

Heroes and History: Using Story to Tie Young Minds to the American Past

Introduction

For most primary children, history starts with yesterday, stretches back to preschool, and then most everything else falls into a vague category of “long, long ago.” While historical information can be learned, it is confused. Children make comments such as, “My father fought in the Civil War,” or “Thomas Lincoln wrote the Declaration of Independence with his friend Abraham Jefferson.” Without possessing a skeletal chronology, new information has nowhere to be stored. The historical reference points—the hooks on which to hang incoming information— aren’t yet in place.

This unit uses stories about historical personalities to give children reference points in U.S. history. Children are drawn to thinking about people; it is this interest that attracts them to fiction, which allows them to imagine challenges, struggles, successes and other possible futures for themselves. Biographical stories can attract children the same way: real stories about people can guide children to imagine challenges, struggles and successes as well. *This unit uses biographical stories to connect young children with the historical experience and provide them with hooks into history.*

This packet is divided into six sections: Objectives, Ongoing Structures, Specific Assignments and Projects, Timeline, Annotated Bibliography and Historical Habits of the Mind. Depending on how you approach the suggestions in this packet, this study could be something quite simple, or it could become a comprehensive and involved unit that drives a good part of your reading and social studies teaching for the year. For teachers of the youngest students, you will probably want to adhere more to the briefer version. For teachers of 4th and 5th graders, this unit (using the right heroes) could potentially act as a vehicle for delivering your entire history program. Bold italics mark activities that capture the bare minimum of what you will need to do. The other activities offer a smorgasbord of possibilities.

Primary Objectives

- 1) Students will learn about nine historical personalities that represent variation in the American experience—one for each month. The set selected could include well known heroes, but it could also include lesser known people. For instance, George Washington, Abe Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. could be skipped, as these personalities will be returned to repeatedly in school. More important than selecting monumental figures is selecting personalities who will interest the children and who will help them develop a basic mental historical map. Also crucial is that there is quality literature available about each, especially with younger children.
 - a. A set of personalities that could work:
 - i. Benjamin Franklin
 - ii. George Washington and/or Thomas Jefferson
 - iii. Tecumseh
 - iv. Harriet Tubman and other lesser known personalities from the Underground Railroad
 - v. Thomas Edison
 - vi. Susan B. Anthony and/or Elizabeth Cady Stanton
 - vii. Walt Disney
 - viii. Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey
 - ix. Rosa Parks
 - x. Rachel Carson

- b. Some of the many other heroic figures that could be used:
 - i. Ida B. Wells-Barnett
 - ii. Albert Einstein
 - iii. Victoria Woodhull
 - iv. Mary Cassatt
 - v. Langston Hughes
 - vi. Hellen Keller
 - vii. Frederick Douglas
 - viii. Cesar Chavez
 - ix. Jane Addams

2) Each child will become an expert about one personally relevant historical figure.

Secondary Objectives

Children will...

- gain a mental picture of some of the general historical periods in American history.
- learn to identify model personalities, heroes who might be emulated.
- gain a general sense of time's movement, including an understanding of past/present/future, a century vs. a decade
- learn basic geography, particularly regarding regions of the United States.
- learn to recognize that our lives are affected by past events.
- learn to distinguish between fact and opinion.
- be guided to understand that while they should read widely, and that they shouldn't believe everything they hear or read.
- experience seeing the world through another person's eyes.
- learn that individuals make a difference.
- learn the importance of place in affecting events.
- explore the difference between important and unimportant information and facts.
- learn about the historical habits of the mind directly and indirectly (see attached description).
- work with primary sources in the classroom.
- learn about heroes:
 - Heroes are admirable for tremendous actions and contributions.
 - Even the greatest of us have faults and make errors.
 - Heroes are real people who did real things.
 - Heroes are willing to die for what they believe sometimes.
 - Heroes are selfless, courageous and can stand the test of time.
 - Heroes exist in all fields, races and genders.

Ongoing Structures

This section includes a wide variety of regular activities designed to help the children learn about these heroes during the year.

- 1) ***Each month one historical personality should be introduced to the whole class through stories told and books read aloud. One or two books, perhaps mentioned in the annotated bibliography below, will be read aloud and discussed with the class. More stories will be told when less quality literature is available. During these readings and in pursuant discussions, the historical***

habits of the mind will be stressed. Other readings will be used as appropriate to help students to develop historical context and background for the current biography.

