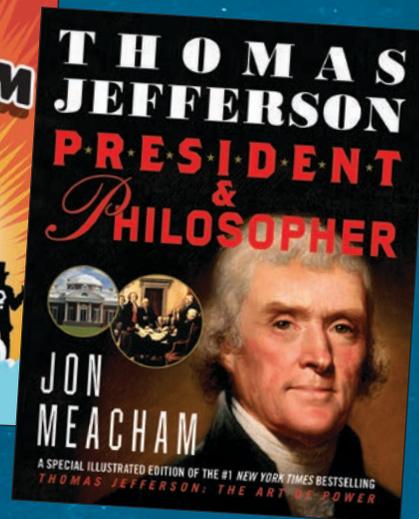
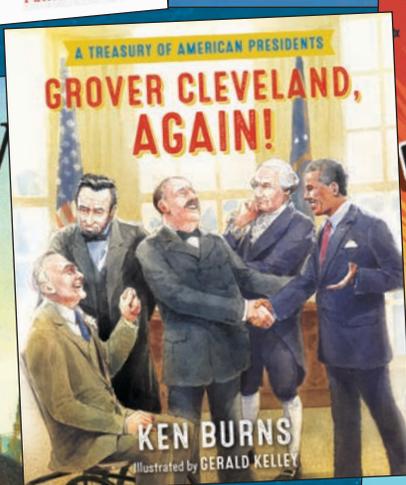
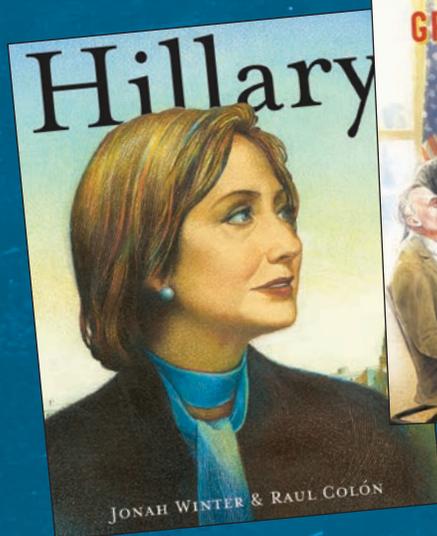
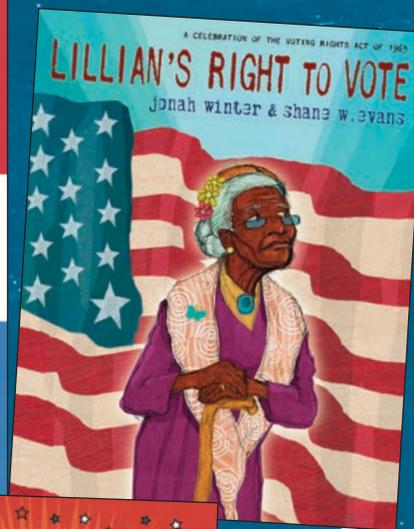
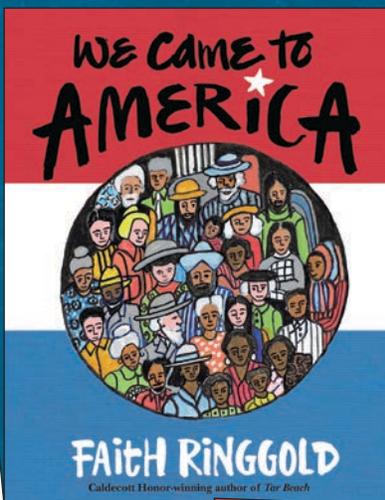
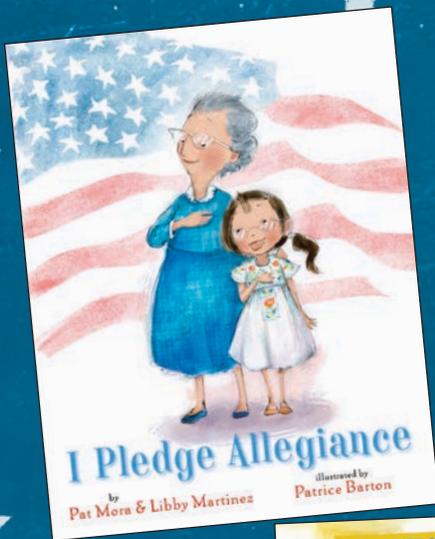


# WE THE PEOPLE

## Educators' Guide

Featuring seven outstanding books to help students prepare for their future as voters and active citizens



Includes Common Core Standards Correlations

[RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com)

**CALLING ALL FUTURE VOTERS!** With the presidential race in the headlines, children are hearing a lot about politics these days. In the not-too-distant future, those children will be entering the voting booth. To prepare for that day, they need to learn about citizenship, voting rights, and the U.S. presidency. A key goal of education in a democracy is to create informed citizens who have a strong sense of history and the political process. With that in mind, the We the People educational kit features seven outstanding books to help students prepare for their future as voters and active citizens.

Even elementary school students are ready to learn about the diversity of our country and the importance of citizenship and voting, themes of the first books in this guide. The joyful picture book *I Pledge Allegiance* by Pat Mora and Libby Martinez tells of a girl named Libby practicing the Pledge of Allegiance with her great-aunt, who has just passed her citizenship test. As they prepare for the swearing-in ceremony, Libby learns her great-aunt's moving history as a Mexican immigrant. *We Came to America* by Faith Ringgold celebrates generations of immigrants, shown in vibrant paintings, who have come to the United States for many reasons, while also acknowledging the treatment of Native Americans and slaves. Similarly, in *Lillian's Right to Vote* by Jonah Winter, an elderly black woman briefly recounts the history of slavery and the struggle for voting rights as she makes her way uphill through time, arriving at the top to proudly cast her vote.

