**American Contributions**

**In this fifth six-week unit of first grade, students meet Americans who have contributed to our society in various ways and during various times of history.**

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**Overview**

* + Building on the work with fiction and informational text in previous units, students meet famous Americans in informational books and then hear fictional stories about the same people. Focusing on reading independently and fluently, students read non-fiction to learn about the contributions made by interesting people in America. By placing events of a similar time period on a timeline, students are able to visualize the connections among events and people. Students also write and revise an opinion piece. The unit also focuses on vocabulary in context as students learn to read and reread for meaning.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RI.1.10:**With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.
    - **RI.1.3:**Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
    - **RF1.4:** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
    - **RF.1.4(c):**Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
    - **W1.1:**Write opinion pieces in which [the student] introduce[s] the topic or name the book they are writing about, state[s] an opinion, suppl[ies] a reason for the opinion, and provide[s] some sense of closure.
    - **SL.1.3:** Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Read non-fiction independently, proficiently, and fluently.
    - See and describe the connection between two key events or ideas in a text and between texts.
    - Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition.
    - Reread when necessary.
    - Write an opinion about an interesting person studied in this unit, supporting their choices with reasons.
    - Revise opinion writing.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Little House in the Big Woods* (Laura Ingalls Wilder and Garth Williams) (E)
    - *The Hatmaker's Sign: A Story by Benjamin Franklin*(Candace Fleming and Robert Parker)
    - *Willie Was Different: A Children’s Story*(Norman Rockwell)
    - *Rockwell: A Boy and His Dog* (Loren Spiotta-DiMare and Cliff Miller)
    - *A True Story About Jackie Robinson (Testing the Ice)*(Sharon Robinson and Kadir Nelson)
    - *George Washington and the General’s Dog*(Frank Murphy and Richard Walz)
    - *A. Lincoln and Me*(Louise Borden)
    - *Mr. Lincoln’s Whiskers* (Karen Winnick)
    - *Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale*(Deborah Hopkinson and John Hendrix)

**Poetry (Read Aloud)**

* + - “Hope” in *The Collected Poetry of Langston Hughes* (Langston Hughes) (EA)
    - “Washington” in *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* (Nancy Byrd Turner)
    - *You’re a Grand Old Flag*(George M. Cohan and Norman Rockwell)

**Songs**

* + - *Yankee Doodle Boy*(George M. Cohan)
    - *You’re a Grand Old Flag*(George M. Cohan)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

* + - *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*(Mordicai Gerstein) (E)
    - *George Washington* (Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)
    - *Let’s Read About—George Washington* (Scholastic First Biographies) (Kimberley Weinberger and Bob Doucet)
    - *Abraham Lincoln* (Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)
    - *Let’s Read About—Abraham Lincoln*(Scholastic First Biographies) (Sonia Black and Carol Heyer)
    - *Laura Ingalls Wilder*(Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)
    - *Paul Revere*(Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)
    - *Let’s Read About—Cesar Chavez*(Jerry Tello)
    - *Benjamin Franklin* (Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)
    - *Pocahontas*(DK Readers) (Caryn Jenner)
    - *Jackie Robinson* (Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)

**Informational Text (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave*(Laban Carrick Hill and Bryan Collier) (EA)
    - *John, Paul, George, and Ben* (Lane Smith)
    - *A Picture Book of Paul Revere* (David A. Adler, John and Alexandra Wallner)
    - *A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin* (David A. Adler, John and Alexandra Wallner)
    - *A Picture Book of George Washington* (David A. Adler, John and Alexandra Wallner)
    - *Betsy Ross: The Story of Our Flag* (Easy Reader Biographies)(Pamela Chanko)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Art**

* + - John Singleton Copley, [*Paul Revere*](http://www.mfa.org/collections/search_art.asp?recview=true&id=32401&coll_keywords=copley&coll_accession=&coll_name=&coll_artist=&coll_place=&coll_medium=&coll_culture=&coll_classification=&coll_credit=&coll_provenance=&coll_location=&coll_has_images=&coll_) (1768)
    - Gilbert Stuart, [*Dolley Madison*](http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1812.html) (1804)
    - [*Portrait of Harriet Tubman*](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/tubman/aa_tubman_subj_e.htmlPortrait) (artist and date unknown)
    - Gilbert Stuart, [*George Washington*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Washington_(3).jpg) (1796)
    - George P.A, Healey, [*Abraham Lincoln*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Al16.jpg) (1869)
    - [*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at The Lincoln Memorial*](http://mentalfloss.cachefly.net/blogs/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/400martin_luther_king_jr.jpg) (1963)
    - Ben Wittick, [*Geronimo (Goyathlay), a Chiricahua Apache; full-length, kneeling with rifle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Goyaale.jpg) (1887)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Reading / Informational**

To help students make visual connections between events and people during the “early America” part of history, create a simple timeline and record events as you read books on this topic together or as students report back on what they read independently. Students should understand that although the informational texts are focused around different people or topics, it all happened at the same time in history. By extending the timeline to include historical figures, students begin to understand chronology. (RI.1.3, RI.1.10)