- 2) *Use other reading selections as appropriate to help students develop historical context and background for the current biography.*
- 3) Make varied reading material available to children to enable independent exploration to learn more about our personality of the month, material varied enough in difficulty that it reflects a wide variety of reading levels.
- 4) *Use biography as a regular element of the class reading program: to deepen our knowledge about a personality of the month or to learn about someone new.*
- 5) When possible, use real experiences from the monthly personality to motivate behavior, improve social skills, build a work ethic and frame possible solutions to class disputes and challenges.
- 6) Conduct an occasional discussion to help children in processing and understanding concepts and information discovered in books read aloud.
- 7) *Post a timeline which can be organized on one wall stretching from the 1700s through to the present. Information should be added to this timeline regularly during the year as the class progresses through various time periods:*
 - a. This timeline should be referred to regularly during read alouds and when discussing personalities.
 - b. An image and name of the historical figure, along with some basic information should be placed on the timeline
 - c. Illustrations capturing technology can be included.
 - d. Major events can be included on this timeline as well, i.e., the Civil War.
 - e. This timeline could be quite simple or quite complicated depending on the age and sophistication of the students.
- 8) *Use one small bulletin board, or portion of a bulletin board, to track class learning about the monthly personality. Challenge students to seek out the information as they are listening to books read aloud, information that can be adhered to the board immediately with a sticky note or tack. A grid divides up the space to include a section for recording information about:*
 - a. the time and place the person lived
 - b. major struggles encountered
 - c. accomplishments
 - d. how the person helped others
 - e. why the person is famous
 - f. important experiences
 - g. a quote
- 9) *Beside this grid, post and use another one that operates similarly, one that helps the class sort out general information about the time period:*
 - a. common foods eaten
 - b. clothing
 - c. technologies (transportation, heat, architecture, etc.)
 - d. common tools
 - e. issues regarding social roles
 - f. the life of children
 - g. housing
 - h. religion

- 10) A general table can be used to help the class compare and contrast personalities over time. At the end of the month, before starting on a new figure, the old information can be entered into the table. Heroes are listed across the top and the categories from the grid above are listed down the side.
- 11) *As often as possible, photographs, or at least illustrations, should be shared to help children envision and learn about the information learned.***
- 12) Newspaper accounts could help children to consider perspectives on significant historical events. For instance, how did newspapers report on the suffrage issue or Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier?
- 13) Handwriting, especially that of the figures themselves, might help to add some depth to the study.
- 14) Information collected on the bulletin board could be transferred to a large sheet that is posted on the timeline before moving on to a new figure.
- 15) *In one part of the room, display biographies of diverse personalities. This will feed into the normal selection of books for reading workshop.***
- 16) Invite in local experts to share about particular figures, especially local ones.
- 17) Help the class to notice heroic figures in the community.
- 18) Use some of the following to help build a sense of the context:
 - a. music played as would have been played or heard in the time period
 - b. quotes
 - c. words from a diary/journal
- 19) Try using props, costumes and reenactment enliven the learning.
- 20) *Revisit the concepts of past, present, future, decade, century and period with regularity.***
- 21) *Teach about general American geographical regions early in the year.***
- 22) Consider having the class reenact major historical moments through role plays.
- 23) Celebrate interesting heroes' birthdays in simple ways during the year.
- 24) Direct children to articulate information to peers:
 - a. thinking alone, discussion in pairs and than sharing with the class
 - b. summarizing the essence of a personality in one bookmark or in one license plate

Specific Assignments and Projects

These are specific activities and assignments that could also be used.

- 1) ***Challenge each child to research and become an expert on one particular heroic figure, independently or as a homework assignment, perhaps with parent assistance.***
 - a. This project can lead to a culminating presentation in the late spring.
 - b. Create a form that helps students to collect information on their heroes, one based on the grids described above under ongoing structures.
- 2) Have the class conduct interviews with people from the community about their lives in order to help us appreciate that the categories we are using to examine historical figures apply to seeing people in the present as well. Questions could be asked about:
 - a. experiences growing up
 - b. accomplishments and setbacks
 - c. accomplishments the visitor would like to attain
 - d. a bit about family
- 3) Challenge students to consider what they would like to accomplish in life and what these accomplishments might demand.

