



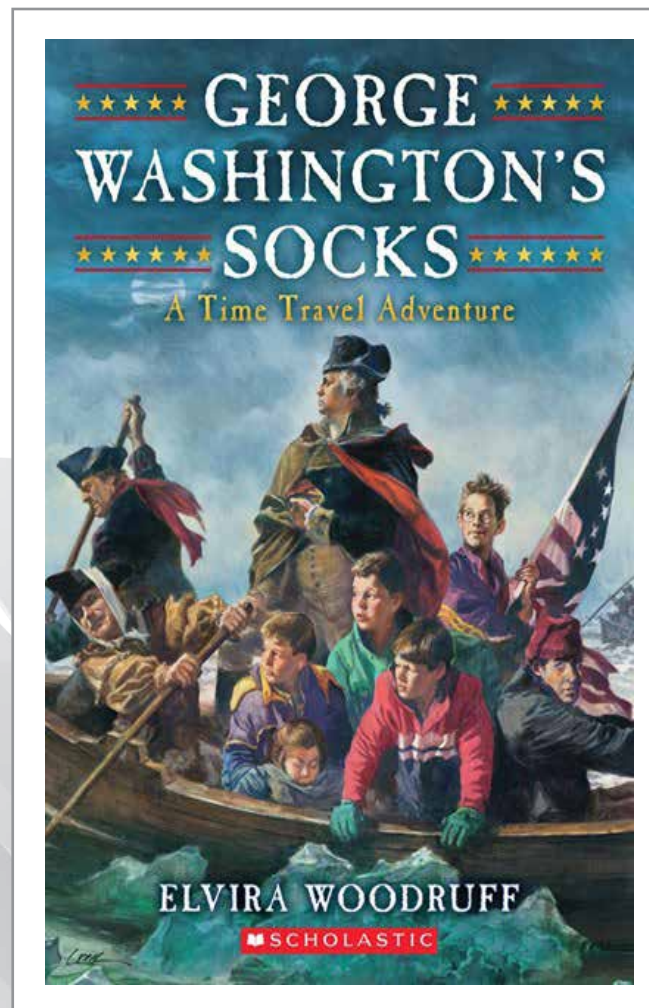
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

George Washington's Socks

Elvira Woodruff



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

George Washington's Socks

Elvira Woodruff

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, predicting, inferring, supporting judgments, cause/effect

Writing

Creative writing, personal narrative, letter, poem, journalism

Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, analysis, compare/contrast, fact/opinion

Vocabulary

Definitions, target words, synonyms/antonyms, homophones, root words

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, dramatization, oral presentation

Literary Elements

Characterization, setting, conflict, theme, dialogue, author's purpose, point of view

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—culture, history, Revolutionary War, recipes, currency, maps and geography; Science—time travel, moon phases, survival; Health—fire safety, frostbite; Music—drums; Art—design, time line, illustration, models

Genre: historical fiction; fantasy

Setting: present-day Rumson, Nebraska; 1776 Delaware River, New Jersey

Point of View: third person

Themes: war, courage, leadership, freedom, adventure, friendship, death

Conflict: person vs. nature, person vs. society, person vs. person, person vs. self

Tone: informational, sincere, humorous

Date of First Publication: 1991

Summary

The Adventure Club's first camp-out turns into more of an adventure than Matt, Q, Hooter, Tony, and Katie had planned when a mysterious rowboat transports them back in time to 1776. They meet George Washington and the Continental Army crossing the Delaware River on the way to the Battle of Trenton. As leader of the Adventure Club, Matt takes responsibility for getting everyone home safely, but first they must survive freezing temperatures, a midnight march, Indian scouts, Hessian soldiers, and the horrors of war. They discover being involved in the Revolutionary War is a lot different than reading about the war in textbooks. Matt finds his own strength after witnessing Washington's leadership and the soldiers' courage—on both sides. Once they are safe at home, everyone realizes that living in his or her own time is best, though Matt hopes the other Adventure Club members will soon be ready for another time-travel adventure.

About the Author

Elvira Woodruff was born and raised in New Jersey. She attended Adelphi University and then Boston University, majoring in English Literature, until she quit school at age 19—too restless to sit in a classroom. For 15 years, she held a variety of jobs, including janitor, gardener, ice-cream truck driver, window-dresser, and storyteller in a library, before becoming a writer with the guidance of her cousin, children's author and illustrator Frank Asch. Between writing, speaking in schools about creative writing, and traveling for research, Woodruff keeps her restlessness under control. She says, "This business of writing could never be boring because each story that I slip myself into is a new adventure." Woodruff has won awards and honors for her picture books and middle-grade novels. Her sons Noah and Jess illustrated her book *Dear Napoleon, I Know You're Dead, But...*

Background Information

The battle at Trenton resulted in a monumental victory, a turning point in the American Revolution. The victory at Trenton, combined with the crossing of the Delaware River and the victory at Princeton nine days later, drastically improved American morale and provided new energy to the American cause. Soldiers who could have gone home at the end of December re-enlisted. The victory also erased any doubt in George Washington's leadership abilities and guaranteed his place in history.

The cover of *George Washington's Socks* is based on the famous painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* by Emanuel Leutze. The German artist, known for combining political messages with his art, did not intend for the painting to be an accurate record of history, and historians fault

his details. The flag should be the “Grand Union” flag or a regimental flag, not the Betsy Ross “Stars and Stripes” version, which didn’t exist at the time of the Delaware crossing. Washington would not have risked standing in the boat depicted (as Katie discovers in *George Washington’s Socks*); however, Washington, as well as his troops, would have no choice but to stand in the high-sided but seatless Durham boats used in the crossing (also not shown in the painting). The ice floe chunks resemble those of Germany’s Rhine River, not the Delaware River. Also debated is whether the soldier carrying the flag is future President James Monroe, who was present at the crossing, and whether the black rower is Prince Whipple, an African-American slave who served in the Revolution. Washington is portrayed as older, more like he looked as President, than the middle-aged man he was in 1776. Despite the inaccuracies, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* became an iconic image, a patriotic symbol of an important event in the fight for American independence.

Characters

Matthew Carlton: leader and president of the Adventure Club; participates in the march to Trenton and befriends Israel Gates

Katie Carlton: Matt’s seven-year-old sister; rescued by George Washington

Tony: scout of the Adventure Club; short and cautious

Q (Quentin): brain of the Adventure Club; collects historical items

Hooter (Brian Melrose): muscle of the Adventure Club; sensitive, trusting

Mr. and Mrs. Carlton: Matt and Katie’s parents

Israel Gates: rebel soldier; Matt’s friend

George Washington: general and leader of the Continental Troops

Nathan and Temperance Hornbee: farmers; patriots

Henry Schudder: 13-year-old drummer

Two Indian boys: guides for the Adventure Club

Gustav: Hessian soldier

Corporal Adam Hibbs: grandson of Adam Hibbs, the missing friend of Tony’s grandfather

Initiating Activities

1. **Prior Knowledge:** Discuss with students what they know about George Washington. Have students record their responses in the “K” column of their KWL charts (see page 22 of this guide). As a class, complete the “W” column of the charts with what students would like to know about Washington from reading the novel and through additional research. The “L” column will be completed after reading the novel to record what students have learned.
2. **Geography:** Provide maps of the United States and New Jersey. Have students locate the 13 original colonies and the area shown on the map at the beginning of the novel.
3. **History:** Review the Revolutionary War Concept Map on page 23 of this guide. Students should complete the first activity, creating a time line of the events leading up to the war, and then discuss in class. Students can complete the other activities as part of the end-of-book assessment.
4. **Predictions:** Have students examine the jacket cover and then predict how the title will apply to the story. Students should begin the Prediction Chart on page 24 of this guide.

Chapters One–Three

Matt can't wait to get to the first meeting of the Adventure Club even though he has to bring his little sister Katie. At club meetings, Matt and his friends—Tony, Hooter, and Q—read about real adventures from *Great Adventures in History*. The first night's adventure is about George Washington's troops crossing the Delaware River. At the camp-out in Tony's backyard, Katie embarrasses the boys, asking when the adventure starts. Matt decides the club should have adventures as well as read about them. He talks the club members into a night hike through the woods to the lake.

