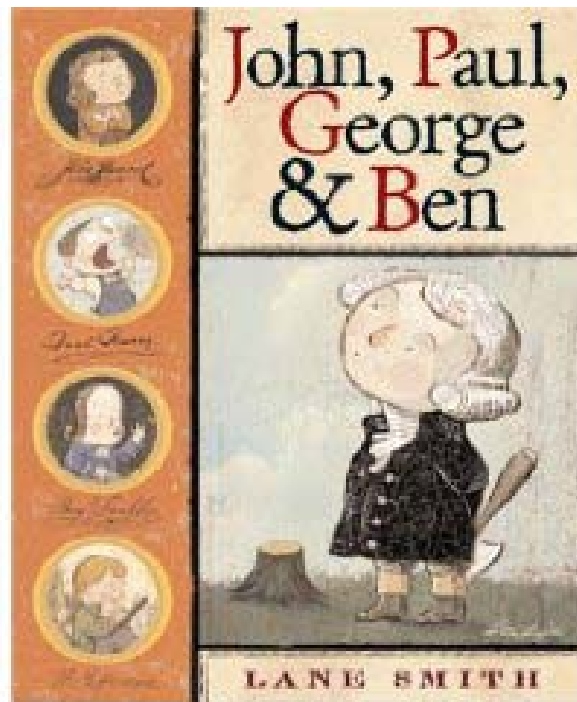


John, Paul, George & Ben



By Lane Smith

Copyright: 2006

Publisher: Hyperion Books for Children

About the Author/Illustrator



Lane Smith is primarily known as a children's book illustrator. He has illustrated many books like *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*, *The Stinky Cheese Man*, *Math Curse*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Science Verse*, and *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day*. Many of these books were cowritten and illustrated with author Jon Scieszka. *The Stinky Cheese Man* is a Caldecott Honor Book. *John, Paul, George & Ben* was written and illustrated by Lane Smith. Lane Smith does not have a webpage of his own; however, information is available through Hyperion Books, the publisher for *John, Paul, George, & Ben*. Hyperion Book's website is:

<http://hyperionbooksforchildren.com/authors/displayAI.asp?id=407&ai=a>

He lives in Washington, Connecticut today with his wife, Molly Leach. His wife helps him design some of his stories. Washington, Connecticut is the first town in America named for George Washington in 1779. George Washington is a character in his recent book, *John, Paul, George, & Ben*.

Lane Smith graduated college with a B.F.A. in illustration. He then went to New York with his work. His work later appeared on covers of *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *Sierra*, *American Bookseller*, *The Progressive*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Mother Jones*, and *Ms.*

Annotation

Smith, Lane. *John, Paul, George & Ben*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.

The author takes young children on a picture book adventure into the past. Each section of this book is dedicated to one of America's founding fathers. The founding fathers include John Hancock, Paul Revere, George Washington, Benjamin (Ben) Franklin, and Thomas (Tom) Jefferson. Each part of the book focuses on a character trait shown by that particular founding father.

We first meet John Hancock who was a bold lad. Next, we meet Paul Revere, a noisy lad. Then, we are able to meet George Washington who was an honest lad. Next, we meet Ben Franklin, a clever lad. Finally, we meet Tom, an independent lad. Each story is written and illustrated with humor, guaranteed to keep children and adults interested throughout while learning about bits and pieces of America's history. Many humorous lines in the story are directed to adults, as children would not understand the wit in his comments.

The end of the book offers a two page layout with actual pictures of each character, as well as facts about each. Each of the picture's captions better explains how each character's trait describes that person. There is also a true and false page at the end of the story that gives readers a chance to find out if information presented in the story itself is true or false. If the information in the story is false, Lane Smith gives further information explaining why. The text inside the story is written in different sizes, drawing attention to important information and vocabulary, as well as giving each character voice.

The illustrations are well done and bring additional humor to the story. The illustrations were hand drawn with pen and ink. The pictures were then painted with oil paint on canvas, handmade parchment papers, and weathered pulp boards. Smith's story will keep children and adults laughing; however, it also teaches children character traits essential for those leading our country.