- 4) Organize a hero fair in the spring in which children arrive dressed as heroes and play various games in which they must act their parts.

Timeline

A sample progression through one year.

- 1) September
 - a. Benjamin Franklin
 - b. Introduce key concepts: leader, model, hero, biography, history, struggle, timeline.
 - c. Introduce the ongoing structures (detailed above) that will take the class through the year: timeline, bulletin board grids, etc.
- 2) October
 - a. Jefferson and Washington
- 3) November
 - a. Tecumseh
- 4) December
 - a. Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad
- 5) January
 - a. Abraham Lincoln
 - b. Interviews begin with community members.
- 6) February
 - a. Thomas Edison
- 7) March
 - a. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- 8) April
 - a. Rosa Parks
 - b. formal work in preparation for May presentations
- 9) May
 - a. Rachel Carson
 - b. Presentations on researched heroes
 - c. personal explorations of what students would like to accomplish in life and what these accomplishments might demand
- 10) June
 - a. Jackie Robinson
 - b. a brief assessment of what the children have learned

Annotated Bibliography

The included children's literature titles are arranged in groups according to the primary personalities on which this unit focuses. The final section includes a diverse set of biographies meant to motivate individual interest and personal exploration. Asterisks bring attention to especially high quality books or those that could be especially powerful for young children. Books are listed as PRIMARY or INTERMEDIATE to clarify general reading difficulty. This list includes books of varied levels in order to respond to diverse learning needs. Remember always to read a book yourself before reading it aloud. While there are numerous quality books listed here, some are harder than others to present orally, or might include content you will want to be prepared to discuss. Also, there are many fine biographies not listed here. Be sure to keep on the look out for good ones. Be careful though: many biographies are poorly written or include inaccurate information.

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Connell, Kate, *They Shall Be Heard: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (Raintree, 1993). *

This book tells of the friendship that helped to fuel the fight for women's rights. INTERMEDIATE. 87pp.

Duffy, James. *Radical Red* (Scribner, 1993). *

This historical novel witnesses Anthony's arrival in Albany in 1894 to lobby for women's suffrage. Twelve-year-old Connor O'Shea and her mother join Anthony's followers despite that it means going against Connor's father. INTERMEDIATE. 152pp.

Levin, Pamela. *Susan B. Anthony* (Chelsea, 1993).

Provides an explanation of Anthony's life, though the writing is a bit awkward. INTERMEDIATE. 80pp.

McGovern, Ann. *If You Lived 100 Years Ago* (Scholastic, 1999).

Parker, Barbara Keevil. *Susan B. Anthony: Daring to Vote* (Millbrook, 1998)

Beginning with her attempt to vote in the 1872 election, this book highlights Anthony's early years and her work as a crusader for justice. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Schlank, Carol Hilgartner and Barbara Metzger. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Biography for Young Children* (Gryphon, 1991).

Describes Stanton's childhood, and in particular, her challenge of competing for attention with her favored older brother. The book later develops her working relationship Anthony. INTERMEDIATE. 31pp.

Rachel Carson

Accorsi, William. *Rachel Carson* (Holiday, 1993) *

This biography brings to life Carson's important work for the environment. The artwork successfully adds to the text. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Erlich, Xamy. *Rachel: The Story of Rachel Carson* (Silver Whistle, 2003).

This book effectively expresses Carson's achievements. GL 2-4. 32pp.

Ring, Elizabeth. *Rachel Carson: Caring for the Earth* (Millbrook, 1992). PRIMARY. 48pp.

Walt Disney

Selden, Bernice. *The Story of Walt Disney: Maker of Magical Worlds* (Yearling, 1989).

A fast paced look at this man's life and achievements. INTERMEDIATE. 96pp.

Jean-Pierre Isbouts. *Discovering Walt* (Disney Press, 2001).

Thomas Edison

Adler, David A. *Thomas Alva Edison: Great Inventor* (Holiday, 1990).

While this book is less successful than other Adler books, it is informative. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Adler, David A., John Wallner and Alexandra Wallner, Illus. *A Picture Book of Thomas Alva Edison* (Holiday, 1996).

While this book describes Edison's later life, it gives an especially good sense of Edison's early influences. Concludes with a list of important dates in his life. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Buranelli, Vincent. *Thomas Alva Edison* (Burdett, 1990).

