

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Parent Guide

See the Reading Helpers sheets for specific directions.

SUMMARY

In this activity, you and your child will explore *The Flag Maker* together, using these suggested reading questions.

WHY

Questions are an important part of learning, and your child can learn a lot by answering and asking questions.

TIME

- 30 minutes

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten through 4th grade.

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **fort:** a permanent army post, image on page 26
- **bunting:** a lightweight loosely woven fabric used mostly for flags and festive decorations, image on pages 9-10
- **ramparts:** protective barriers, image on page 14
- **militia:** a body of citizens organized for military service, image on page 17

YOU NEED

- Reading Helpers sheets (*attached*)
- Background sheet (*attached*)
- *The Flag Maker* book

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/starspangled/>

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Background Information

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/starspangled/>.

The flag that is now known as the Star-Spangled Banner was made by Mary Pickersgill's flag shop in Baltimore, Maryland in 1813. The Battle of Baltimore, during the War of 1812, was fought while this flag was flying over Fort McHenry. During this battle, Francis Scott Key was looking at the flag flying over Fort McHenry and thought of the words that we now sing as the national anthem of the United States. For more information, visit:

<http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner>.



Illustration of the Pickersgill household sewing the Star-Spangled Banner, from *The Flag Maker*.



The Star-Spangled Banner was created in 1813 by Mary Pickersgill.

What does the American flag look like?

Grab your book and find out more about a very famous flag with the Reading Helpers on the next pages.

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Reading Helpers, page 1 of 3

For adults and kids to follow together.

Reading Helper One: Look for new vocabulary.

You might not know all of the words that are used in this book, so you have the chance to learn some new words! If you come across a word you don't know, here are a few ways to figure out what it means:

- Look at the whole sentence where you see the word. Try to figure out what the word means based on what the sentence is talking about.
- Look in the picture to see if there is an image of the word. For example, maybe you don't know the word "banner," and the sentence says, "The workers spread out the banner." Look in the picture on that page to see if the workers are holding something—that might be the banner!
- Ask a parent, teacher, or friend.
- Look the word up in a dictionary. There might be more than one definition, so see which one fits best with the sentence you're reading.

Tip This book uses some words that might be new to your child. If your child is reading the book to you, listen closely. If your child stumbles over a word, it might mean she or he hasn't heard that word before. If you are reading aloud to your child, stop after reading a sentence with a word you think might be new.

Reading Helper Two: Guess what comes next!

Tip This Reading Helper works best if you use it during the first time you read the book. Otherwise, you might already know what happens.

It can be a lot of fun to try to guess what will happen next in the story. During exciting parts of the story, try asking yourself what will happen next, then keep reading and find out if you were right. Here are some good spots to try this:

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Reading Helpers, page 2 of 3

- After reading page 6: Guess whether Caroline and her mother, Mary, will say “yes” or “no” to the officers.
- After reading page 15: Decide if you think Baltimore will be attacked or not.
- After reading page 19: Guess whether the flag is still there or not. What could have happened to it?
- After reading page 27: Decide who you think won the battle.

Reading Helper Three: How does Caroline feel?

Caroline Pickersgill is the main character in this story. She feels a lot of different emotions during the story. Try to find those emotions through the words of the story or the pictures. If it doesn't say what she's feeling, guess her feelings based on what's happening in the story. Here are some good places to try this:

- After reading page 4
- After reading page 6
- After reading page 9
- After reading page 10
- After reading page 14
- After reading page 19
- After reading page 27
- After reading page 30

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Reading Helpers, page 3 of 3

Reading Helper Four: Look for facts and fiction.

The Flag Maker involved details that we have historical evidence for, and detailed that we don't have evidence for. Take a look at the Author's Note on pages 31 and 32. In the Author's Note, Susan Campbell Bartoletti (the author) explains whether or not there is historical evidence related to different parts of the story. After reading about the historical evidence, take another look at these parts of the story:

- In the story, Mary, Caroline, members of the Pickersgill family, a slave, and a servant all work together on the flag. What does the Author's note say about the people who worked on the flag? Why would the author decide to include so many people?
- In the story, Caroline can see the battle from her window. What does the Author's Note say about that detail? Why would the author pick to include Caroline watching the battle from her window?

THE FLAG MAKER by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, illustrated by Claire A. Nivola. Text copyright (c) 2004 by Susan Campbell Bartoletti. Illustrations copyright (c) 2004 by Claire A. Nivola. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Teacher Guide, page 1 of 2

See the Reading Helpers sheets for specific directions.

SUMMARY

Students will actively read *The Flag Maker*, using these suggested reading questions.

RATIONALE

Questions are an important part of learning, and your students can learn a lot by answering questions. Asking and answering questions involves understanding, assessing, and sharing information from different resources like images, written information, and other people. These critical thinking skills enable people to express their curiosity, gain specific knowledge, and build informed opinions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Read for understanding.
- Answer questions using written and image resources.

TIME

- 30 minutes

AGE GROUP: K-4

TARGET VOCABULARY:

- **fort**: a permanent army post, image on page 26
- **bunting**: a lightweight loosely woven fabric used mostly for flags and festive decorations, image on pages 9-10
- **ramparts**: protective barriers, image on page 14
- **militia**: a body of citizens organized for military service, image on page 17

MATERIALS

- Reading Helpers sheets (*attached*)
- Background sheet (*attached*)
- *The Flag Maker* book

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/starspangled/>

Reading *The Flag Maker*

Teacher Guide, page 2 of 2

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Discussion exhibits understanding of story and historical details.
- Discussion exhibits understanding of vocabulary in the context of the story.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

2D: Read historical narratives imaginatively.

2H. Draw upon the visual data presented in photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings.

3C. Analyze historical fiction.

3F: Analyze illustrations in historical stories.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

4E: The student understands national symbols through which American values and principles are expressed.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving