# A Teacher's Guide to the DiMenna Children's History Museum

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 1: What Did You Do Last Halloween?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 2: Old Stuff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 3: Cornelia van Varick</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 4: Alexander Hamilton</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 5: James McCune Smith</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 6: Esteban Bellán</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 7: Newsies</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 8: Orphan Train Riders</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON 9: George Washington in New York</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANDARDS</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LESSON 1: What Did You Do Last Halloween?**
- Life Story: Cornelia van Varick, 1692?-1733
- Resource: The Inventory of Margrieta van Varick's Estate
- Resource: The Kast (Great Chest)

**LESSON 2: Old Stuff**
- Life Story: Alexander Hamilton, 1757?-1804
- Resource: Alexander Hamilton’s “Hurricane” Letter
- Resource: Money, Real and Fake

**LESSON 3: Cornelia van Varick**
- Life Story: Cornelia van Varick, 1692?-1733
- Resource: The Inventory of Margrieta van Varick’s Estate

**LESSON 4: Alexander Hamilton**
- Life Story: Alexander Hamilton, 1757?-1804
- Resource: Alexander Hamilton’s “Hurricane” Letter
- Resource: Money, Real and Fake

**LESSON 5: James McCune Smith**
- Life Story: James McCune Smith, 1813-1865
- Resource: Address to General Lafayette
- Resource: Dr. Smith: Open for Business

**LESSON 6: Esteban Bellán**
- Life Story: Esteban (Steve) Bellán, 1849-1932
- Resource: The Haymaker Nine
- Resource: Tabletop Baseball

**LESSON 7: Newsies**
- Life Story: Newsies, 1870-early 1900s
- Resource: A Place to Sleep
- Resource: Extra! Extra!

**LESSON 8: Orphan Train Riders**
- Life Story: Orphan Train Riders, 1854-1929
- Resource: Ready to Go
- Resource: Staying in Touch

**LESSON 9: George Washington in New York**
- Life Story: George Washington in New York, 1776-1790
- Resource: Taking the Oath
- Resource: The House on Cherry Street

**GLOSSARY**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**STANDARDS**
- Common Core State Standards in Reading
- Common Core State Standards in Writing
- New York State Standards in Social Studies
Dear Educator,

The New-York Historical Society is proud to present our groundbreaking new DiMenna Children’s History Museum (DCHM) and this collection of accompanying education materials. Designed for upper-elementary and middle-school students, the Children’s History Museum is an interactive educational center where children make discoveries about American history from the 17th century onward.

Students become history detectives in the DCHM, learning about events and people in history through inquiry and investigation, and using the tools of real historians to learn about the past. Biography-based pavilions present stories of New Yorkers in history, with an emphasis on their formative years—childhood through young adult—to give young visitors a captivating introduction to the history of New York City and the nation.

The content, lesson plans, and primary resources in these materials were compiled for use by both teachers and students, and follow the structure of the museum. The first two lessons provide a springboard for exploring history, followed by a lesson for each of the seven featured historical figures. All the lesson plans include innovative teaching strategies, Life Stories that introduce students to the individuals featured in the museum and primary resources and background information that illuminate what life was like at different moments in our history.

The Education Division of the New-York Historical Society is committed to providing valuable history-based materials and programming to enhance learning for both teachers and students. This collection of materials has been designed both to complement and enhance school visits to the exhibition and to help teachers and students from across the country bring history to life in their classrooms.

To learn more about school programs designed for the DiMenna Children’s History Museum and all education programs at the New-York Historical Society, contact us at (212) 485-9293 or visit the Education Division online at www.nyhistory.org/education.

Sincerely,

Louise Mirrer, Ph.D.
President and CEO
New-York Historical Society
The DiMenna Children’s History Museum is a unique opportunity for children, families, and educators to discover New York and American history through the eyes and lives of children. This unprecedented museum would not have been possible without the leadership and vision of Dr. Louise Mirrer, President and CEO; Roger Hertog, Chairman, New-York Historical Society Board the Trustees and all the Trustees; and the extraordinary generosity of Diana and Joseph DiMenna.

We extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed to its development and wish particularly to thank those listed below for their dedication and commitment to bringing it to fruition. Special thanks go to the Education Division, led by Dr. Sharon Dunn and to Marjorie Waters, Maggie Chang, and Paul Rosenthal whose combined efforts yielded a child-friendly, intellectually stimulating experience for young visitors. We also are grateful to Lee A. Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership for their beautiful design and to Unified Field for their inventive and educational media interactives. Thanks also to Pam Pollack for the beautifully designed educational materials.

All of the individuals listed below played an extraordinary role in making this museum possible. We are proud to share this experience with our audience.

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A Teacher’s Guide to the DiMenna Children’s History Museum • 3
Introduction

The DiMenna Children’s History Museum is a permanent museum within a museum devoted to the interests, needs, and ability levels of children ages 8–13, and to the requirements of upper elementary and middle school teachers for teaching New York and American History. Occupying the entire lower level of the New-York Historical Society, the museum offers a captivating introduction to history through the eyes and experiences of children who lived in the past. Young visitors and their adult companions interact with a broad selection of videos, games, maps, touch objects, and media pieces to build their understanding of events and eras of the past. The museum is solidly grounded in scholarship and pedagogy, but it is also fun.

In the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, visitors are encouraged to think like history detectives and explore a number of different pavilions described below. Each has its own focus or theme, which can be experienced in any number of ways. There is no structured pathway through the museum. It is designed for exploration and discovery. Following is a brief description of the exhibition pavilions visitors will encounter.

HISTORY DETECTIVES

The History Detectives pavilion explores a basic question: How do we know what we know about the past? There are two major parts of the pavilion. One is focused on the 1696 estate inventory of Margrieta van Varick (mother of Cornelia, who is the subject of another pavilion). The other explores a cross-section of a recent privy excavation in lower Manhattan, and shows how stories can be teased from old objects.

This pavilion introduces the idea of history as detective work, which is the major theme running through the museum. It also introduces the silhouetted figures of children holding magnifying glasses who signal interesting “history detective” questions at various locations in the gallery.

AMERICAN DREAMERS

This engaging photo gallery combines images of New Yorkers from the past—well-known and obscure—with easily recognized people today. Young visitors can snap their own pictures in the photo booth and add the occupation they hope to have when they’re grown up.

GEORGE WASHINGTON IN NEW YORK

New York City was the nation’s first capital and the site of the first presidential inauguration. Standing near a replica of Federal Hall’s frontage on Wall Street, visitors enter the time and place of George Washington’s first swearing-in. They admire a painting showing the beautiful wrought-iron balustrade where he stood in full view of the crowds below, and recite the dramatically brief oath of office that the U.S. Constitution requires of incoming presidents.

“Cast Your Vote” is a related interactive in which visitors watch the growth of U.S. suffrage over time, learning who was and was not allowed to vote in different elections.

HISTORICAL VIEWFINDER

Visitors can peer through an engaging viewfinder and see a large digital selection of then-and-now photographs (and some prints) of selected locations in the five boroughs. Brighton Beach, City Island, Battery Park, Flushing Meadows, and Sandy Ground, among many others, show dramatic changes from past to present.

The Personal Narrative Pavilions

Six pavilions form the heart of the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, each devoted to a person or a group of people representing a particular time in history. Spanning two centuries and a wide range of experiences, the pavilions are constructed to tell two stories, one focused on New York City, and the other on broader national and even global themes directly related to the local story. But, most important for young visitors, the personal narrative pavilions present history as a human story that begins in childhood.

CORNELIA VAN VARICK

Cornelia van Varick was a Dutch girl who lived in Flatbush, Brooklyn, around 1700. A great deal is known about her household and family because when her widowed mother died, executors compiled an estate inventory that still survives. It lists every item in the family’s home and in the store that Cornelia’s mother, Margrieta, operated from a room in the house. (Visitors can explore the inventory at the History Detectives pavilion.) The inventory provides an unusual window into the life of a wealthy family in Dutch New York.

In the Van Varicks’ time, New York was a surprisingly worldly place, connected by trade to far-off corners of the globe. A large interactive map allows children to follow the trade routes that connected Margrieta’s Brooklyn store to London, Amsterdam, the West Indies, Africa, and Asia.
ALEXANDER HAMILTON
A virtual orphan in the Caribbean, Alexander Hamilton used his intelligence and determination to start a new life in New York City. Visitors enter Hamilton’s “study,” and explore his personal and professional life, including an interactive station where they can read and decode the first issue of the Federalist Papers. A social-media-type installation, called Federalbook, engages today’s visitors in Hamilton’s personal side (his likes, hobbies, etc.) as well as his social and political circle—both his friends and his enemies.

The “nation” side of the pavilion uses Hamilton’s role as the first secretary of the treasury to consider the early days of the United States, when survival, even in the short run, demanded a staggering number of good decisions on questions of enormous importance. Hamilton is responsible for, among other features of the financial system, the currency and banking system we use today.

JAMES MCCUNE SMITH
James McCune Smith, later a brilliant doctor and abolitionist, was a student at the African Free School in 1824. The son of a black woman and an unknown white man, Smith was almost certainly the star of his class. Later, he studied medicine in Glasgow, Scotland, after he was denied admission to two medical schools in the United States because of his race. He was the first university-trained black doctor in America.

The “nation” area introduces visitors to the lives of shockingly young children who worked in factories, in tenement kitchens, in mines, and elsewhere. Focused on the photographs taken by Lewis Hine for the National Child Labor Committee in the early 1900s, this area invites visitors to consider what it meant to be a young worker when protective child labor laws were not yet in place.

ESTEBAN (STEVE) BELLÁN
When Esteban Bellán was a young Cuban student at St. John’s College (now Fordham) in the 1860s, he was introduced to the game of baseball, discovering both a talent and a career. He Americanized his name, and as Steve Bellán became the first Latin American to play professional baseball. After a few years here, he returned to Cuba and helped establish the game in his homeland.

In this pavilion, children and adults explore the world of baseball today, a story with national and international scale.

NEWSIES
Newsies were poor, often abandoned, sometimes immigrant children who sold newspapers on New York City streets in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Visitors meet some of the boys (and occasional girls) who worked as newsies, and explore the 1899 strike in which the newsies brought two New York newspapers almost to a standstill.

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THE ORPHAN TRAIN
Here visitors engage in a pivotal moment in the lives of poor, young, New York orphans who were transported from East Coast cities to new lives, mostly in rural America, beginning in the mid-1800s. Considered the nation’s first foster care program, the orphan train relocated many thousands of children over its 75-year history. The results were mixed. For some, the story ended happily, but others were treated as little more than servants.