**Reading / Informational / Fluency**

Have students choose one of the biographies they enjoyed reading. Have them practice reading the book until they can read it well (i.e., with phrasing and expression). As students read their biographies independently, look for opportunities to use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, encouraging the children to reread as necessary*.*Take the books to a kindergarten class and have students read the books aloud to students there. (RF.1.4a, RF.1.4b, RF.1.4c, RI.1.4, RI.1.10)

**Writing / Opinion / Prompt**

Give students this prompt: “Choose one of the people from this unit that you think is the most interesting. Write about the person. Be sure to name the person and to tell why you think he or she is the most interesting. Also make sure you support your opinion with ideas from the book(s) we read.” (W1.1)

**Reading / Word Activity**

Display the lyrics to each of the songs on an overhead projector. After singing the songs together several times, allow the students to choose words that are interesting to them and circle them. Help students look for clues in the text to determine word meanings. Collect these and other words to add to the word bank from reading throughout the unit. (RF.1.4c)

**Writing / Language**

Give students this prompt: “Write three sentences about an American person we’ve read about recently, using at least three new words from our word bank in your work. Illustrate each sentence to demonstrate the meaning of each word.” (L.1.6, L.1.5c)

**Reading / Literary / Writing / Revision**

Read and discuss *The Hatmaker’s Sign* (Candace Fleming and Robert Parker)*.* Talk about how it relates to revision. Instruct students to take a piece of their writing (such as the “most interesting” piece) and carefully work on revising ideas. Students should edit their pieces and publish them. (W1.5, RL.1.2)

**Reading / Literary / Informational**

Create pairings of books that are literary and informational  (e.g., *George Washington and the General’s Dog*and the Rookie Biography of George Washington). Discuss how you read a story and a biography about the same character/historic person. Talk about how these two books connect to each other. How were the books the same? How were they different?  In this unit, there are numerous potential book pairings among the biographies, fictional stories, and even a fictional story written by the historical person himself (Benjamin Franklin). This is an opportunity to show the different characteristics of genre. This is also important to do within one book, explaining how events in the life of a person connect to each other . (RL.1.5, RL.1.7, RI.1.3)

**Guest Speaker / Listening / Questioning**

Invite a person from your community who has made a notable contribution to visit your classroom. After the speaker has shared his or her story, invite the students to ask questions to gather additional information or to clarify understanding. After the speaker leaves, have the students write a thank-you note telling one new thing they learned. (SL.1.3)

**Class Discussion/Art Connection**

Select several works to view. Ask the students to do a turn-and-talk: turn to the person next to them and share what they notice in the work. Share some of their responses in the large group. Move into further discussion of who they think the person might be or what he or she might do, based on their observations.

**Contextual Research Project/Art Connection**

Display several of the works under study and write the name of the subject on a chart. Ask the students if anyone has heard of any of these important figures. Gather books related to the subjects and ask the students to find out more about a chosen subject. Students should discuss how the artist imbued their portrait of that person with a sense of the subject’s struggles and accomplishments.

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**Reading Foundations**

* + **A Pacing Guide for Reading Instruction**

This guide is based on the “reading foundations,” writing, and language standards in the CCSS and is customized to the maps. Completed for Kindergarten and first grade (more grades to come), the guide tracks curriculum map units, as indicated in the first row of the document. Concepts of print, phonological awareness, and text reading fluency are all addressed and woven into a developmental progression that leads to word recognition and text reading. Accomplishment of these milestones can be achieved with daily practice and brief activities, suggestions for which are highlighted in the guide.

[Reading Foundations and Activities (1: Units 1-3)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/1st_Foundations_U1-3_(8.19).pdf)

[Reading Foundations and Activities (1: Units 4-6)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/1st_Foundations_U4-6_(8.19).pdf)

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**Additional Resources**

* + - [Collaborative Stories 2:  Revising](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/collaborative-stories-revising-222.html) (ReadWriteThink) (W1.5)  
      Note: Although this is a revision lesson based on a narrative, the technique would work for revising an opinion piece as well.
    - [Bio-Cube](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/bio_cube/) (ReadWriteThink) (RI.1.3)  
      Note: If students create these bio-cubes on the lives of famous Americans, it would welcome the comparison of historical figures.
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**Terminology**

* + - biography
    - compare
    - contrast
    - expression
    - opinion
    - reread
    - support
    - timeline
    - word bank
    - words in context
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
    - **Art**: portraiture
    - **Music**: George Cohan
    - **Geography**: United States (e.g. 13 colonies, 50 states, territories)
    - **History**: Important Americans (e.g. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Geronimo)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **Geography**: Appalachian Mountains, Rocky Mountains, Mississippi River
    - **History**: American Revolution (E.g. Boston Tea Party, Paul Revere’s Ride)