These books provide excellent ways to explore the curricular topics of citizenship, immigration, civil rights, and voting. With related themes and a focus on one public figure, *Hillary*, also by Jonah Winter, follows the life of Hillary Clinton as first lady, a U.S. senator, and U.S. secretary of state. Regardless of a reader's political views, this picture-book biography conveys a powerful image of a citizen who aspires to serve her country in a variety of ways.

The final books explore our presidential history at an upper-elementary and middle-school level. Two of them introduce the U.S. presidents in chronological order, relating each story with an overview enhanced by fascinating details. In *Grover Cleveland, Again!*, acclaimed documentary maker Ken Burns approaches his subject with enthusiasm, providing an incisive biographical sketch of each president, a significant quotation, intriguing sidebars, and each president's portrait and basic facts. With a more playful approach, comedy writer and presidential history buff Daniel O'Brien cracks jokes throughout *Your Presidential Fantasy Dream Team* while supplying plenty of essential information. Both offer effective ways to introduce students to our country's past and its leaders.

Finally, Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Jon Meacham brings to life one of our most influential, cultured, and controversial U.S. presidents, Thomas Jefferson. Enhanced with 150 historic illustrations, *Thomas Jefferson: President & Philosopher* sets Jefferson's actions and character in the context of the extraordinary events that led to our country's founding and our way of government.

The We the People educational kit makes it easy to incorporate these outstanding books into your classroom with pre-reading questions, discussion questions, and curriculum-related activities for each book. Additionally, a list of Internet resources on history and government is provided and can be used in correlation with all the books, while graphic organizers lend themselves to reading, speaking, and writing activities at different grade levels.

Capitalize on the current publicity surrounding the presidential campaigns to get your students excited about their role as citizens and their future power as voters.

# I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

Pat Mora & Libby Martinez; Illustrated by Patrice Barton

## ABOUT THE BOOK

We all know the Pledge of Allegiance, but what does it really mean? No one understands the true meaning more than Libby and her great-aunt Lobo. Lobo just passed her citizenship test and is preparing to say the Pledge of Allegiance at a special ceremony, while Libby is practicing to lead her class in the Pledge. As they practice together, Libby learns about Lobo's journey from Mexico and her heartfelt love for the United States. Then they stand together in front of the judge and place their hands over their hearts, beaming with pride as they recite the words they now know and love.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, what emotions do you feel? What does the Pledge mean to you?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

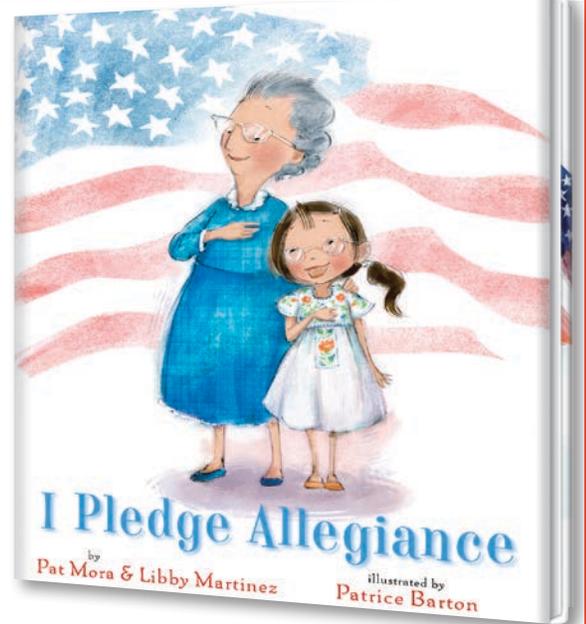
1. What does it mean that Great-Aunt Lobo passed her citizenship test? Why is she learning the Pledge of Allegiance?
2. Why does the teacher ask Libby to lead the class in the Pledge? How does Libby prepare?
3. Go through the Pledge slowly and talk about words that may be unfamiliar, such as *indivisible*, *liberty*, *pledge*, and *allegiance*. What do the words mean? Have you heard them at times other than when you say the Pledge?
4. Why does Great-Aunt Lobo say, "This country is like one big family, *una familia*, that works together to take care of people who need help"? How did the country help her?
5. What do you learn from the pictures about Libby, her great-aunt, her mother, her teacher, and her classmates? What do you see in the pictures that isn't in the words?

🔗 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Literature: K-2.1, K-2.2, K-2.4, K-2.7

## ACTIVITIES

### International Family Tree

Discuss the concept of a family tree with your students. Then have them go home and ask an adult where the members of their family were born. Cut out leaf shapes from paper in various colors and assign one color to each student. On each leaf, students can write the name of a family member, that person's relationship to them, their country of birth, and when they came to the United States. Create a large tree trunk on a classroom wall and have students add their leaves to the family tree. When it is complete, spend time discussing all the countries represented on the tree. You can also have students keep track of the countries with a bar graph or tally chart.



Grades PreK–2

PB: 978-0-399-55341-7 • HC: 978-0-307-93181-8

GLB: 978-0-375-97109-9 • EL: 978-0-307-97556-0



## Citizenship Qualities

Explain the concept of citizenship and engage students in a discussion about what it means to be a good citizen—in the classroom, at home, and in their community. Guide students toward the following ways to be good citizens:

- Volunteer to help those in need
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Follow the rules and laws
- Respect others
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Protect the environment

Create a classroom box called "Citizens in Action" with slips of paper and pencils by it. For a week, have students notice acts of good citizenship in the classroom, write what they see on the slips of paper, and put them in the box. At the end of the week, gather in a circle and read the slips aloud to share how many good citizens there are in the classroom.