On the “nation” side, visitors use a large U.S. map interactive to follow the lives of several children who rode the orphan train. In the process, they will see something of what America was like, far from the crowded neighborhoods of New York.

The Whiz Bang Quiz Machine
Visitors can end their tour with a stop at a game that helps them use what they’ve learned in the museum. Designed to accommodate a range of ages, this interactive experience works for both children and adults. (Visitors may also explore this game at the beginning of their visit, and use it to focus their attention as they move from area to area to find answers.)

The Barbara K. Lipman Children’s History Library
The library is a large, multipurpose space where students can read on their own, listen to a story in the comfortable class-size seating area, explore digital maps and old books, and examine carefully assembled collections of items from the New-York Historical Society. It’s also the setting for a story hour every Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m.
**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

By focusing on a recent event in their own lives, students will understand that history is a process of discovery and that historians work from evidence.

**MATERIALS**

- Writing or drawing materials
- Photos and other materials gathered during the activity

**ACTIVITIES**

This lesson is built around children’s passion for Halloween, but you should feel free to establish a different focus question if it would work better for your students (e.g., What did you do on your last birthday?). However, it should be a discreet event, and either recent or very memorable to a child.

- Ask children to answer the question as well as they can from their own memory alone, and to write down or draw what they remember. They should keep track of details they can’t remember as well in the form of questions.

- Students can fold a page in their notebooks into three columns. Label the first column “Memory,” the second one “Evidence,” and the third “Witness Statements,” or give them similar headings.

- Introduce the idea of evidence as information or clues that can contribute to a picture of what happened. Police detectives look for evidence like fingerprints on a doorknob or blood stains on a carpet. History detectives look for evidence in eyewitness accounts, documents, photographs, and objects.

- When the students have done all they can from their own memories, have them talk with other people who were part of the event, such as friends, siblings, parents, teachers—anyone who can supply memories that add details to the student’s story or drawing. They should be people who played a direct role themselves (as in “eyewitnesses”).

- The next step is to move beyond what people remember. Students might look for photographs of the event, or leftover fabric from their costume (or the whole costume!), or emails their grandparents sent them, or postings on their Facebook page. Part of the task here is to think of where the evidence might be, and then to find it.

- After collecting the evidence, students can start to look at it to see what they can learn, and build the most complete story or picture they can, describing or drawing the memories, physical evidence, and witness statements they used to help them recall the event as accurately as possible.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Ask students, as a class or in small groups, to think about what they learned, and how they learned it. For example:

- How did your memory compare with your other evidence?
- How much evidence were you able to find?
- What does each piece of evidence contribute to the picture?
- Did all the sources agree? What if your best friend thinks you dressed as a giraffe, and you are sure you were a pirate, but there’s a picture of somebody (maybe you?) in a werewolf costume? Can you figure out which version is correct?
- Are there questions you can’t answer, even after all your research? Can you think of any way to answer them? Unanswered questions are really important in history, so make sure you keep track of them.
- What if the original question had been: What did you do on Halloween three years ago? Or, what did your parents do on Halloween when they were kids? Where would you look for answers?

Students should then write an account of what they did last Halloween based on all the evidence they’ve collected and include images to support their work. In other words, they should do what historians do. Alternatively, they can create a collage of the materials and information they collected and write a text panel to describe their event and how they figured it out.

The teacher can create a class display of the students’ collective work—similar to an exhibition pavilion in the DCHM.

**LEARNING OUTCOME**

Students will be able to complete an essay or image that demonstrates their understanding of how evidence is used to learn about the past.

**FOLLOW-UP**

At the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, visit the History Detective pavilion and let your students watch the video interviews of historians describing their work. Listen as they explain how they work from evidence to build an understanding of the past.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that by examining old objects they are analyzing a special and important kind of evidence that can inform them about the past.

MATERIALS

- A collection of 10 or more old objects (see below)
- Blank DCHM Object Forms, printed out
- Rulers or measuring tape
- Camera or drawing equipment

ACTIVITIES

Begin by presenting students with a box of old objects. They could be things you find in a second-hand store, or old things you have at home or in the school. Functional objects, and those with moving parts, will probably be the most interesting to work with—things like staplers, woodworking clamps, manual can openers, door hinges, old toys. The collection should include a few items students will recognize, and some they probably won’t. It’s okay if some are broken, or if pieces are missing, but the object should be complete enough for students to explore, and it should look old. (You might also want to ask your students to bring in items from home.)

Students should work three or four to a group, and select (or be given) one object to work with.

Give all students a chance to explore and hold the object. Let them speculate about what it is, how it worked, when it was made, etc.

Hand out a blank Object Form and a ruler or measuring tape to each group, and ask group members to work together to fill in the form. They should use a question mark to show good educated guesses, but the information they put on the form should not include wild stabs. If they are pretty sure the item is an old roller skate, they can write “roller skate?” But if they have no clue at all, they should enter “unknown.”

You may want to suggest limited use of the Internet if a group is stuck. But this activity is about discovering as much as possible from the item by looking at it closely.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When the forms are completed, bring the class back together and ask each group to describe its object, what they were able to learn, and any questions they can’t answer.

Take advantage of what all the groups learned, and allow all the students to speculate about different items. Make sure any unanswered questions are treated as possible outcomes of this exercise; they are a constant in all historical research. Historians never have answers to all their questions.

By definition, objects are things people made and used. Ask students to take a step back and think about what the object tells them about the past.

- Who would have needed an object like this?
- What would they have done with it?
- What does it tell you about their lives or times?
- Do people today use things like this?
- Do they use different tools to accomplish the same task?

LEARNING OUTCOME

Students will be able to explain how studying an object from the past can help us understand the way people lived.

FOLLOW-UP

The Henry Luce III Center for the Study of American Culture, on the New-York Historical Society’s fourth floor, is filled with historic objects, from works of art to ordinary things used by people in the past. A visit by your students would allow them to look for something similar to the object they studied. Encourage your students to also look for objects that might be related, or that are simply interesting or perplexing. This could be the springboard to your next object-based activity.

Your students can also visit the New-York Historical Society’s emuseum, the online catalog of artifacts and works of art at emuseum.nyhistory.org. They can search by key word or phrase (like apple parer) to see information about all the items in that category. They can also search by object number (like 1950.4), which is included in the credit lines within this curriculum. The object number will take them to a catalog entry for a single item. Many emuseum items are also on display in the Luce Center. (Items in the Society’s Library and Print Room are not available digitally.)
**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

Students will understand that even as early as 1700, New York was connected by trade to the rest of the world.

**MATERIALS**

- Life Story: Cornelia van Varick
- Classroom Resource: The Inventory of Margrieta van Varick’s Estate
- Classroom Resource: The Kast (Great Chest)
- Map of present-day Brooklyn

**ACTIVITIES**

### The Inventory of Margrieta van Varick’s Estate

Begin by presenting the life story of Cornelia van Varick, which will introduce students to a wealthy Dutch family who lived in Brooklyn around 1700. Allow students some time to discuss the family’s life and find the locations mentioned on a map of Brooklyn today. This will give students a foundation for looking at the two primary resources, the Inventory and the Kast.

Next, introduce the transcript of the inventory of Margrieta van Varick’s estate. (Margrieta was Cornelia’s mother.) These pages list some of the items Cornelia and her siblings inherited. The estate executors followed Margrieta’s wishes as she set them down in her will, but they added other items for each child as they worked to settle the estate. Then, they made a bundle for each child and wrapped it in a large piece of cloth. Explain that the complete inventory is much longer—a total of 18 pages, including many pages devoted to an item-by-item list of everything in Margrieta’s shop. So each Van Varick child inherited many more items than those listed on these two pages, but since these items were “lockt up,” they may have been the most prized family possessions. All the other items for the children were stored in “great close baskets.”

Note: In addition to copies of the original inventory, two transcriptions are provided. One is a direct transcription with original spelling and punctuation, and the other is a modern English version. Students should use the glossary to find definitions of unfamiliar words.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What kinds of things were left to the girls, Johanna and Cornelia?
- To the boys, Marinus and Rudolphus?
- Which items would the children have to wait to be grown up to use?
- Does it seem that Margrieta treated her four children fairly?
- What surprised you most about the list?

### The Kast (Great Chest)

Now introduce the photos of the kast. Make sure students understand that it was used by Dutch families like the Van Varicks instead of closets or chests of drawers.

The kast was a very large piece of furniture. To give students a sense of the scale, let them transfer the measurements to a wall of the classroom. If you want, they can try to draw the kast to scale on craft paper. This can be a rough outline just to show the scale, or it can be more detailed, using the photographs as a source. When you set up this activity, keep in mind that the kast is more than 7-feet tall and approximately as wide. Actual dimensions are 87 x 88.5 x 29 inches, height by width (at its widest), by depth.

- Ask students to use the classroom scale-drawing, photos, and resource description to write a description of the kast in as much detail as they can. They should think about its purpose, size, color, decorations, moving parts, exterior, and interior. (You may need to point out the large drawer on the bottom of the kast, and the two very shallow drawers under each shelf.)

- When you bring your class to the New-York Historical Society, they will be able to see this kast on display at the Luce Center, on the fourth floor. Ask them if seeing the piece “in person” changes their understanding of it. For example, they may have a very different sense of the kast’s drama and weight, and a new appreciation for what it meant to transport such a piece from Holland to Brooklyn on a Dutch sailing vessel. Let them make notes of details they hadn’t noticed in the photos, and later ask them to revise their descriptions.

Most families today are not as wealthy as the Van Varicks, but people still have items they prize—because they are old, or beautiful, or were given to them by someone special, or for other reasons.

- Ask students to write about something they or their families consider a prized possession. They should describe what it means to the family or individual owner, how it is stored or displayed, and how and when it is used. Let students use either fiction or nonfiction for this exercise.
LEARNING OUTCOME

Students will be able to explain the kinds of things New Yorkers used in 1700, and understand the links to people’s lives today.

FOLLOW-UP

Ask students to do a survey at home and make a list of where a few items were made. They should look in the labels of their clothes, on the bottoms of mugs, inside their sneakers, on appliances and electronic equipment. Collect all the information students find and chart it on a world map. At the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, ask students to compare their map with the one in the Cornelia van Varick pavilion titled “The World’s Riches Reach Margrieta’s Shop.” How different are the two maps? As an alternative, ask students to use the museum map to consider life in Cornelia’s time: If you lived then, how would you get cloves, or silk, or pepper?
LESSON 3: Life Story

Cornelia van Varick

1692?–1733

If you took a photograph of a certain Brooklyn intersection today, where Flatbush Avenue crosses Church Avenue, you would see a familiar city sight: cars and trucks at the stoplight, wide sidewalks, a crosswalk marked with white stripes, kids with backpacks and moms with strollers, a few stores, and on one corner a building with a tall, white steeple and a sign that reads "Flatbush Reformed Church.”

Now try to imagine the same corner more than 300 years ago. Erase the cars and trucks, and the paved roads and sidewalks, because they weren’t here in the 1690s. Erase the stoplight and the metal signs and street lights, which are all modern. Erase all the people wearing blue jeans and baseball caps, because no one dressed like that three centuries ago. Erase the church with the steeple, too, because it was built later. But save the sign, because there has been a Dutch Reformed Church on this corner since the 1650s. Add woods full of tall old trees, some dirt paths, a few houses, and a different building for worship. This one, small and made of wood, was the original church building. In 1686, Rudolphus van Varick came from Holland to become the minister here. He and his family lived next door in the parsonage, the house provided for them by the church. It was probably here that his daughter Cornelia was born around 1692.

Cornelia was the youngest of four. When she was born, her big sister, Johanna, was 10. Her brother Marinus was six. And Rudolphus, named for his father and closest in age to Cornelia, was two. The older children probably remembered the parsonage well. They would have remembered the room where their mother, Margrieta, operated her shop. It was filled with beautiful fabrics from Asia—Chinese silk, Indian cotton—as well as buttons and ribbons and thread, and lacquered boxes from Japan, and spices from Indonesia. Their mother may have sometimes asked them to sweep the floor, or spoon out cinnamon or cloves for customers, or neaten the shelves—there were over 2,000 items in this shop!

Cornelia probably did not have memories of the parsonage or the shop, or of her mother and father. By the time she was four, both parents had died and she had moved to Manhattan to live with Maria and Nicolas van Tienhoven. But she was still surrounded by her family. Maria was her grown cousin, and there were aunts and uncles nearby, along with her sister and brothers. Whenever parents died young, families stepped in to care for children. Maria herself had been raised by Margrieta, and now Maria and Nicolas would be the only parents Cornelia really knew.

But Cornelia certainly grew up hearing stories about her mother and father. She knew they were adventurous, that they had both traveled on big sailing ships to Asia and had met there, in the port of Malacca. She knew they were wealthy, that their house had been full of Asian luxuries. She knew many of these luxuries exactly, because they were hers now. Her mother had left a will that set aside the best items in the household for her children. After she died, officials arrived to make a list, called an inventory, of every single item in the house. This way they could keep track of everything and make sure Margrieta’s wishes were honored.

This is how we know that Cornelia grew up with 28 of the 80 or more small silver toys her mother had collected. Like other Dutch women, Margrieta may have had a doll house she furnished as a hobby, filling it with miniature silver plates and teapots and spinning wheels. But the Dutch also saw children as precious creatures who should be indulged, so she may have bought some of these toys for her sons and daughters to play with. Among the many other items Cornelia inherited were a Turkish carpet, ebony chairs, and gold jewelry set with diamonds. These were items of great value, but Margrieta also left her youngest child the kinds of everyday things young children become attached to, like a picture of a flower pot, a worn quilt, a homespun blanket.

Though she would have to wait to grow into them, Cornelia shared with Johanna their mother’s nightgowns, silk stockings, and...
Cornelia van Varick
1692?–1733
continued

In her will, Margrieta had set aside all the baby things she had accumulated, knowing her daughters would grow up and become mothers one day. There were children’s beds and linens, gloves, caps, bibs, pants, shoes, coats, and great quantities of what Margrieta called napkins. Cornelia would later put her share of these nursery items to good use. She married goldsmith Peter van Dyck and bore 12 children, who no doubt grew up playing with their grandmother’s tiny silver toys.


LESSON 3: Life Story
Cornelia van Varick
1692?–1733
continued

The Dutch had lost control of the city 20 years before Cornelia’s family arrived, but New York still felt Dutch when Cornelia was a girl. People still spoke the language and dressed in Dutch fashion. They celebrated Dutch holidays with their favorite treat, waffles sweetened with honey. Growing up in this familiar setting, Cornelia probably spent most of her days comfortably with Maria, who had no children of her own and whose husband was a ship’s captain often gone on long voyages. When she was old enough, Cornelia went to the school run by the Dutch Reformed Church, and she may have studied with an expert seamstress who taught her to sew, and to practice her needlework by making samplers that Maria would hang proudly on a wall.

petticoats, including one of white satin with gold flowers, as well as the family sheets, blankets, table cloths, and napkins, the best the world had to offer. Cornelia also inherited her mother’s slave, Bette, who was to stay with her until she turned 14. Slavery was a fact of life in many New York families, and Bette may have taken care of Cornelia from the time of her birth.
LESSON 3: Resource

The Inventory of Margrieta van Varick’s Estate

When Margrieta van Varick was ill in the fall of 1695, she wrote her will and spelled out exactly what she wanted to happen after she died. Her husband had died the year before, so she was most concerned with dividing the best of her possessions among her four children: Johanna, Marinus, Rudolphus, and Cornelia. She took four napkins and carefully wrapped some “silver plate rings” and jewels in each one. Then she listed other items she wanted each child to have. She said that anything left over should be sold, and the money used to support her children. She named three men as the “executors” who would carry out her wishes.

After Margrieta died, these three men—Nicholas Bayard, Charles Lodwick, and John Harperdingh—began their work. They carefully went through her house and the shop where she had sold imported fabrics, spices, and other luxuries from Asia. They made a document called an “inventory,” which they probably wrote in their native Dutch. (Records had to be filed in English, and today only the English translation survives.) In the first pages, they named the things each child would receive, adding some special items to Margrieta’s original list. They did as Margrieta had done and wrapped items for each child in napkins that they put in the great chest, called the kast. Then, they made a list of all the other items and what they were worth. They even counted small broken dishes. Their spelling is different from ours today, but it makes sense when it is read out loud. So “diamants” were diamonds, and “monny” was money.

The inventory is 18-pages (called “folios”) long. The first two pages are printed here, but the remaining pages named many other special items for each child.
When the Van Varicks lived in Flatbush, Brooklyn, houses did not have closets. Instead, Dutch families kept their most valuable things in a great wooden chest, or *kast* in Dutch. Many *kasten* (the Dutch plural for *kast*) were made in Holland, and were very beautiful. The *kast* was a sign of the family’s wealth, so it was often given a prominent spot in the home, where everyone would see it. For many families, it was probably the best piece of furniture they owned.

Historians know that the Van Varicks had a *kast*, because Margrieta’s will mentioned “three china pots which stand upon my kas.” Margrieta probably used her *kast* as a storage space for her best tablecloths and other valuables. After she died, the executors of her estate stored the things for the children “in the great chest, lockt up.” (In those days, furniture was often made with locks, because people did not trust their servants and slaves.)

None of Margrieta’s children inherited her *kast*. The executors said it was impossible to move from Flatbush. They did not say why, but maybe it was too large or fragile for a long journey over rutted dirt roads. It was sold, probably to someone nearby, for £25. (‘£’ is the symbol for the English pound, the currency used at the time because the English were in control of New York.) Was that a lot of money? Yes. The only item in the inventory that was worth more was 185 ounces of silver, valued at nearly £70.

So the *kast* in this photograph was not Margrieta’s. It belonged to another Dutch family who lived near the Van Varicks and also worshipped in the Dutch Reformed Church in Flatbush. It is now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society. A very large piece of furniture, it is 87 inches tall, 88.5 inches at its widest point, and 29 inches deep. It is made of several woods — walnut, ebony, elm, and oak. The keyhole is hidden within the vertical line of carving in the center of the *kast*. The bottom drawer could be locked and unlocked separately.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Students will understand the important role Alexander Hamilton played in the creation of the U.S. government and financial system.

MATERIALS
- Life Story: Alexander Hamilton
- Classroom Resource: Alexander Hamilton’s “Hurricane” Letter
- Classroom Resource: Money, Real and Fake

ACTIVITIES
The “Hurricane” Letter
Begin by presenting the life story of Alexander Hamilton, who grew up in difficult circumstances in the Caribbean, moved to New York as a teenager, became involved in politics, and ultimately served as the nation’s first treasury secretary. Ask students to use a map of the Western Hemisphere today to find the locations mentioned in the life story.

Next, introduce the “hurricane” letter, focusing on the paragraph about the storm.

- Ask children to make a timeline of the storm based on the descriptive paragraph. What happened, and at what time?
- Ask children to rewrite the description of the storm in their own words, and to try to capture the fear and drama Alexander was describing. Students may recall their own experiences with stormy weather.
- Explain that this may be the part of the letter that impressed those who read it, not simply because of the vocabulary, but because of the spiritual searching that seemed very grown-up.
- If you want to let your students explore the letter in more detail, focus on this sentence: “Oh! impotent presumptuous fool! how durst thou offend that Omnipotence, whose nod alone were sufficient to quell the destruction that hovers over thee, or crush thee into atoms?” Ask students to use a dictionary to see if they can decode it. You may need to tell students that Hamilton believed that God sent the hurricane to punish humanity for its arrogance. This sentence might be simplified in this way: “Oh, you weak fool. How dare you offend God, who could so easily either stop the hurricane or let it crush you?”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Now ask students to use the life story and the “hurricane” letter together to imagine the reaction among people who read the letter.

- Would people in St. Croix be surprised to learn that Hamilton had written the letter? Why or why not?
- Based on his background, what might they have thought about him before this letter was published?
- Why would some wealthy people in St. Croix decide to pay his way to New York for schooling? What did they believe about the ability of children to escape their past?

Money, Real and Fake
Begin by presenting the 1776 five-dollar bill from New York State. Explain that the bill was issued during the American Revolution, when New York was not yet a state, though it was hoping to be!

- Give students time to study the bill and understand that it was money issued in New York State, worth five “Spanish dollars.” (These were different from American dollars, which did not yet exist.)
- Direct students to the phrase “‘Tis Death to counterfeit,” on the back of the bill. Make sure they understand that “to counterfeit” means to make a fake bill and try to use it as a real one.
- Explain that counterfeits were a huge problem, and that states used elaborate pictures on the bills to make copying harder. Ask students to look at the complex designs on the bill.
Now introduce the counterfeit North Carolina pay certificate with “Counterfeit” written across the face.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- How different is this bill from the New York bill?
- What would have made it easier to try to copy?

Explain that security is still an issue—people still try to make counterfeit money. Direct students to [https://www.uscurrency.gov/denominations/5](https://www.uscurrency.gov/denominations/5) to see how the redesigned five-dollar bill is meant to make it harder to make a false copy. Ask them to see if they can find the security marks by holding a bill up to the light.

**LEARNING OUTCOME**

Students will understand and be able to discuss the circumstances of Alexander Hamilton’s life, and his contributions to the history of U.S. currency.

**FOLLOW-UP**

Compare the stories of Alexander Hamilton, James McCune Smith, and Esteban Bellán. Each is the focus of a pavilion in the DiMenna Children’s History Museum as well as a unit in this curriculum. All three could be called “boy wonders”: young men of remarkable intelligence or talent. How are their three stories similar? How are they different? Are there stories like these today? How do smart or talented young people today try to win recognition for their skills?

At the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, study the many kinds of money that were in circulation when Alexander Hamilton became treasury secretary. The New York State bill was just one of many currencies people used. It was a confusing picture that Hamilton needed to address. Visit “What’s in Store at the Store?” in the Cornelia van Varick pavilion to see how, even long before Hamilton, people had to keep track of many different currencies (and do a lot of math for every purchase!).
Alexander Hamilton was an American hero who was ashamed of his childhood. His mother had a bad reputation. She had been in prison and had abandoned her husband and child. She later lived with James Hamilton, but they were not married. People called Alexander and his brother names, even though none of this was their fault. The family lived on the island of Nevis in the Caribbean, because Alexander’s father, like most of the British people in the Caribbean, was involved in the sugar trade. All around them, far outnumbering the white people on the islands, were African slaves who grew and harvested the sugar. Some people may have been able to overlook the nightmare of the slaves’ lives, but Alexander was horrified by slavery and fought it all his life.

When Alexander was a boy, his father left the family for good. No one knows for sure how old he was at the time, because there are questions about his birth date. Alexander believed he was born in 1757, but there is a legal record that gives the date as 1755. Some historians believe one date, and some trust the other. In the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, and in this curriculum, 1757 is used with a question mark to show that it may not be right. If it is, Alexander was eight years old when his father left. His brother James was 12.

Needing to support her two sons, Alexander’s mother moved the family to the nearby island of St. Croix, and opened a small shop. Alexander could not attend a Church of England school because his parents were not married. But there were books in his home. They weren’t stories for children, but serious adult books: poetry, biography, religion. Alexander read and read, and used them to teach himself. (Imagine how hard that would be.)

When Alexander was 11, he and his mother both became ill with a fever that raged for days. He survived, but his mother did not. So Alexander Hamilton, the man whose face is now on ten-dollar bill, was then a boy with no father, no mother, and no money. Relatives who might have taken care of him and his brother also died. There was no choice but to go to work. He was given a job in the local office of the New York trading firm, Cruger and Beekman. He was told to keep paper work in order, make handwritten copies of documents, do the bookkeeping. He was a smart, ambitious boy, and the clerk’s job embarrassed him, but he later said it was the most useful part of his education, because he learned about trade. He learned how materials were grown and processed and shipped, how money was made and spent, how good business decisions were made, and he later put these lessons to important work.

When he was 15, Hamilton wrote a letter to his father that aimed his life in a new direction. He described a hurricane that had hit the island. He showed it to an editor who published it in the local newspaper. Some local businessmen were so impressed by this young writer that they donated money to help him go to New York City and enroll in King’s College (now Columbia University). Hamilton packed his bags and never looked back.

But he did not finish college. He had arrived in New York just as the colonists were moving toward revolution, and he was swept up in the fiery political atmosphere. He left school and joined the continental army. This time, Hamilton impressed General George Washington, and he spent most of the war as Washington’s aide-de-camp, his right-
Alexander Hamilton 1757?–1804
continued

hand man. He was 26 when the American Revolution ended. He had already lived a dramatic life, but he had not yet begun the work that would make him famous—helping to design the government of a new nation, the United States.

How do you do that? How do you go from fighting a war to making a country unlike any that has existed before? Hamilton, Washington, and other leaders knew that the constitution written during the war—called the Articles of Confederation—needed to be changed. It gave the states most of the power, and made the central government so weak it could not function. Hamilton took part in the convention that drafted a new constitution, and later he wrote most of the Federalist Papers to persuade the states to ratify it. When they did, George Washington became the nation’s first president, and he named Hamilton the first secretary of the treasury. He was now the second most powerful man in America.

It was not hard to see what the country’s financial problems were. We had debts we had to repay, especially to France and Spain, which had lent us money during the Revolution. Other countries would not trust us if we did not repay loans. The currency was a confused mess before the Revolution, and war made it worse. All sorts of money was in circulation, produced by foreign countries, states, and even private companies. Much of it was worthless or fake. If you needed to buy fabric for a new coat, paying a fair price was not easy for customer or shop-keeper. Trade was suffering, and as Hamilton had learned as a boy, trade was the key to a healthy economy.

