



Important People in American History Activity Pages





Important People in American History Activity Pages

PRESCHOOL

Core Knowledge Language Arts®
New York Edition



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Family Letter



Dear Family Member,

Throughout this school year, your child will be learning about important people in American history. Important people are men and women like scientists and presidents who changed the way we live today. As they learn about important people, your child will also learn the difference between things that happened a long time ago and things that are happening today.

Below are some suggestions for activities you might do at home to help your child learn about important people and the past and present:

1. Talk with Your Child About the Past and Present

One of the greatest challenges that preschoolers face is learning to distinguish (and talk about) things that happened in the past from things happening here and now. Help your child learn to talk about things that happened long ago by talking about old family photos or family stories. Tell your child that these things happened “a long, long time ago,” “in the past,” or “before you were born.” Help your child learn to talk about things that are happening today by talking about very recent family photos or events. Tell your child that these things happened “today,” “recently,” or “not very long ago.”

2. Read Aloud Each Day

Your child will bring home stories about each of the important people they are learning about in school. Read these stories with your child before bed. Talk about whether the important person lived a long, long time ago or is still living today.

3. Talk About Your Heroes

Tell your child about someone you admire who lived long ago or is living today. Tell your child a true story about what this person did and why this person is important to you.

4. Identify Today's Important People

Help your child learn about famous people in America today who are important to your family. Point to and name important people who are on the television or on the cover of magazines. Be sure to explain why these people are important and that these people are still alive today.



Dear Family Member,

Your child is learning about Native Americans in school because we are nearing the Thanksgiving holiday. Read the story below with your child to help him/her remember what s/he learned about the Native Americans in school. You might also talk about how Native Americans dressed differently long ago and how people dress today by pointing to some of the pictures as you read.



Important People in American History: The Native Americans

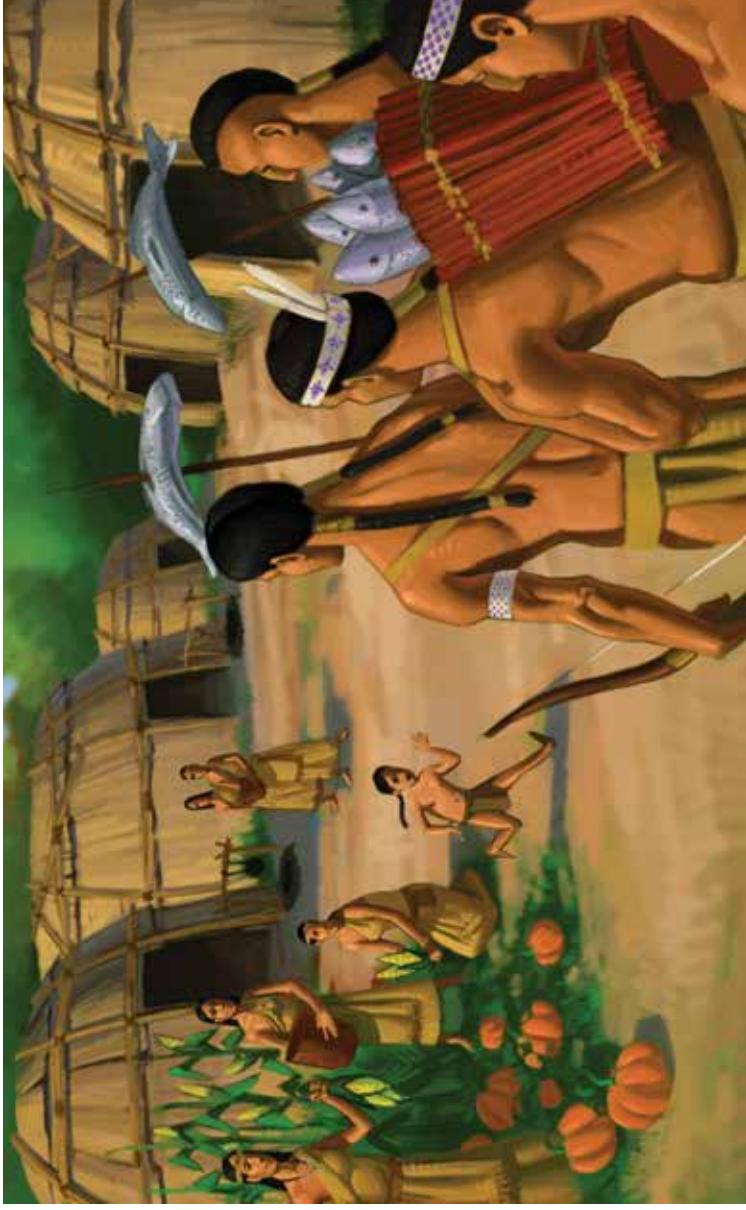
We live in a country called the United States of America. In this country today, there are many, many people, cars, and buildings. People like to talk on the phone, shop in the grocery store, play on computers, and watch television. Some people live in big cities with tall buildings and lots of traffic. Some people live in the country where there is lots of green grass and people drive tractors. But things in the United States were not always the way they are today.



Long, long ago, long before your mother and father were born, and even long before your grandparents were born, the United States looked very different. There were no phones or computers, no tall buildings, no cars or tractors, and no grocery stores. Not as many people lived here.



In that time long ago—four hundred years ago—there were trees, rivers, rocks, and mountains. There were wild animals, like deer and birds. The only people who lived here way back then were the Native Americans.



The Native Americans knew many things about how to live here way back then. They knew how to plant seeds in the ground and grow corn, pumpkins, and beans to eat. They knew how to catch fish to eat. They knew how to make clothing from the skins and furs of the animals that they hunted. They knew how to use fires to cook their food. The Native Americans long ago lived very differently from the way we live today.



Tell Me About the Native Americans and the Pilgrims

Help students cut out the puppets provided or cut them out ahead of time. Ask students to identify the puppets and then use the puppets and the backdrop to reenact the arrival of the Pilgrims.



Cutouts

for Tell Me About the Native Americans and the Pilgrims



Dear Family Member,

Your child is learning about Pilgrims because we are nearing the Thanksgiving holiday. Read the story below with your child to help him/her remember what s/he learned about the Pilgrims in school. You might also talk about the way your family celebrates Thanksgiving today by talking about something special you do each year at Thanksgiving time.



Important People in American History: The Pilgrims

Long, long ago, there were people living in a country called England. In England, the king made all the rules. The king and his rules made some people so angry that they decided to go live somewhere else. The people who decided to move away from England were called the Pilgrims. The Pilgrims decided they would move to America so they did not have to follow the king's rules. To get to America from England, they had to sail a long time across the Atlantic Ocean. They sailed on a boat named the *Mayflower*. Their journey was very hard.



When the Pilgrims arrived in America, they met a Native American man named Squanto who was already living there. Squanto became a special friend of the Pilgrims. He taught them many things about how to live in America. He showed them how to use wood from the forest to build houses. He gave them seeds to plant, so they could grow food to eat. The Pilgrims were grateful to Squanto for helping them learn to live in their new home.



Squanto told the Pilgrims that every year when it was time to harvest the crops, he and the other Native Americans had a celebration. After the harvest that year, the Pilgrims and the Native Americans celebrated together. They roasted turkey, fish, and deer meat. They cooked corn, pumpkins, and beans. When they saw how much good food they had, they gave thanks together.