Genre

Historical Fiction

Point of View

Third person

Theme

John, Paul, George & Ben teaches children character traits important for those leading our country.

Conflict

Each of the characters caused some sort of trouble as a young child. John was always in trouble at school; Paul was always noisy; George cut down Cherry Trees; Ben was always offering unwanted advice; and Tom always did his own thing no matter what others wanted him to do.

Conflict Resolution

Each of these characters had to learn how to use their character traits in a positive way. When they learned how to do that, they became important figures in our nation's history.

Characters

John Hancock- First to sign the Declaration of Independence, bold lad

Paul Revere- Warned Boston that the British were coming, noisy lad

George Washington- America's first president, honest lad

Benjamin Franklin- Informed everyone that signing the Declaration was treasonous so they would all need to stick together, clever lad

Thomas Jefferson- Wrote the Declaration of Independence, independent lad

Setting

13 colonies in today's Eastern United States prior to the Declaration of Independence

Interest Level

Interest grade level: K-3 (according to Follet Library Resources)

Interest age level: 5-9 (according to BTSB)

Reading Level

Reading grade level: 3.5 Follet Library Resources

Booktalk

John, Paul, George, Ben, and Tom were always causing trouble as young children. John was always in trouble at school; Paul was always noisy; George cut down Cherry Trees; Ben was always offering unwanted advice; and Tom always did his own thing no matter what others wanted him to do. As each character grows up, they are given the opportunity to do important things to help America. Will they be able to stop

causing trouble long enough to help America? Or will they continue to cause trouble and cause more problems, thus letting everyone down?

Discussion Questions

Pre-reading: Who has heard of any of these names before: George Washington, John Hancock, Paul Revere, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson? What do you know about these people? What does it mean to be clever, independent, honest, noisy, and bold? Do you think these words describe good character traits?

During reading: What does “lad” mean? (page 1) What do you think John is doing wrong at school? (page 3) How does John Hancock show he is bold? (pages 4-5) Would you like to be the one to ring the bells everyday? Why or why not? (page 7) What other sounds make your head feel like it bings and bongs? (page 8) Why does the author use all capital letters on these pages? (pages 10-11) What does Paul mean, “the redcoats are coming”? (page 12-13) How does Paul Revere being noisy help the town of Boston? (page 14). Can you think of a time you chose to be honest? Was it hard to do? (page 16) How does George Washington show he is honest? (pages 18-19) What do you think the saying, “fish and visitors stink after three days” means? (page 21) What does the saying, “the sleeping fox catches no poultry” mean? (page 22) How could the townsfolk have told Ben nicely to be quiet? Why do you think the townsfolk are annoyed? (pages 24-25) How does Ben Franklin show he is clever? (page 26) Do you think it is okay that Tom is not listening to his teacher? Why or why not? (pages 28-29) What does Tom do that is considered to be independent? (pages 30-31) Do you know what happened when the Redcoats finally came to what is now America? (page 33) Have you heard of the Declaration of Independence? Do you know what it is? (page 34-35) Were there any parts of the story you thought were maybe false? We can check on this page and see if you are right. (page 37)

Post-reading: Do any of the names sound more familiar to you now? If George was not honest, Ben was not clever, Paul was not noisy, Thomas was not independent, and John was not bold, do you think they would be as important to America’s history today as they are now? Can each of these character traits be good character traits if used in the correct way?

Language

Words that may need to be defined:

- Bold (page 2) - Bold means to be not afraid. It means to be brave.
- Penmanship (page 3) - Another word for handwriting.
- Belfry Tower (page 7) - A tower that holds a bell that needs someone to ring it.
- Breeches (page 11) - Another word for underpants.
- Hatchet (page 16) – A small axe.
- Kindling (page 18) - Small pieces of wood used to start fires.
- Leveled (page 19) - Torn down to the ground.
- Clever (page 20) - A word that means very smart.
- Generously (page 21) - When someone shares something to be kind without expecting anything in return.
- Frequent (page 22) – Another word that means often. It happens a lot.
- Quarrels (page 22) – Another word for arguing.
- Ye olde (page 28) – A way to say the old back in the olden days.
- Neoclassical (page 28) –A particular style from the mid-18th through the mid-19th centuries.
- Fume (page 31) – To become very angry.
- Pursue (page 31) – Another word for follow or practice.

Indiana Academic Standards

Reading K.2.2, K.2.3, K.3.3; Social Studies K.1.3, K.2.1

Reading 1.2.3, 1.2.6; Social Studies 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.9, 1.2.4, 1.2.5

Reading 2.2.6; Social Studies 2.2.5

Reading 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.3.3, 3.3.4; Social Studies 3.1.7, 3.2.2

Anticipation Statements

Before		<i>John, Paul, George & Ben</i> By Lane Smith	After	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		Important people in America's history (like Presidents) got in trouble as young children.		
		You should listen to your teacher.		
		You should always tell people what to do, even if they do not want to hear it.		
		Ringling bells all the time can cause you to scream when you talk.		
		It is okay to chop down trees.		

Art Medium

The illustrations are well done and bring additional humor to the story. The illustrations were hand drawn with pen and ink. The pictures were then painted with oil paint on canvas, handmade parchment papers, and weathered pulp boards.

Read-Alikes

If you liked *John, Paul, George, and Ben* by Lane Smith, you may also like...

- ❖ *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (A story by the same illustrator.)
- ❖ *Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin* by Gene Barretta (A story that looks at inventions Ben Franklin developed in today's society.)
- ❖ *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning* by Rosalyn Schanzer (This story gives background knowledge about Benjamin Franklin.)
- ❖ *George Washington: Our First President* by Garnet Jackson (A non-fiction story that gives information about our nation's first president.)

- ❖ *The Journey of the One and Only Declaration of Independence* by Judith St. George (This story offers readers an engaging venture into U.S. history as children learn about the journey of one of the Declaration of Independence.)
- ❖ *The Declaration of Independence: How 13 Colonies Became the United States* by Syl Sobel J.D. (A non-fiction book showing how the 13 colonies became the U.S.)
- ❖ *Paul Revere's Ride* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Ted Rand (A poem that creates a story about American colonist Paul Revere.)

Across the Curriculum Connections

Curriculum Connection #1: Social Studies

Theme: Declaration of Independence

Activity: For these activities, students will learn facts about the Declaration of Independence via the Internet. Students can go to any of the below sites to learn more. Brainpop offers short video that students can watch with an option to take quizzes at the end of the video. Another activity could be an Internet scavenger hunt using the websites below. Younger grades would need to do this together on a Smart Board or projector.

Brainpop Videos:

Declaration of Independence:

<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/declarationofindependence/preview.weml>

Ben Franklin: <http://www.brainpop.com/science/energy/benfranklin/preview.weml>

George Washington:

<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/famoushistoricalfigures/georgewashington/preview.weml>

Paul Revere: <http://www.brainpop.com/search/results.weml?keyword=paul+revere>

Websites:

History for Kids: <http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/after1500/government/declaration.htm>

Congress for Kids: http://www.congressforkids.net/Independence_declaration_2.htm

Social Studies for Kids: <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/declaration.htm>

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids:

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/documents/declaration/about.html>

Time for Kids: <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/news/story/0,28277,486827,00.html>

Sample Scavenger Hunt Questions:

1. On what date did Congress actually vote for independence?
2. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
3. When did the members of Congress sign the Declaration?
4. Which famous founder did not sign the Declaration?

Answers:

1. On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress voted for Independence. They adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4.
2. Thomas Jefferson wrote the first version. John Adams and Benjamin Franklin made several changes. Then Congress made more changes before giving final approval.
3. The formal signing was on Aug. 2, 1776, although some members of Congress did not sign it until several days later.
4. George Washington was commanding general of the Continental Army and was unavailable for the signing.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Social Studies K.1.3, K.2.1; Social Studies 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.9, 1.2.4, 1.2.5;

Social Studies 2.2.5; Social Studies 3.1.7, 3.2.2

Curriculum Connection #2: Language (Writing)/ Social Studies

Theme: Citizenship

Activity: For this activity, students will write about a time they showed any of the following citizenship traits in a positive way: noisy, bold, clever, honest, or independent.