Told in a clear manner. PRIMARY. 133pp.

Mason, Paul. *Thomas A. Edison* (Raintree, 2002).

Starts with a defining moment in Edison's life, and goes from there. Includes a timeline, quotes and diagrams. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Middleton, Haydn. Tony Morris, Illus. *Thomas Edison: The Wizard Inventor* (Oxford, 1998).

While the writing is clear for the most part and focuses on Edison's major accomplishments, it does gloss over the negatives. Includes a timeline. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Moore, Floyd C. *I Gave Thomas Edison My Sandwich* (Whitman, 1995). *

Carrying a sandwich made of souse, a homemade luncheon meat, the fictional main character visits Thomas Edison, William Taft, and Henry Ford when their train stops at the station. Learning that Edison has fond memories of souse, Floyd gives his sandwich to the famous inventor. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Parker, Steve. *Thomas Edison and Electricity* (HarperCollins, 1992). *

Edison's life and achievements are clearly described. Included is a helpful timeline. INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

Wallace, Joseph. Toby Welles, Illus. *The Lightbulb* (Athenum, 1999). *

This book focuses on the technology and how it was accepted by the public. Includes Edison's plans and notes. Bib., ind. INTERMEDIATE. 80pp.

Ben Franklin

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin* (Holiday House, 1990). *

Describes Franklin's ups and downs in business, his inventions and his career as a statesman. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Adler, David A. *B. Franklin, Printer* (Holiday, 2002).

Expands on topics mentioned in the other books and discusses Franklin's amazing life from youth to old age. Timelines are included. INTERMEDIATE. 126pp.

Adler, David A. *Benjamin Franklin: Printer, Inventor, Statesman* (Holiday, 1992)*

Includes many facts about the early years of the United States. Full of information, this book includes looks at Franklin's personal life, his writings and inventions. INTERMEDIATE, 48pp.

Feldman, Eve B. *Benjamin Franklin: Scientist and Inventor* (:Watts, 1990).

Focuses on Franklin's scientific work, including the kite experiment. INTERMEDIATE. 64pp.

Fleming, Candace. *The Hatmaker's Sign: A Story by Benjamin Franklin* (:Scholastic, 1998).*

Based on an anecdote, this story describes Franklin's response to Thomas Jefferson after the Continental Congress changed his draft of the Declaration of Independence. Good for reading aloud. PRIMARY. 34pp.

Fradin, Dennis Brindell. *Who Was Ben Franklin?* (Grosset, 2002).

Deals with Franklin's personality and major achievements. The artistic style should attract reluctant readers. INTERMEDIATE. 105pp.

Giblin, James Cross, *The Amazing Life of Benjamin Franklin* (:Scholastic, 2000)**

Giblin records the facts, including Franklin's accomplishments and difficulties. Includes a selective listing of his inventions and powerful illustrations. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Murphy, Frank. *Ben Franklin and the Magic Squares* (Random House, 2001)

Describes a math puzzle that Franklin created and shows readers how to make their own. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *The Many Lives of Benjamin Franklin* (Dial, 1990). *

A straightforward account of Franklin's life and his times. Includes many quotes. INTERMEDIATE. 129pp.

Thomas Jefferson

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson* (Holiday, 1990). *

Includes much information about Jefferson's life and accomplishments with simple language and detailed drawings. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Blumberg, Rhoda, *What's the Deal Jefferson? Napoleon, and the Louisiana Purchase*(National Geographic, 1998). *

This book presents the Louisiana Purchase in the context of global politics and individual ambitions. Specifically expresses the contest between Napoleon's ambition and Jefferson's vision. INTERMEDIATE. 144pp.

Fleming, Candace. S.D. Schindler, Illus. *A Big Cheese for the White House: The True Tale of a Tremendous Cheddar* (Ink/Kroupa, 1999). *

The story of the 1,235 pound cheddar sent to Jefferson as a gift. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Giblin, James Cross. Michael Dooling, Illus. *Thomas Jefferson: A Picture Book Biography* (Scholastic, 1994). *

Giblin brings attention to Jefferson's primary accomplishments, points to his personal tragedies, and hints at the contradictions regarding slavery. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Quackenbush, Robert, Author-Illustrator. *Pass the Quill, I'll Write a Draft: A Story of Thomas Jefferson* (Pippin, 1989).

A brief, simple history of Thomas Jefferson's life and achievements. PRIMARY. 36pp.

Spier, Peter. *We The People* (Doubleday, 1987). PRIMARY.

Abe Lincoln

Borden, Louise. *A. Lincoln and Me* (Scholastic, 1999). *

A boy who shares Lincoln's birthday finds parallels between his own personality and that of Lincoln. There is potential to use this fictional account to help connect current readers with historical figures. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Brenner, Martha. Donald Cook, Illus. *Abe Lincoln's Hat* (Random, 1994).

Brenner reveals the reason Lincoln's hat became such an important item. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Cohn, Amy L. and Suzy Schmidt. David A. Johnson, Illus. *Abraham Lincoln* (Scholastic, 2002). **

The authors introduce Lincoln as a great man but still human. Grand watercolor washes capture him in illustrations, leading up to the final one of the imposing Lincoln Memorial. PRIMARY. 40pp.

Fritz, Jean. *Just a Few Words, Mr. Lincoln: The Story of the Gettysburg Address* (Grosset, 1993)
Personal details in the text and watercolors bring alive an introduction to the Gettysburg Address. The book provides brief information about battles and Lincoln's preparation for the speech itself. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Gross, Ruth Belov, Jill Kastner, Illus. *True Stories about Abraham Lincoln* (Lothrop, 1990).
A collection of anecdotes that helps to develop a picture of who this man was. Accessible to reluctant readers. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Harness, Cheryl. *Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington: 1837-1865*. (National Geographic, 1997).
Harness sketches Lincoln's political career from the Illinois State Legislature to his assassination. Quick views of his family life are mixed with details about his rise in the new Republican Party and about the Civil War. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Holzer, Harold, Compiler-Editor. *Abraham Lincoln--The Writer: A Treasury of His Greatest Speeches and Letters* (Boyd's, 2000). *

This book offers a compilation of Lincoln's writing including speeches and personal letters. Biographical notes describe Lincoln's development as a writer as well. INTERMEDIATE. 107pp.

Jacobs, William Jay, *Lincoln* (Scribner, 1991).

This book avoids myth and helps to show Lincoln as a real human being. INTERMEDIATE, 42pp.

January, Brendan. *The Emancipation Proclamation* (Children's Press, 1997).

Glos., ind. INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

January, Brendan. *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (Children's Press, 1998). INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

Kent, Deborah. *The Lincoln Memorial* (Children's Press, 1996).

Following a brief biographical sketch of Lincoln, Kent describes the planning and construction of the memorial. INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

Lincoln, Abraham. Michael McCurdy, Illus. *The Gettysburg Address* (Houghton, 1995). *

Lincoln's words have been organized to accompany a series of images that complement and bring them to life. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Sullivan, George. *Picturing Lincoln: Famous Photographs That Popularized the President* (Clarion, 2001). *

Sullivan shows the process through which a few photographs were used to make many. Brings attention to the technology of the time. INTERMEDIATE. 88pp.

Sullivan, George. *Abraham Lincoln* (Scholastic, 2001).

This story of Lincoln is told with many quotations from his own writing as well as black-and-white photographs. INTERMEDIATE. 128pp.

Turner, Ann. Wendell Minor, Illus. *Abe Lincoln Remembers*. (HarperCollins, 2001).

Turner uses a fictional lens to show children how Lincoln might have looked back on his experiences a boy, storekeeper, lawyer and politician. PRIMARY, 32pp.

Rosa Parks

Parks, Rosa and Jim Haskins. Wil Clay, Illus. *I Am Rosa Parks* (Dial, 1997).*

Covers the famous bus confrontation, Parks' life till that moment and the progress and outcome of the boycott. Four chapters cover the famous confrontation on the Montgomery bus; Parks' life until that defining moment; the progress and outcome of the boycott. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Adler, David A. Robert Casilla. *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* (Holiday, 1993).

This portrait provides a glimpse into the era in which Parks was born. Adler recites the facts of Parks' life and emphasizes her strong role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Jackie Robinson* (Holiday, 1994).

This book brings attention to the courage of this hero. Watercolors add to the simple text. PRIMARY. 32 pp.