## Practice Makes Perfect

Why is it important to practice? What kinds of things require practice? Begin a discussion with these questions and ask students to share things that they have had to practice. Each student should share one thing that they practice to improve—sports, musical instruments, speaking a different language, and so on. Ask them to spend the evening practicing a skill and share it with the class the next day. Ask students to make an "I practice . . ." poster that shows how often they practice a skill, with whom, and how they think practicing helps them improve. Hang the posters around the room.

🔗 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Speaking & Listening: K-2.1, K-2.5; Writing: K-2.2

# WE CAME TO AMERICA

Faith Ringgold

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Vibrant illustrations and lyrical words celebrate the rich diversity of America and the people who have come here from around the world, bringing their music, stories, dances, food, and fashion. Some people were already here, while others came in chains or fled from danger and injustice. As the book concludes, however people came to be here, "We are all Americans, just the same."

## NOTE TO EDUCATORS

*We Came to America* fits well in curriculum units about immigration, emphasizing the reasons people came to this country and what they have contributed. At the same time, it speaks to the world refugee crisis that saw more than 900,000 people seeking refuge in Europe in 2015. Depending on the age of your students, this could be a timely discussion topic that ties into *We Came to America*.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Why do people today want to come from other countries to live in the United States? Why did they want to come in the past?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

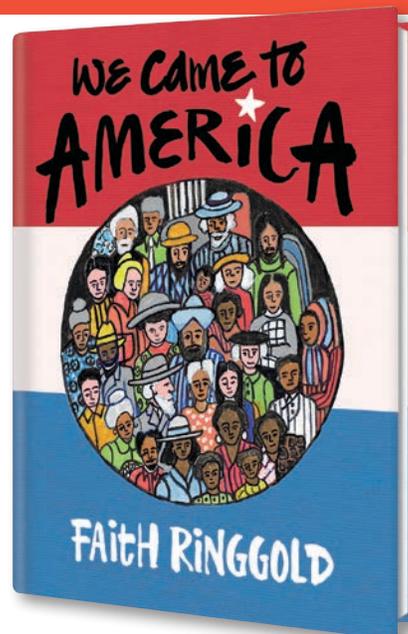
1. The book shows that people have come to America from around the world for different reasons. Find reasons in the text, and then add thoughts of your own on the topic.
2. What does the book show that people brought with them? If you were moving to another country, what would you want to take with you?
3. What forms of transportation are shown or mentioned? What are other ways people arrive in America? Share stories you've read or heard about immigrants and how they traveled here. If you moved to the United States from another country, how did you travel?
4. Others "came running/From injustice, fear, and pain." What is *injustice*? Why would it motivate people to leave their country? Share any examples you know of people who came to America because of problems in the country they left.
5. Some people were "brought in chains/Losing our freedom and our names." Who are these people? How did they lose their freedom and names? Compare them to others in the book who chose to move to America, and discuss how each group might have felt.

 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Literature: K-2.1, K-2.2, K-2.3, K-2.4

## ACTIVITIES

### Looking Closely

Assign pairs of students a two-page spread from the book to study closely. They should discuss or write down everything they can glean from the words and pictures, including details as basic as the colors and shapes used. Then have each pair report back to the class on what they observed. Talk as a class about what illustrations add to picture books. Read the text aloud without showing the pictures and have students discuss that experience.



Grades K-3  
HC: 978-0-517-70947-4  
GLB: 978-0-517-70948-1  
EL: 978-0-553-51257-1



### Tell Me More

Have each student choose a page and compose a story about the person or people on the page, imagining where they might be from, why they left, and what their new life is like. This can be written by the student or dictated to the teacher. Create a bulletin board of these stories and have students discuss where they got their ideas.

### From Around the World

Have the class collect stories and songs from around the world. This could mean finding folktales and songs in the library or online, or bringing them from home, including family stories related to their heritage. Have them share the stories, either by telling them or reading the book version aloud. If possible, have the class learn at least one of the songs to sing together.

### My Favorite Part

After reading the book aloud, have students spend some time re-reading or looking through it again. Then have them write or dictate the answer to the prompt, "I like the part when \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_." Have them share their answers in small groups and discuss the book in more detail.

### Endpaper Inspiration

Colorful decorations on the endpapers correspond to shapes found throughout the book. Have students find those connections, and then draw and color their own original decorations inspired by Faith Ringgold's art. Use them to decorate a display or bulletin board.

 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Literature: K-2.1, K-2.7; Speaking & Listening: K-2.1, K-2.5; Writing: K-2.3, K-2.7

# LILLIAN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

## A CELEBRATION OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

Jonah Winter; Illustrated by Shane W. Evans

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*Lillian's Right to Vote* tells the story of one black woman going to vote. As she makes her way to the polling booth, she reflects on the history of voting rights in America. It's a complex picture book with a large cast of characters, some fictional and others real, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It emphasizes the importance of the right to vote and the struggle of blacks to secure those legal rights. Powerful writing and illustrations give this inspiring book an emotional weight that reflects the importance of its themes.

### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

What does it mean to vote in a government election? Why is voting important?



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Lillian care so much about voting? Why did some people keep others, including African Americans and women, from voting?
2. In the story, Lillian walks up a steep hill. What is it like for her to walk uphill for such a long way? How is the hill like the history of voting for blacks?
3. When Lillian's great-grandfather Edmund votes and his wife, Ida, goes with him, Lillian feels their "dignity, and their pride, as they enter the courthouse for the first time." What made it possible for Edmund to vote? What are *dignity* and *pride*, and why do the two of them feel it?
4. Even though Edmund votes, his son Isaac doesn't. What changes make it impossible for Isaac to vote? What stops Lillian's uncle Levi from voting?
5. When Lillian is shown as a child, how do whites try to keep her parents from voting? Talk about the burning cross and its effect on the family. Why won't Lillian ever forget it?

🔗 Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading Literature: 1-4.1, 1-3.2, 1-4.3, 1-4.4, 1-4.7

### ACTIVITIES

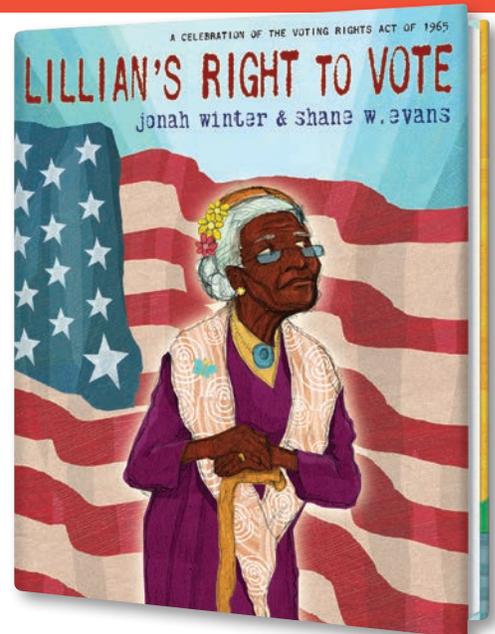
#### The Magic of the Spoken Word

Re-read the section in the book about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Then share parts of his "I Have a Dream" speech either by reading Kadir Nelson's *I Have a Dream* or by reading from and listening to the website below. Have students talk about the speech and what it means to them.

[americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm](http://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm)

#### Meet New Words

*Lillian's Right to Vote* incorporates vocabulary related to voting and government. Many of the words may be unfamiliar to students. Have the class create a list of vocabulary words, such as *denied*, *abridged*, and *servitude*. Continue working as a class or have students work in small groups, discussing the words in context and then looking them up in a dictionary.



Grades K-4

HC: 978-0-385-39028-6

GLB: 978-0-385-39029-3

EL: 978-0-385-39030-9

schwartz & wade books

### Marching for Freedom

Show your class the short "Freedom March" video of the Selma to Montgomery march from this website: [history.com/topics/black-history/selma-montgomery-march](http://history.com/topics/black-history/selma-montgomery-march). Before watching, discuss the word *Negro*, used in the newsreel, which was common at the time. Have a discussion that connects the video to the part in *Lillian's Right to Vote* about the three marches. Talk about the concept of a "peaceful protest march" as described in the book.

### Delving into the Past

As a class, go through *Lillian's Right to Vote* and brainstorm topics for a simple research project. The list could include real people mentioned in the text, slavery, laws, civil rights events, and so on. Have students work in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class to learn more about one of the topics, using print and Internet resources. The final product should be a short research paper that demonstrates at least three new pieces of knowledge.

### Calling All Actors!

Because *Lillian's Right to Vote* has many characters and scenes, it lends itself to reenactment. Assign roles to students. Some students can supply narration for each scene, saying where and when it takes place before the characters speak. Other students can be part of the freedom march scenes. Each student playing a character should say who they are and what they did or what happened to them.

🔗 Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading Literature: 1-4.1, 1-3.2, 1-4.3, 1-4.4, 1-4.7; Speaking & Listening: 1-4.1, 1-4.2, 1-4.5; Writing: 1-4.2, 1-4.7

# HILLARY

Jonah Winter; Illustrated by Raul Colón

## ABOUT THE BOOK

*Hillary* is a timely, complex picture-book biography about Hillary Clinton, an important contemporary figure in U.S. politics and government. The inspiring narrative takes an even-handed approach, showing her accomplishments but also times she hasn't met her goals. Regardless of a reader's political views, Hillary Clinton merits study for her roles as an influential first lady, U.S. senator, U.S. secretary of state, and politician with presidential aspirations. This biography recounts her life from childhood to her second campaign for the presidential nomination in clear text and powerful pictures.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

What qualities does it take to be a good leader in a classroom, business, or politics?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe Hillary as a person, giving examples from the book. What aspects of her personality have helped her reach her goals? What are some words that describe her?
2. Give examples of times in the narrative when Hillary showed courage. What are some different ways to be brave?
3. Discuss times when Hillary succeeded in her goals and times when she didn't. What did she do after she failed? In what ways can failure be useful and important?
4. Hillary said in a famous speech that "Women's rights are human rights." What did she mean? What are some of the ways that women and girls are treated unfairly around the world? Why do you think the U.S. hasn't had a woman as president?
5. On the final page, a sentence describes Hillary as "unstoppable." What does the author mean? What are his reasons for considering Hillary unstoppable?

🕒 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text: 1-4.1, 1-3.2, 1-4.3, 1-4.4, 1.6, 1-4.7

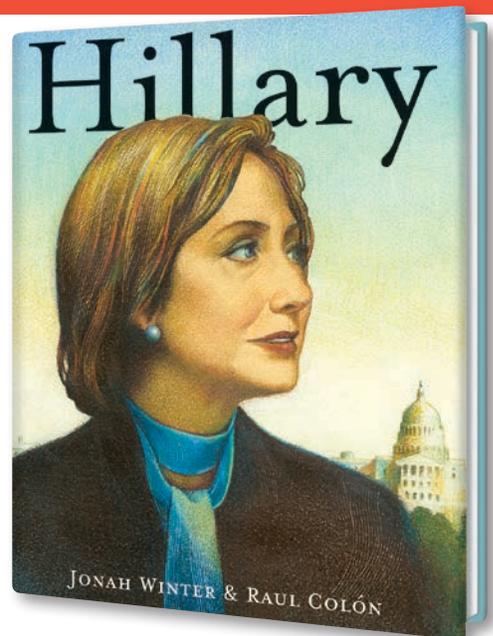
## ACTIVITIES

### A Web of Ideas

Have students use the web-shaped graphic organizer found later in the guide to sum up the information about Hillary Clinton found in the book. They should put her name in the middle and then write words in the outer circles that describe her, her jobs, or places she's traveled. Post the organizers on a bulletin board.