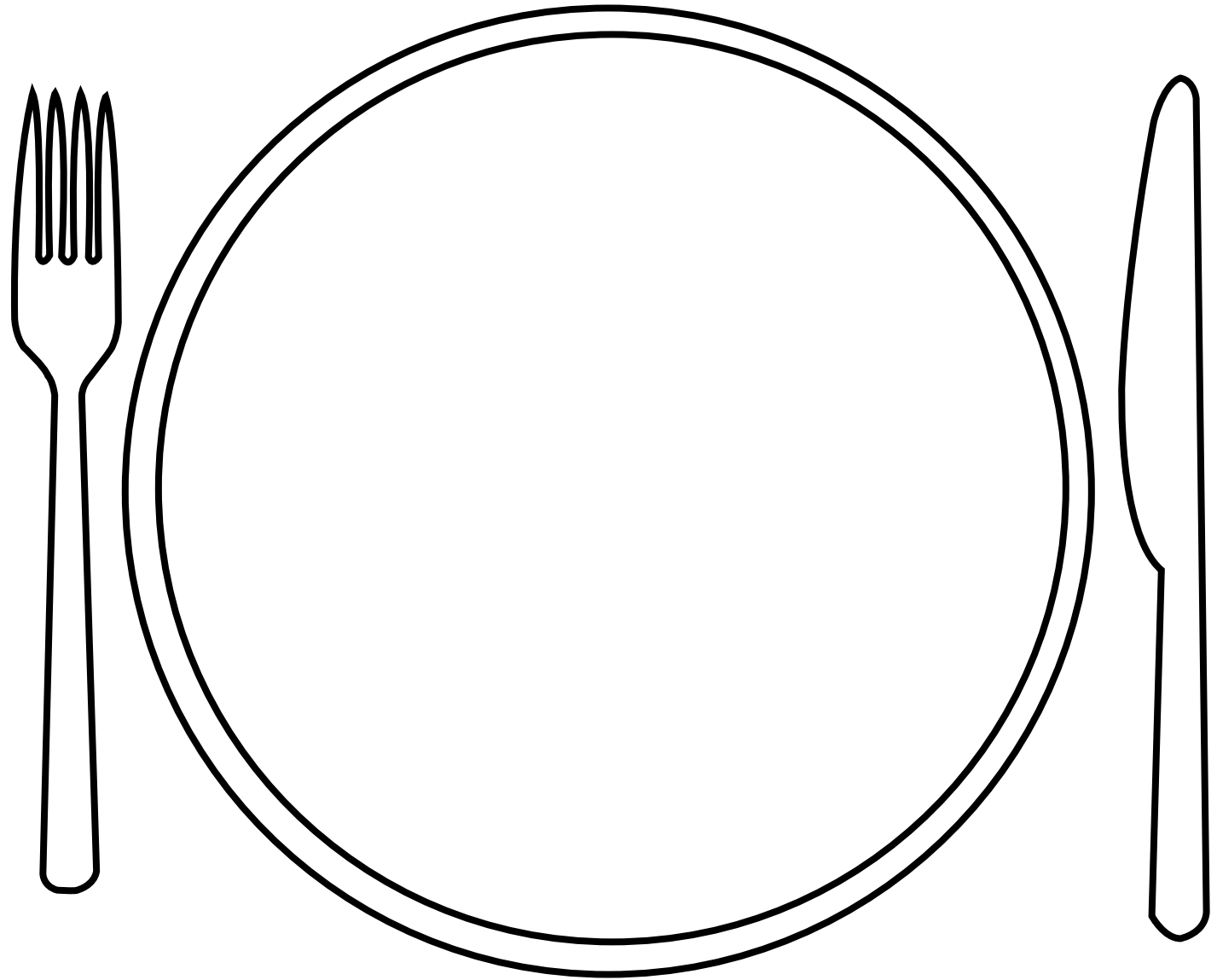


Today, on the holiday called Thanksgiving, we remember the celebration that the Pilgrims and Native Americans had long, long ago. Lots of families eat a special meal of roast turkey, corn, and beans, just like the Pilgrims and Native Americans. Americans celebrate Thanksgiving to remember all we have to be thankful for: the beautiful country we live in, the food that keeps us healthy and strong, and the friends that help us feel safe and comfortable in our homes.



My Thanksgiving Feast

Below is a picture of foods the Pilgrims and Native Americans ate at the first Thanksgiving. Help your child identify these foods. Then, ask your child to draw a Thanksgiving feast with foods he/she would like to eat. Discuss similarities and differences between your child's food choices and the food eaten at the first Thanksgiving.



Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King

Remind your child that long ago, Martin Luther King Jr. made a famous speech that said, "I have a dream."

His dream was that all children would "walk together as sisters and brothers" and could be friends and go to school together.

Help your student complete the sentence summarizing Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream. Write the words your student says below, then read them to your student, sliding your finger under the words as you read.



I have a dream that one day...



Dear Family Member,

Your child is learning about Barack Obama during African American history month. Read the story below with your child to help him/her remember what s/he learned about Barack Obama in school. You might also talk with your child about the important things the president does as the leader of our country.



Important People in American History: Barack Obama



Our country, the United States of America, has had many presidents. The forty-fourth president of the United States is Barack Hussein Obama.

When President Obama became president, he and his family moved into a big, fancy house in Washington, D.C., called the White House. The White House is different from most houses because it is not only a place to live, but it is also a place to work. In one part of the White House there are rooms where the Obama family sleeps, gets dressed, and eats their meals, just like you do in your house.





But another part of the White House is an office building where lots of busy people come to do hard work every day. President Obama has an office with a big desk where he can read and sign important papers. He also has a phone so that he can talk to important people from all around the world. Since President Obama's office is in the White House where his family lives, his daughters, Malia and Sasha, can visit him when they get home from school.

President Obama once told Malia and Sasha that he knew their lives were wonderful in many ways. He also told them he wanted every child in the United States of America to have a wonderful life just like theirs. Barack Obama said that he was going to work long and hard to make the United States a better place to live so that all children would have the chance to “learn and dream and grow.”

President Obama talked to the people of the United States and told them the same thing he told his daughters. He said he wanted everyone in the United States to have a chance to go to a good school, to learn how to read and write, and to have a good life in the United States.



Dear Family Member,

Your child is learning about Abraham Lincoln because it is Presidents' Day. Read the story below with your child to help him/her remember what s/he learned about Abraham Lincoln in school. Using the illustrations on this page, encourage your child to retell the story about Abraham Lincoln borrowing his neighbor's book. You might also talk with your child about what it means to be honest. Remind your child that Abraham Lincoln's nickname was "Honest Abe."