Golenbock, Peter. Paul Bacon, Illus. *Teammates* (Harcourt, 1990).*

Golenbock brings to life Branch Rickey's recruitment of a legend. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Walker, Sally M. Pete S. Rodney, Illus. *Jackie Robinson* (Carolrhoda, 2002).

This book depicts Robinson at various stages of his life. Includes a list of important dates. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Tecumseh

Connell, Kate, Jan Naimo Jones, Illus. *These Lands Are Ours: Tecumseh's Fight for the Old Northwest* (Raintree, 1993)

Captures the courage and vision of Tecumseh. Includes material from primary sources. INTERMEDIATE. 97pp.

Immell, Myra H. and William H. Immell, *Tecumseh*

A thorough text that includes extensive quotes from primary and secondary sources. INTERMEDIATE. 112pp. *

Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

Burns, Bree. *Harriet Tubman* (Chelsea, 1992).

Conveys Tubman's leadership in her struggle for freedom. INTERMEDIATE. 80pp.

Elish, Dan. Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad (Millbrook, 1993). INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

Gorrell, Gena K. *North Star to Freedom: The Story of the Underground Railroad* (Delacort, 1997).

Gorrell offers a Canadian perspective on the history of the Underground Railroad. The narrative sets the story of the escape route to freedom in the broad context of the history of slavery. Includes the stories of people such as Harriet Tubman, Ellen Craft, and Henry 'Box' Brown. INTERMEDIATE. 168pp.

Guccione, Leslie Davis, *Come Morning* (Carolrhoda, 1995).

A boy knows that his father, a freed slave, works for the Underground Railroad, but he is frustrated because his father doesn't trust him to help. Ultimately the boy leads a runaway family to Harriet Tubman after his father is imprisoned by slave trackers. INTERMEDIATE. 120pp.

Haskins, Jim. *Get on Board: The Story of the Underground Railroad* (Scholastic, 1993).

Haskins traces the story of the Underground Railroad from the 1840s to the 1860s. Well documented, researched, and illustrated. Includes well-told escape stories. Time line included. INTERMEDIATE. 152pp.

Johnston, Tony. James E. Ransome, Illus. *The Wagon* (HarperCollins, 1996)

In this fictional account, a farm wagon, crafted by a slave's father, symbolizes the hope and liberty his family eventually gains following Lincoln's Civil War efforts. Striking art is included. PRIMARY. 34pp.

Lawrence, Jacob, *Harriet and the Promised Land* (Simon and Schuster, 1993). *

This is reissue of one of the first children's books illustrated by an African-American artist. A powerful read aloud. PRIMARY. 31pp.

Schroeder, Alan, Jerry Pinkney, Illus. *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* (Penguin Putnam, 1996). *
This fictionalized account based on fact details the early life of Harriet Tubman. Quick action and dialogue creates an active story and depicts Minty's strong-willed nature along with her desire for freedom. PRIMARY. 40pp.

Wright, Courtni C. Gershom Griffith, Illus. *Journey to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railroad* (Holiday, 1994).

A suspenseful, historically rooted survival tale follows a family for twenty fearful days as they travel from Kentucky to Canada with Harriet Tubman as their 'conductor' on the Underground Railroad. INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

George Washington

Erdosh, George. *Food and Recipes of the Revolutionary War* (Power Kids Press).

Fritz, Jean. DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan. *George Washington's Mother* (Grosset, 1992).

This book provides a glimpse of the relationship between a stubborn, eccentric woman and her famous son. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Fun and Games Long Ago. (Americana Review, 1973).

Giblin, James Cross, Michael Dooking, Illus. *George Washington: A Picture Book Biography* (Scholastic, 1992). *
Accessible narrative and oil paintings bring to life Washington's family life, military service, and presidency. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Gross, Ruth Belov. *If You Grew Up with George Washington* (Scholastic, 1982).

Harness, Cheryl, *George Washington* (National Geographic, 2000).

Harness celebrates many facets of Washington's life, taking special care to cast Washington in terms of his times. The illustrations are filled with historical detail. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Jacobs, William Jay, *Washington* (Scribner, 1991)

A product of scholarly research and insight, this book avoids myths and portrays a great human being. The author makes use of direct quotes. INTERMEDIATE. 42pp.

Moore, Kay. *If You Lived At the Time of the Revolution* (Scholastic, 1998).

Osborne, Mary Pope. *George Washington: Leader of a New Nation* (Dial, 1991).

118pp. Dial (Penguin Putnam) 1991

A brief, but interesting and well-documented biography, this book includes a timeline and brings to life the flavor of the time. INTERMEDIATE. 118pp.

Tunnell, Michael O. Kathy Osborn, Illus. *The Joke's on George* (HarperCollins, 1993)

Charles Willson Peale tricks his friend President George Washington into bowing politely before a lifelike trompe l'oeil painting of Peale's sons climbing a staircase. A fictionalized version of an actual incident. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Mixed Titles to Encourage Individual Exploration

Adler, David A. *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Holiday, 2001).

Describes King's life and major accomplishments, including his marriage, his leadership during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, his famous "I Have a Dream" speech and his assassination. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Adler, David A. John Wallner and Alexandra Wallner, Illus. *A Picture Book of Helen Keller* (Holiday, 1990)

With simple language and active artwork, the book communicates basic information about the life and accomplishments of Helen Keller. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Adler, David A. John Wallner and Alexandra Wallner, Illus. *A Picture Book of Robert E. Lee* (Holiday, 1994). This clear text describes the life and achievements of this distinguished General. Includes attractive watercolors. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Asirvatham, Sandy. *Katharine Graham* (Chelsea 2002). Including many quotes from Graham, this book offers a glowing biography. INTERMEDIATE. 120pp.

Becker, Helaine. *John Brown* (Blackbirch, 2001). *Frederick Douglass* (Blackbirch, 2001). Readable biographies of Civil War-era leaders, these books offer sidebars that refer to other famous Americans of the period. These books include photos, engravings and some portraits. INTERMEDIATE. 104pp.

Burford, Betty. *Chocolate by Hershey: A Story about Milton S. Hershey* (Carolrhoda, 1994). Hershey grew up poor, was apprenticed to a candymaker, and failed in the candy business many times before succeeding. This book shows Hershey's successes and his generosity. INTERMEDIATE. 64pp.

Cooper, Floyd. *Coming Home: From the Life of Langston Hughes* (Philomel, 1994). * This fine introductory biography highlights crucial events in Langston Hughes' life, emphasizing his loneliness as a child and his development as a poet. Cooper's illustrations help to build a sense of the setting. INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

Dennenberg, Dennis and Lorraine Rocoe, *50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet!* (The Millbrook Press, Inc., 1993). ** This helpful text provides interesting looks at heroes for children, or for adults who want quick reminders about important heroes.

Dolan, Sean. *Matthew Henson* (Chelsea, 1991). This book presents information in easy-to-read language. INTERMEDIATE. 80pp.

Finn, Margaret L. *Christopher Reeve: Actor and Activist* (Chelsea, 1997). This admiring biography captures Superman, his riding accident and his political life. INTERMEDIATE. 134pp.

Garfunkel, Trudy. *Letter to the World: The Life and Dances of Martha Graham* (Little, 1991) This book captures Graham's career as a choreographer and teacher. It also brings attention to her influence on modern dance. INTERMEDIATE. 92pp.

Gogerly, Liz. *Louis Pasteur* (Raintree 2002). Describes the life of this renowned scientist with photos, maps and a chronology. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Gogerly, Liz. *Marie Curie* (Raintree, 2002). Briefly describes Curie's life. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Goldstein, Margaret J. and Jennifer Larson. *Jackie Joyner-Kersey: Superwoman* (Lerner, 1994). Presents the story of the famed Olympic gold-medalist. INTERMEDIATE. 56pp.

Holland, Gini. Gary Rees, Illus. *Sandra Day O'Connor* (Raintree, 1997) Looks at O'Connor's childhood and adult life, showing her determination despite failures. Chronology included. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Joseph, Paul. *Harry S. Truman* (ABDO, 1999). Includes a brief biography, a list of stats, a time line and two pages explaining the role of the president and the other two branches of government. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Kramer, Barbara. *John Glenn: A Space Biography* (Enslow, 1998). Captures Glenn's pioneering role in the space program. INTERMEDIATE. 48 pp.

Krensky, Stephen. *Nellie Bly: A Name to be Reckoned With* (Aladdin Library, 2003).

