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by Lane Smith

Ages: 7-10

Lexile®: AD660L; Guided Reading Level: N

Themes: American History, Biography, Founding of America, Growing Up, Humor, Imagination, Learning

SUMMARY

According to the author, John (Hancock), Paul (Revere), George (Washington), Ben (Franklin), and Independent Tom (Jefferson) were always getting into trouble together as boys before getting into bigger trouble later in life with the King of England, George III. Based on character traits and later accomplishments, this program playfully mixes fact with fiction to hook young viewers into the lives of five of our country's founding fathers. For example, Paul's early work at a belfry damaged his hearing so much that he had to scream just to hear himself, a nuisance that later came in handy when he warned the citizens of Lexington and Concord that the Redcoats were coming! Students will enjoy seeing a less serious (but nevertheless factual) side of five of the people who articulated and fought for the liberties that provided the foundation of the American government.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will demonstrate a beginning understanding of the roles of John Hancock, Paul Revere, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson in the American Revolution.
- Students will create a biographical poster depicting the life of one of the five historical figures in the story.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Elicit and build students' background knowledge of the American Revolution. Write the names and post the pictures of each of the five people from the program on a KWL chart (*Know, Want to Know, Learned*). Record what students think they know about each person, whether or not it is incorrect. Then, in the *Want to Know* section, record any questions or

wonderings that the students have about each person. Revisit this chart to complete it after viewing the program.

Preview some of the vocabulary from the program: *lad, belfry, liberty, treason, revolution*. Each student should write the new word on the front of an index card. On the back of the index card, ask students to write the definition of the word and draw a picture that represents the meaning of the word. Encourage students to listen for the words in the story and to write down any context clues from the program that would also help them to remember the meaning of the word.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Revisit the KWL chart from the Before Viewing Activity. Review the questions that the students asked in the Want to Know section. Record any answers that were learned. Next, fill in the Learned section of the chart. Guiding questions:

- What did you learn from the program about these characters that you didn't know before?
- How did each person play a role in the American Revolution?

Separate fact from fiction. Make a T-chart with Facts on one side and Fiction on the other side. Have the students recall parts of the program and separate the fact from the fiction. At the end of the book on which the program is based, there is a Fact and Fiction section that dispels some of the fiction from the movie. Based on the facts from the program, guide students in research about one of the five men. Each student should pick one Revolutionary character to research and make a biographical poster about him. The poster should include information about the person's background, role in the American Revolution, unusual or interesting facts, and pictures of the person.

Have students make an illustrated timeline of the Revolutionary War. Guide them through putting events in order, from Paul Revere's ride to the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. Important events to include are: the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Signing of the Declaration of

Independence, Winter at Valley Forge, the Battle of Saratoga, and the Battle of Yorktown. After the events are in order, students should draw detailed illustrations of each event.

Teach the Statement of Rights in the Declaration of Independence ("We hold these truths to be self-evident..."). Discuss with students the main message of this statement. A suggested summary would be: *The beginning of the Declaration tells what rights the founding fathers believed that all people should have. These are that all people are equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights cannot be taken away. If a government tries to take away these rights, then the people have the right to change the government or make a new government that will uphold those rights.* Using this summary as a basis, list all of the ways that the English government did not uphold these rights and discuss how and why this led John Hancock, Paul Revere, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and others to form a government that would.

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