Adaptation Suggestions:

- Younger grades can draw a picture and write a sentence to show these traits.

- Older grades can connect their citizenship trait to the character from the story, *John, Paul, George & Ben* by Lane Smith.
- Older grades can also find other famous Americans (presidents, congress members, etc.) with similar character traits to compare.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Social Studies K.1.3, K.2.1; Social Studies 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.9, 1.2.4, 1.2.5;

Social Studies 2.2.5; Social Studies 3.1.7, 3.2.2

Language K.5.1; Language 1.5.2; Language 2.5.5; Language 3.5.2

Book Activities

Activity #1

Grades: K-3, Whole Class Activity

Book Title: *John, Paul, George, & Ben* by Lane Smith

Indiana Academic State Standards:

Reading K.2.2, K.2.3, K.3.3; Social Studies K.1.3, K.2.1

Reading 1.2.3, 1.2.6; Social Studies 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.9, 1.2.4, 1.2.5

Reading 2.2.6; Social Studies 2.2.5

Reading 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.3.3, 3.3.4; Social Studies 3.1.7, 3.2.2

1. Read the parts in *John, Paul, George, & Ben* by Lane Smith about George Washington on pages 15-19 and pages 31-32. Write down three facts you learned about George Washington as a class.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. On large chart paper, create the table below! Look through the book, *George Washington: Our First President* by Garnet Jackson and the encyclopedia to see if the facts from above are true or not. Fill out the chart together as a class.

	True/Not True	Proof
Fact A		
Fact B		
Fact C		

*Remember: If your fact is not true, explain in the proof why it is not true.

Activity #2

Grades: K-3, Individual Assignment

Book Title: *John, Paul, George, & Ben* by Lane Smith

Indiana Academic State Standards:

Language K.5.1; Language 1.5.2; Language 2.5.5; Language 3.5.2

Social Studies K.1.3, K.2.1; Social Studies 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.9, 1.2.4, 1.2.5

Social Studies 2.2.5; Social Studies 3.1.7, 3.2.2

1. Pick one of the people to write about from this book. Think about what Lane Smith is trying to teach you about the person you chose. For example, George Washington was considered to be an honest man, and John Hancock was considered a bold man. Think about a time you acted as this famous American. Tell me about that time below. Remember to give details: Who were you with? What happened that put you in a position to act as you did? Was it a hard position to be in? Why or why not? Younger grades can draw a picture and write a sentence to go with their picture.
2. Use or edit the writing rubric below for grading this assignment.

Criteria	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points
Structure Ideas	All or almost all of the entries have a connection to structure.	Most entries have a connection to structure.	Few entries have a connection to structure.	None of the entries have a connection to structure.
Feelings and Thoughts	Feelings and thoughts are revealed in all or almost of the entries.	Feelings and thoughts are revealed in most entries.	Feelings and thoughts are revealed in few of the entries.	None of your feelings and thoughts are revealed in any of the entries.
Mechanics	All or almost all of my entries use correct spelling and grammar.	Most of my entries use correct spelling and grammar.	Few of my entries use correct spelling and grammar.	None of my entries use correct spelling and grammar.
Completion	All entries are present, in order, and together.	All entries are present, but are either not together or in order.	All entries are not present, but they are together or in order.	All entries are not present, nor are they together or in order.

Taken & adapted from: <http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml#primary>

Bibliography

Author Information: <http://www.kidsreads.com/series/series-warp-author.asp#lane>

Bound to Stay Bound

Follet Library Resources

Publisher Information: <http://hyperionbooksforchildren.com/authors/displayAI.asp?id=407&ai=a>

Smith, Lane. *John, Paul, George & Ben*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.

Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lane_Smith_\(illustrator\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lane_Smith_(illustrator))

Writing Rubric: <http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml#primary>