Important People in American History: Abraham Lincoln



Long, long ago, long before your mother and father were born, and even long before your grandparents were born, almost two hundred years ago—a boy named Abraham Lincoln grew up in the United States of America. People called him by his nickname: "Abe." When Abe was a young boy, he lived with his family far out in the country in a log cabin. Abe's family had to work hard all day long. Abe had so many chores to do, that he did not have time to go to school.

But Abe wanted to learn all kinds of things. So every night, he would read many books. In those days, no one had electric lights that you could turn on after dark. So after dark, in order to read, Abe Lincoln sat next to the fireplace. The light from the fire helped him see the words on the pages of the books that he was reading.





Abe wanted to read more, so he borrowed a book from a man who lived nearby. One night a big thunderstorm came by, and rain leaked in through the roof of Abe's cabin. The book he had borrowed from his neighbor got soaking wet! The pages were stuck together and it was hard to read the words. The book was ruined.



Abe felt terrible. He bravely carried the ruined book back and showed it to the man he had borrowed it from. Abe knew the book was very important to the man and he felt badly that it was ruined. He agreed to work on his neighbor's farm for three days in order to pay for the book that had been ruined. Abe proved that he was an honest boy and a hard worker.

As Abraham Lincoln grew up, more and more people saw how honest and hard working he was. They called him "Honest Abe." They trusted him so much that they chose him to be president of the United States of America. He was our sixteenth president.



Dear Family Member,

Your child is learning about Sally Ride because it is Women's History Month. Read the story below with your child to help him/her remember what s/he learned in school. You might also watch the night sky your child. Go outside and look at the stars and moon together and talk about what you see.



Important People in American History: Sally Ride

This is a true story about Sally Ride, who became famous as the first American woman to travel into space. She was a scientist and an astronaut.



Sally Ride loved playing sports, like tennis and football. She enjoyed doing her schoolwork and learned as much as she could about science. When she was a little girl, she watched rockets launch into space on TV. She thought it was really exciting to see astronauts go into space. Those lucky people got to fly higher into the sky than anyone had ever been before!



Sally Ride worked hard in school. She learned about how machines like cars and rockets work. She decided she wanted to be an astronaut and fly into space. People said to her, "Sally, it's really hard to be an astronaut." And she answered, "Just you see. I am going to be an astronaut."



When she was finished going to school, Sally got a job as an American astronaut.

Sally Ride became a member of a team of astronauts. These astronauts all worked together to fly a big space ship called the space shuttle high up into the sky, higher than any airplane could fly.

On launch day, Sally and the other astronauts put on their space suits and got ready to go into space. They heard the countdown. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, blast off! The space shuttle blasted into space.

Sally learned that life is different for astronauts living in a space ship high up in the sky. She wore a special space suit. She ate special food. Her body floated in the air, even inside the space ship! When their work was done, Sally Ride and the astronauts drove the space shuttle carefully down out of the sky and landed back on Earth again.

Many years later, Sally Ride still

remembered her first trip into space. She remembered when the rocket blasted off. "There is so much power; there is so much thunder," she said. She remembered looking out the window. "I saw the blackness of space, and then the bright blue Earth," she said. Every chance she could, she shared the excitement of science and space with kids. She wanted everyone, girls and boys, to know that they could become scientists and astronauts if they wanted to be.



Dear Family Member,

Your child is learning about Sonia Sotomayor because it is Women's History Month. Read the story below with your child to help him/her remember what s/he learned in school. You might also talk about what languages people in your family can speak since Sonia was bilingual and speaks both English and Spanish.



Important People in American History: Sonia Sotomayor

When Sonia Sotomayor was a little girl, she lived in the Bronx in New York. Everyone in her family spoke Spanish, but everyone in her school spoke English! She had to learn quickly to speak English, even though she still spoke Spanish at home every day. Sonia Sotomayor was proud to be a bilingual student.



As a child, Sonia's mother told her that if she worked hard in school, she could be anything she wanted to be. "I don't care what work you do when you grow up," her mother said. "Just do it well."



Sonia Sotomayor went to school for many years so that she could become a judge. After many years of studying and working hard, Sonia Sotomayor finally became a judge. When Judge Sotomayor would come into the courtroom, someone would call out, "Order in the court! All Rise! Judge Sotomayor is here." Everyone would stand up and listen to what Judge Sotomayor had to say.



Sonia Sotomayor was a smart and helpful judge. She was so good at her job as a judge that President Obama asked her to become a justice on the Supreme Court of the United States of America. Now Sonia Sotomayor goes to work every day at the Supreme Court. She puts on her black robe, and everyone calls her Justice Sotomayor. She knows all about the laws, or rules, that people in the United States have to follow. Her job is to think about the best way to help people obey those laws. A judge in the Supreme Court is called a justice, so she is called Justice Sotomayor.



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