### Women at the Top

As a class or in small groups, do a simple research project on a female leader other than Hillary Clinton. It could be someone in government or another field, in the past or present. Start with print resources, and then use the Internet if helpful. Have students write and illustrate individual books or one large class book about the leader(s). Talk as a class about what makes a good leader and compare the leader(s) researched to Hillary Clinton.



Grades PreK-3

HC: 978-0-553-53388-0

GLB: 978-0-553-53389-7

EL: 978-0-553-53390-3

schwartz & wade books

## Speak Up!

Hillary Clinton is known for her speeches, some about improving the world and especially conditions for women. Have students each write a short speech, perhaps even just one sentence, about how they'd like to change the world for the better. Then have them give the speech to the class or a small group. As a class, discuss where public speaking occurs and why it matters.

## Two Sides of an Issue

As a U.S. senator, Hillary Clinton debated with her fellow senators about important issues. As a class, brainstorm topics for students to debate that are related to school or home. Students should form teams of two, prepare their side of the topic, and debate another team in front of the class. Find topic and format ideas here: [educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson/lesson304b.shtml](http://educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304b.shtml)

## Government Glossary

Talk with your class about what a glossary is. As a group, go through the book and make a list of vocabulary related to politics and government, such as *ambassador*, *senator*, and *primaries*. Talk about what they mean based on the context and students' prior knowledge. Then have pairs of students look up one of the words in a dictionary and create an entry for a class glossary that includes the word, a sentence from *Hillary* that uses the word, and a definition.

🕒 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text: 1-4.1, 1-4.2, 1-4.4; Writing: 1-4.2, 3-4.4, 1-4.7, 1-4.8, 4.9; Speaking & Listening: 1-4.1; 1-4.2; 1-4.3; 1-4.4; 1-4.5.

# GROVER CLEVELAND, AGAIN!

## A TREASURY OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

Ken Burns; Illustrated by Gerald Kelley

### ABOUT THE BOOK

From George Washington to Barack Obama, the stories of America's presidents come alive in a whole new way when told by acclaimed filmmaker Ken Burns. In *Grover Cleveland, Again!* Burns shares his love of history by highlighting the most important and intriguing information about each of these influential leaders. Richly illustrated with engaging watercolor scenes from the presidents' lives, the book will give young readers the opportunity to learn about the entire span of our country's history and, as importantly, see that they, too, *could* grow up to be president.

### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Which U.S. presidents do you know about? What do you think the president does for the country?



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

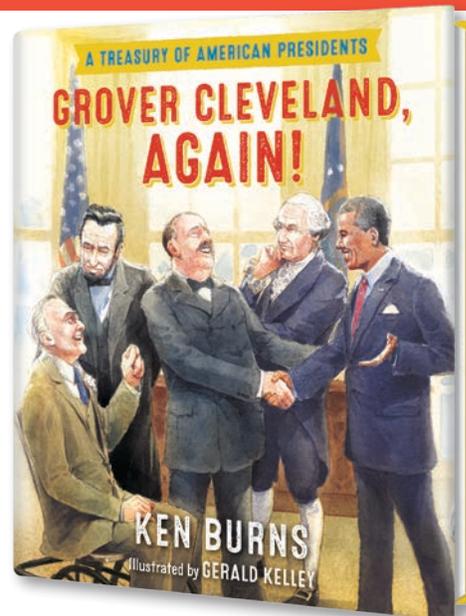
1. Discuss the information in the book about Ken Burns and his accomplishments, and then re-read the note from him at the beginning. Why is he so interested in history? How does he use film to explore his interest?
2. Burns acknowledges some of the shameful parts of American history but also mentions aspects of our country that should be celebrated. Discuss what he says about the good and the bad in our past and present. How can learning about history help improve our country?
3. In the section on each president, a quote appears under the president's name. Choose several presidents and discuss how the quote relates to what else you learn about that leader in the book.
4. The book is arranged in chronological order. What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a structure? What are other possible ways that the author could have structured the book?
5. Each spread about a president has several sidebars, or boxes of information. What sort of details about each president do these include that you find especially interesting? Why would the author present information in a sidebar instead of in the central text?
6. The illustrations convey information that isn't in the text, such as the type of clothing each president wore. Go through the book, taking note of the clothing, hats, and hairstyles. Discuss ways fashions change and ways they stay the same. What else do the illustrations add?

🔗 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text: 4-7.1, 4-7.2, 4-7.3, 4-7.5, 4-7.7.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Just Like Me

Have students go through the book and find five presidents with whom they have something in common. It could be as simple as having siblings or pets, sharing a name, or being from the same state or part of the country. Students should create a poster with a self-portrait and pictures of the presidents, noting the similarities they found.



Grades 5 and up  
HC: 978-0-385-39209-9  
GLB: 978-0-385-39210-5  
EL: 978-0-385-39211-2



### Digging Deeper

Have students choose a president or assign one to each student for a research project. Using both print and online resources, the student should prepare a multimedia presentation to share with the class that reports on the president's accomplishments and personal life, including weaknesses or failures where important. Find resources in the Internet Resources list later in the guide.

### A Time-Travel Talk

What would the conversation be like if a modern president met one of the earlier presidents? Have students work in pairs to choose one of the first seven presidents and imagine them meeting with one of the most recent seven. Students should write a short dialogue between the two about what their experiences were like as president, emphasizing what has changed over the years. The students should perform the dialogue for the class.

### Intriguing Information

Post a large piece of butcher paper on a wall with the title "Intriguing Information." Over the course of a week, have students collect interesting details about the presidents from *Grover Cleveland, Again!* and other sources to add to the paper. Students should each contribute at least five facts, and more if they like. At the end of the week, have students pick out five things that someone else posted that they find intriguing and share them in small groups.

🔗 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text: 4-7.1, 4-7.3, 4-7.7; Speaking & Listening: 4-7.1, 4-7.4, 4-7.5; Writing: 4-7.3, 4-7.7.

# YOUR PRESIDENTIAL FANTASY DREAM TEAM

Daniel O'Brien; Illustrated by Winston Rowntree

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Let's say you could travel through time and draft the best possible team of past presidents to defend America against an attack from a robot army or the zombie apocalypse. Who would you choose? This irreverent yet informative introduction to our presidents from George Washington to Ronald Reagan highlights each leader's strengths and weaknesses. The author, a professional comedy writer and presidential history buff, advises readers on which presidents to select in the categories of Brains, Brawn, Moral Compass, Loose Cannon, and Roosevelt—the building blocks of every successful squad in history. Learn about America's past leaders in the zaniest approach yet to this fascinating aspect of our history.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

What are some characteristics of a good president? How important are intelligence and moral values?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

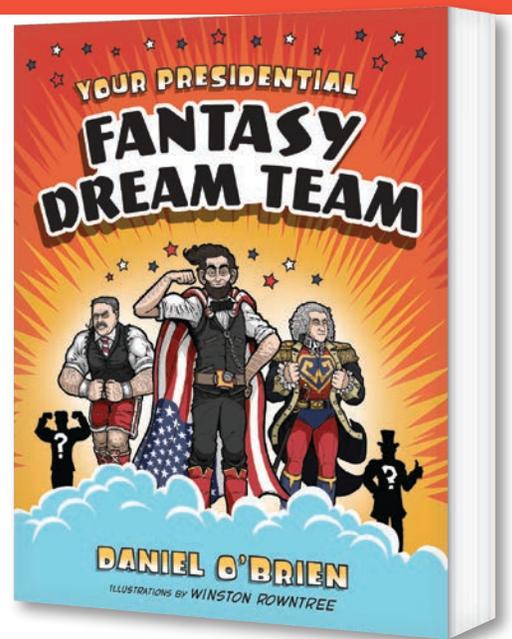
1. Which of the presidents would you put in the top five in terms of important accomplishments, and why? Which are in your bottom five, and why?
2. How has the presidency changed over the years? Would any of the first four presidents—George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, or James Madison—be a good president today?
3. Would you want to be president? Why or why not? What do you see as the most rewarding parts of the job? What are the parts you wouldn't want to do?
4. Why do you think so many military leaders have become president? Which of them were effective presidents? Discuss which characteristics of a military leader might be useful as president, and which ones might be problematic.
5. Choose five of the presidents and discuss what you learned about them from *Your Presidential Fantasy Dream Team*. Talk about the meaning of the chapter title taglines, such as "The Human Iceberg" (Benjamin Harrison) and "Rolling Thunder" (Franklin Delano Roosevelt). Discuss the illustrations in those chapters and what they convey.
6. Some First Ladies played important roles during their husband's presidency. Discuss at least three First Ladies who made a difference during their time in the White House.

 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text: 5-8-1, 5-8-2, 5-8-3, 5-8-4.

## ACTIVITIES

### Draft Your Fantasy Team!

Using the five categories from the introduction—Brains, Brawn, Moral Compass, Loose Cannon, and Roosevelt—have students choose a top president for each position, plus an alternative choice. They should justify their choices in short paragraphs. They can then meet in small groups to compare and contrast their picks.



Grades 5 and up  
PB: 978-0-553-53747-5  
GLB: 978-0-553-53748-2  
EL: 978-0-553-53749-9  
CD: 978-0-399-56849-7



### Elect Me!

Students should choose one of their top picks for the Fantasy Dream Team and write a campaign speech for that president to deliver. The speech should emphasize at least three important qualities or types of experience that the president would bring to the role. Have students deliver their speeches to small groups or the class.

### The Worst Team

After having drafted their best team, students should compile the worst team with one choice each in the categories of Brains, Brawn, Moral Compass, and Loose Cannon. For each choice, they should make a list of at least three qualities or actions that show why the president wasn't great at the job. Share the picks as a class and talk about what qualities pose problems in a president.

### Poster of Pros and Cons

Have students choose one president who wasn't on either of their teams. The choice should be someone who had mixed success as president. Students should create a poster for that president that includes a portrait in the middle surrounded by strengths and weaknesses or successes and failures.

### Dear Mr. President

Each student should write a formal letter to the president they would most like to have known. The letter should explain why the student is interested in that particular president, including facts and anecdotes from the book. Have students suggest an imaginary meeting place and what the two of them might talk about if they met. Post the letters on a bulletin board in chronological order by president, grouping together the ones to the same president.

 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text 5-8-1, 5-8-3, 5-8-7; Speaking & Listening: 5-8.1; 5-8.4; Writing: 5-8-1, 5-8-2, 5-8-3, 5-8.7.

# THOMAS JEFFERSON

## PRESIDENT & PHILOSOPHER

Jon Meacham

### ABOUT THE BOOK

In this compelling portrait of Thomas Jefferson, readers who might already know that he wrote the Declaration of Independence will get to know much more about a complex man of many interests and contradictions. He loved to learn about agriculture, fine arts, architecture, natural history, and science. He was an eloquent statesman who wrote about equality and the pursuit of happiness, yet he was also a slave owner whose slaves were sold after his death to pay his debts. With 150 archival illustrations, including paintings, maps, and photographs, this is a rich introduction to one of the most important Founding Fathers and his world.

### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Read aloud the author's "Dear Reader" letter and discuss why learning about key figures in history is useful, and how to view the flaws of an important person like Jefferson. What does reading about Jefferson and other Founding Fathers have to do with the "training in citizenship" that Meacham mentions?



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

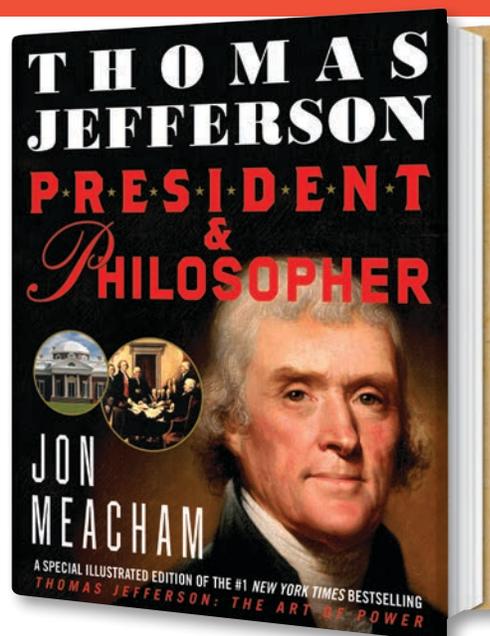
1. What were some of Jefferson's strengths as a man and as U.S. president? What were some of his weaknesses?
2. The title refers to Jefferson not only as president, but also as a philosopher. In what ways was he a philosopher? What did he believe in? Discuss whether you agree with some of his philosophical views, and why.
3. Describe facets of Jefferson's personal life and interests. How did he spend his time outside of politics? What was he most proud of in his life? What do you think his greatest legacies were?
4. What role did Jefferson play in the birth of the United States as a separate nation? How important do you think he was in defining and forming the new government? What aspects of his background prepared him for participating in that task?
5. Talk about the differences between the Republicans and the Federalists, and between Jefferson and Adams. Describe their different visions for the new government, and discuss what parts of each vision prevailed. How similar or different were those divisions to political parties and disagreements today?

 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Text 5-8.1, 5-8.3, 5-8.8; Speaking & Listening: 5-8.1.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Jefferson and Slavery

Jefferson had a contradictory relationship with the issue of slavery in politics and in his personal life. Have students go through the book and create a timeline that reflects Jefferson's interactions with slavery. The timeline should include a year or range of years for each interaction and a paragraph explaining his actions and attitude, including quotes from him when useful. Then hold a discussion as a class about the contradictions between Jefferson's proclaimed beliefs and his actions. Expand the discussion to consider the biographer's attitude toward Jefferson in this area and in



Grades 5 and up  
PB: 978-0-385-38752-1  
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general. Does he seem to admire Jefferson? How does he handle the issue of slavery and any other of Jefferson's flaws? Free online tools for timelines include [dipity.com](http://dipity.com) and [readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline\\_2](http://readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2).

#### Time to Campaign

"In the presidential campaigns of the 1700s, candidates did not campaign, give speeches, or travel the country, seeking votes." (p. 134) Have your students design a campaign brochure for Jefferson based on what they've read in the biography. First have them make a list with page numbers of accomplishments and attributes to include in the campaign. Then have them write the brochure, add graphics, print it out, and share it with fellow students. Most word processing programs have brochure templates, as does NCTE's ReadWriteThink website: [readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/Printing\\_Press](http://readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/Printing_Press).