Krull, Kathleen. Kathryn Hewitt, Illus. *Lives of Extraordinary Women: Rulers, Rebels (and What the Neighbors Thought)* (Harcourt, 2000). *

Captures 20 famous women. Hewitt's portraits add well to the biographical sketches. INTERMEDIATE. 96pp.

Lazo, Caroline. *Jimmy Carter: On the Road to Peace* (Dillon, 1996)

This admiring biography focuses on Carter's public service but also on the personal values and philosophy that helped him to succeed. INTERMEDIATE. 128pp.

McKissack, Patricia and Fredrick McKissack. Ned O, Illus. *Booker T. Washington: Leader and Educator* (Enslow 2001). *George Washington Carver: The Peanut Scientist* (Enslow, 1991). *Ida B. Wells-Barnett: A Voice against Violence* (Enslow, 2001). *Louis Armstrong: Jazz Musician* (Enslow 2001). *Marian Anderson: A Great Singer* (Enslow, 1991). *Mary McLeod Bethune: A Great Teacher* (Enslow, 2001). *Mary Church Terrell: Leader for Equality* (Enslow, 2002). *Ralph J. Bunche: Peacemaker* (Enslow, 1991).

Each title in this series provides an brief introduction to a reknowned African American. Large type and short sentences make these books accessible to diverse readers. Includes timelines. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Naden, Corinne J. and Rose Blue. *John Muir: Saving the Wilderness* (Millbrook, 1992).

This brief biography of the famous conservationist is written in easy-to-read text. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Nicholson, Lois. *Cal Ripken, Jr.: Quiet Hero* (Tidewater, 1993).

Focuses on the dedication and humility of this role model. INTERMEDIATE. 100pp.

Old, Wendie. Robert Andrew Parker, Illus. *To Fly: The Story of the Wright Brothers* (Clarion, 2002). *

This text's simple sentences trace the brothers' journey from inventive boys to aeronautical engineers. The artwork complements the text well. A timeline, source notes, and reading list are included. PRIMARY. 48pp.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. Brian Pinkney, Illus. *Dear Benjamin Banneker* (Harcourt, 1994). *

This biography focuses on Banneker's effort to publish his 1791 almanac and his letter to Jefferson denouncing slavery. The text is straightforward and the illustrations add well to the text.. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Rappaport, Doreen. Bryan Collier, Illus. *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Hyperion, 2001). **

This book mixes carefully written biographical information with appropriate quotes from King himself. The underlying message is that throughout his life, King worked to inspire people with his words. The primary events of King's life are presented. The facts are enriched by eye-catching illustrations. PRIMARY. 40pp.

Ringgold, Faith. *My Dream of Martin Luther King*(Crown, 1995).*

Using a sequence of dreams, Ringgold presents a picture-book biography of the civil rights leader that blends known details from his life with imagined incidents from his childhood. This book captures King's nonviolent efforts, and it improves with repeated readings. A chronology is included. PRIMARY. 32pp.

Roberts, Jack L. *Booker T. Washington: Educator and Leader* (Millbrook 1995).

Recounts Washington's rise from slave to builder to university leader, civil rights leader, author and presidential adviser. A chronology is included. INTERMEDIATE. 32pp.

Ross, Stewart. *Alexander Graham Bell* (Raintree 2002).

Starts with Bell's first successful telephone call and then goes on to provide an account of his life. INTERMEDIATE. 48pp.

Severance, John B. *Einstein: Visionary Scientist (Clarion, 1999)*. *

Looks at the private Einstein but also at the public figures who shaped his life. Photos help to reveal the places he lived but also the scenes that defined his experience. Einstein's theories are explained succinctly. INTERMEDIATE. 144pp.

Spinner, Stephanie. *Who Was Annie Oakley?* (Grosset 2002).

Reveals Oakley's personality and significant achievements. INTERMEDIATE. 110pp.

Sullivan, George. *Mathew Brady: His Life and Photographs* (Cobblehill, 1994).*

The book offers a glimpse at the work of a photographer typically associated with Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. The photos and the well-written text help to convey the the history of photography, the country and the power of the photographic medium. INTERMEDIATE. 136pp.

Walker, Alice. Catherine Deeter, Illus. *Langston Hughes: American Poet* (HarperCollins, 2002). *

Alice Walker's first book for children honors Hughes life in a simply told fashion. PRIMARY. 48pp.