Vocabulary

stole
suppress
desperate
smugly
rebel
bayonet
defeat
verge
abnormal
muster
charter
adventurous
array
arsenal

Discussion Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Adventure Club? Would you like to join a similar club? (*to read and talk about real adventures that people had throughout history; Answers will vary.*)
2. Why does Matt invite Katie to the camp-out? (*so Katie won't tell their parents that Matt hid his peas in the sugar bowl*)
3. Why is Hooter confused when Matt starts reading? (*Hooter knows Americans won the War for Independence, so it doesn't make sense to him when Matt reads about the losses suffered by the rebel army and how the American cause was almost lost.*)
4. Why does Matt say the crossing of the Delaware River is an incredible adventure? What obstacles did George Washington face? (*With the American Army "on the verge of collapse" [p. 7], the crossing of the Delaware and triumph at Trenton provides a victory that turns the tide in America's favor; food and supply shortages, divided loyalties, spies, ill-trained and inexperienced soldiers, and the harshest winter weather*)
5. Who are the members of the Adventure Club? Explain each member's job and why he is assigned that job. (*Matt, president because starting the club was his idea; Tony, scout because he is small enough to check things out without being seen; Q, the brain because he has "the fastest brain in the fifth grade" [p. 9]; Hooter, strong man because he is big; Hooter is also in charge of any stray baby animals because of his soft heart.*)
6. Why is Katie disappointed with the club? Why does this embarrass the boys? (*Katie thought they would be going on an adventure. The boys realize camping in Tony's backyard isn't adventurous.*)
7. Where did the Adventure Club first plan to camp out? Why did they choose this place? Do you think Katie would be disappointed with the club if parents had not changed the original plans? (*along the lake; to be like Washington and his troops along the Delaware River; Answers will vary.*)
8. Review how each character responds to Matt's suggestion of a night hike to the lake. Which character's response is most like what yours would be? (*Answers will vary.*)
9. **Prediction:** How will Katie cause trouble for the boys?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Literary Analysis:** Begin the Story Map on page 25 of this guide. Add to the map as you read the novel.

2. Brainstorming: Write “Leadership Characteristics” in the center of a poster board. As a class, list characteristics and motivation needed to be a leader. Display the poster in class for the duration of the novel.
3. Creative Writing: On page two of the novel, Matt says he would rather face a bloodthirsty vampire or a wild cat than eat peas. Write a poem titled “An Adventure in Eating” about a situation that is preferable to eating a dreaded food.
4. Health: Tony’s dad lectures the Adventure Club on fire safety. Create a fire preparedness video. Show how to avoid fires and what to do during a fire.

Chapters Four–Six

Walking through the woods, Tony tells the Adventure Club about the legend of Lake Levart, where Tony’s grandfather saw his boyhood friend Adam Hibbs vanish. Since then, Tony’s grandfather has investigated other disappearances and heard fantastic stories told by people who have returned. Each had gone onto the lake in a mysterious rowboat when there was a three-quarter moon. The children notice that such a moon hangs over them as they walk through the woods. The boys lose Katie only to find her climbing into an old rowboat. Matt knows he should run away, but he and the others are drawn to the boat. When they join Katie, the boat moves into the lake and mist envelops them. Suddenly the Adventure Club is on a roaring river surrounded by ice. The Adventure Club is terrified when Katie falls overboard. They find an inscription in the boat that reads “Emit Levart.”

Vocabulary
legend
fantastic
canteen
batty
comrades
eerie
transfixed
hoisting
vessel
mistrust
trance
feeble
veered
abrupt
floes
paralyzed
console

Discussion Questions

1. What is the legend of the lake? How does it change some people? *(People disappear after going out on a rowboat when there is a three-quarter moon. People who disappear and return aren’t the same; they tell fantastic stories and sit and stare at the lake.)*
2. Why is Tony’s grandfather interested in the legend of the lake? How many mysterious disappearances has he investigated in 50 years? *(When he was a boy, Grandpa saw his friend Adam Hibbs disappear on the lake; five after Adam)*
3. Why do Matt and Q both think losing Katie is their own fault? Whose fault do you think it is? *(Matt thinks he shouldn’t have let go of Katie’s hand, and as president of the club, he shouldn’t have let Katie come along. Q says Katie put her marshmallows down to help him. Answers will vary but could include whether Katie is old enough to know better than to leave the boys.)*
4. What does Matt feel when he nears the rowboat? *(Matt feels wonder and terror; he knows the boat is powerful and dangerous, yet he is drawn to it. He also feels a strong sense of responsibility to rescue his sister.)*
5. What happens when the Adventure Club members board the rowboat? What is different after the boat’s spell is broken? *(Their fear leaves them, and they smile. The boat trembles, and a mist envelops them. The lake is now a roaring river with ice, and it is very cold.)*