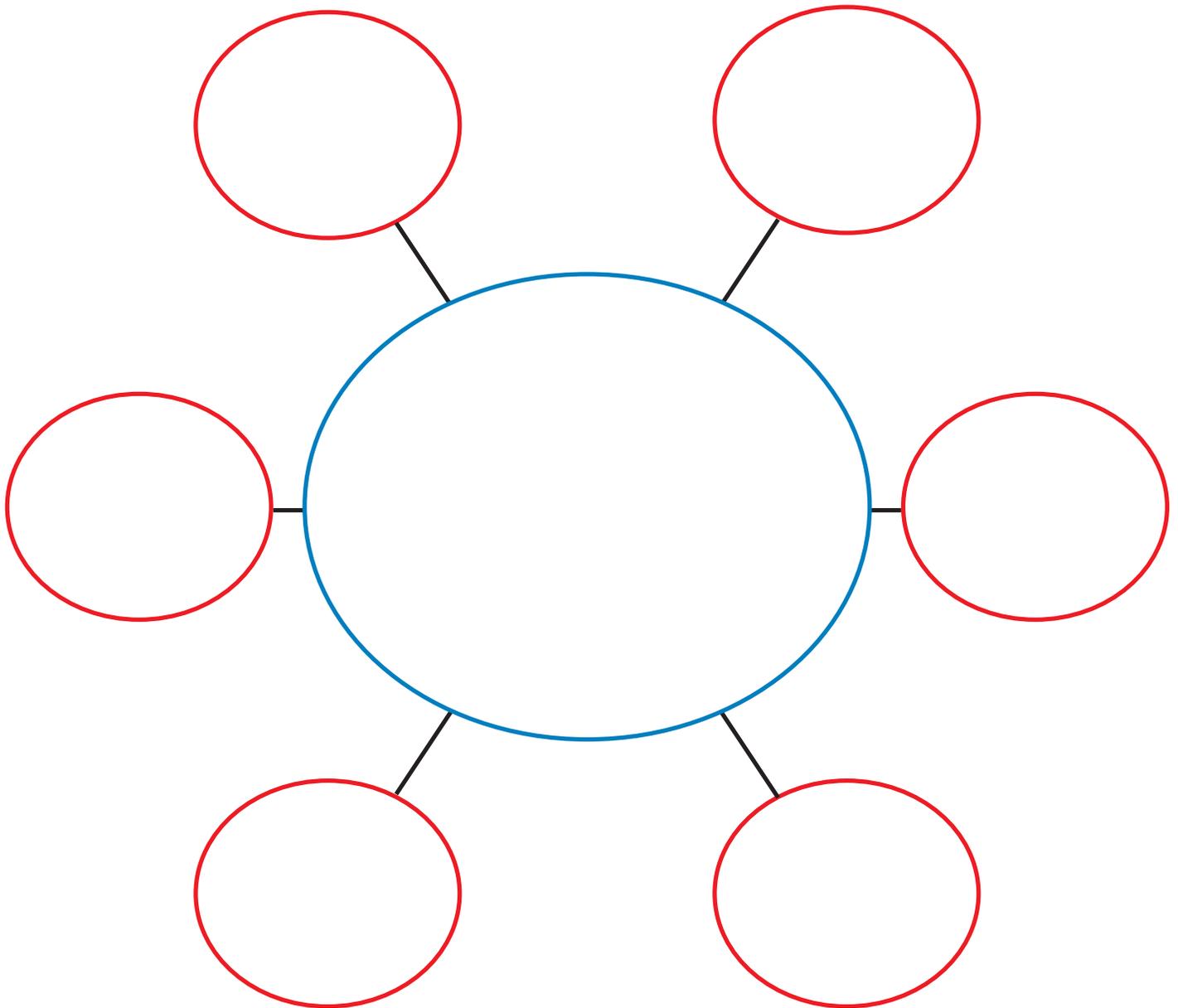
#### Political Terms

As they read, have students keep a list in their reading journal of unfamiliar words with an emphasis on political terms. They should try to define each word from its context, and then look it up if necessary. Possible terms include the following: *tyranny* (p. 22), *treason* (p. 29), *coercive* (p. 45), *aristocrats* (p. 72), *militia* (p. 76), *turbulence* (p. 103), *cabinet* (p. 124), *faction* (p. 128), *sedition* (p. 139), *rebuke* (p. 140), *usurp* (p. 146), *capitulation* (p. 147), *execute* (p. 152), *republic* (p. 154).

 Correlates to Common Core Standards for Reading History 5-8.4, 6-8.6; Writing: 5-6.6; Writing History/Social Studies 6-8.2a.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## A WEB OF IDEAS



**EDUCATORS:** Reproduce this graphic organizer for students. This web works well for summing up facts and ideas in a piece of writing, centered around the main topic. Students can also use it to brainstorm an essay or speech before deciding on how to put the material in order.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## VISUAL IMAGES ORGANIZER

Page	Description	What the Image Adds to the Text

**EDUCATORS:** Reproduce this graphic organizer for students. Picture books and many nonfiction books convey important content through images and other graphics. Use this organizer to help students study visual material page by page and analyze what it adds to the text in terms of information and emotion.



## INTERNET RESOURCES

on citizenship, voting, government, and U.S. presidents

### Growing Voters

Created by a Lesley College professor, Growing Voters provides lesson plans and resources for K-12 students about voting.

[growingvoters.org](http://growingvoters.org)

### History Channel

Includes short videos and other resources on presidential history, the Voting Rights Act, immigration, and much more.

[history.com](http://history.com)

### iCivics

This nonprofit, founded by retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, has educational resources to prepare students to become knowledgeable and engaged citizens.

[icivics.org](http://icivics.org)

### Kids in the House

This U.S. House of Representatives website introduces concepts of government to children.

[kids.clerk.house.gov](http://kids.clerk.house.gov)

### National Archive Founders Online

A searchable archive of the correspondence and other writings of six of the Founding Fathers, including Thomas Jefferson.

[founders.archives.gov](http://founders.archives.gov)

### PBS Kids

The PBS website for kids has an animated, interactive section on voting in the United States, past and present. Another section invites students to experience being U.S. president for a day.

[pbskids.org/democracy/vote](http://pbskids.org/democracy/vote)

[pbskids.org/democracy/be-president](http://pbskids.org/democracy/be-president)

### Smithsonian's "The American Presidency"

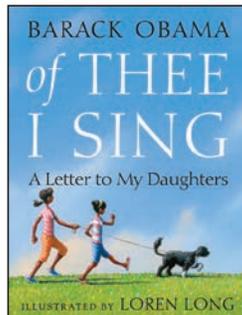
The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History website offers the American Presidency section, aimed at students, that includes some hands-on activities.

[americanhistory.si.edu/presidency](http://americanhistory.si.edu/presidency)

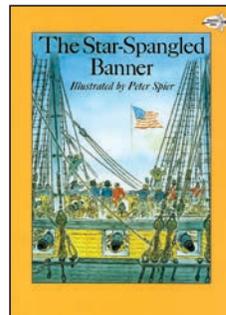
## RELATED TITLES



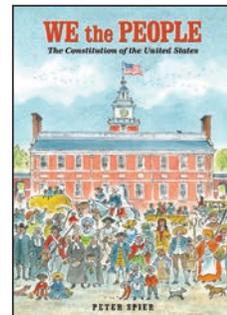
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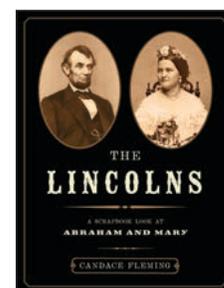
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