Hamilton recognized that these financial problems were more than annoying; they threatened to bring this country to its knees. His genius was in seeing how to fix them, and persuading others to follow his suggestions. During his time as treasury secretary, he created a national bank so the country would have a place to keep its money, and a way to make loans and pay debts. He created a national currency, the same system we use today, and he established the U. S. Mint to manufacture our coins. He raised money by charging tariffs on imported goods, and taxing products made in this country. (Taxes are never popular. When Hamilton decided to tax whiskey, farmers rebelled, and soldiers were sent to restore order.)

Alexander Hamilton was secretary of the treasury from 1790 to 1795. When he resigned and left the capital, which was then Philadelphia, he returned to New York City and built a house where he lived with his wife and children. In 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr, a long-time political enemy, was enraged by a comment Hamilton made and challenged him to a duel. Hamilton was opposed to duels in principle, and his oldest son had died in one just three years earlier. But he felt honor-bound to meet Burr at the appointed place and time. Hamilton was shot and mortally wounded, and he died the next day. But the boy who had had such a rocky start in the Caribbean left a permanent legacy: the United States financial system, the one we still use today.

Alexander Hamilton was 15 when he wrote this letter about a fierce hurricane that struck his Caribbean island a week earlier. There were no nightly weather forecasts in 1772, so the storm blasted in without warning, and St. Croix was in the bull’s-eye. In the worst possible coincidence, an earthquake struck nearby the same day and probably sent a huge tidal wave washing over the islands. The Caribbean was accustomed to massive storms, but one witness reported that this was the “most dreadful hurricane known to the memory of man.”

Hamilton wrote the letter to his father, James, who had abandoned the family seven years earlier and lived on an island out of the storm’s path. Father and son never completely lost touch, but they were not close, and this is not a personal letter. Alexander addressed his father as “Honoured Sir,” and never asked how his father was getting along. He also did not describe his own experiences in the hurricane, or how he survived. Instead, he opened with a terrifying description of the storm, which he clearly had seen first-hand.

But most of the letter was about his “reflections and feelings.” Here the language became complicated and wordy. Hamilton struggled to understand why the storm had come. He believed God had sent it as punishment to human beings, whom he called “vile worms.” Today, the writing seems overdone, but when the letter appeared in the local newspaper, readers were stunned and impressed. It may have captured the way they felt themselves as they looked around their destroyed island. The letter was published anonymously, and everyone wondered who had written it, even the governor of the island. It prompted some wealthy men on St. Croix to learn Hamilton’s identity and raise enough money to pay for him to study in New York City. The hurricane letter became Alexander Hamilton’s ticket to another life.

No one knows how the letter arrived at the newspaper’s office to begin with. The editor said it came into his hands “by accident.” But Alexander may have given the letter to the editor, whom he knew. He may also have known that he had written something other people should see, even if he was too modest, as the editor put it, to submit it publicly.
These two bills are the ancestors of the dollars in your pocket.

The five-dollar bill was printed in 1776. New York was still officially a colony then, but the Revolution had begun, so “State of New York” was printed hopefully across the top of the bill. And instead of shillings—why use the enemy’s system?—they valued their money in Spanish dollars. (There was no such thing yet as an American dollar. We later borrowed the term from the Spanish.)

Do you see “‘Tis Death to counterfeit” written on the New York bill? That was a warning to people who were thinking of printing their own money and passing it off as real. Forgeries were a serious problem. They were also easy to do, and people were desperate. So the New York bill had elaborate drawings and designs that would be hard to reproduce. But the North Carolina bill, a pay certificate issued to soldiers, was much simpler to copy—someone tried, and failed. The word “Counterfeit,” written across the face of the bill, marks it as a fake.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand how a brilliant black student in New York in the 1820s fought racism to become a doctor and abolitionist.

MATERIALS

- Life Story: James McCune Smith
- Classroom Resource: The Address to General Lafayette
- Classroom Resource: Dr. Smith: Open for Business
- Tracing paper
- Map of present-day New York City

ACTIVITIES

Learning Skills in Childhood

Introduce the Address to General Lafayette, delivered by young James McCune Smith when the great hero of the American Revolution visited his school. Distribute hard copies of both the written original and the transcript. Discuss the document so children understand that young Smith was given a great honor when he was invited to address Lafayette, and that he (and the teacher who may have composed the address) took the opportunity to argue on behalf of his race.

Introduce the idea that children learn skills they will use as adults, and schools are designed to teach many of those skills. When James McCune Smith was a boy, everyone learned cursive writing because there were no computers or typewriters. (In cursive handwriting, the pen is not lifted from the paper from the beginning of the word to the end.) All documents were handwritten, and if you needed a copy, the copy was handwritten—no photocopying machines! Today, however, many schools do not stress cursive writing because so much of what we do involves computers.

- Ask students to look closely at the top line of the cursive text, below the words “An Address.” Do they find it hard to read “Delivered by James M. Smith, Aged 11 Years”? Can they get most of these words written in cursive? Some? Any?
- If students have trouble, let them use the transcript to decipher the line, and ask if that helps them decode what they are seeing.
- Give each child a sheet or half-sheet of tracing paper. Ask students to trace the words “James M. Smith.” If it is difficult for them, ask them just to trace the word “James.”
- Ask students to repeat the tracing two or three more times, and then to compare their tracings to the original. Was their last practice tracing better than their first?
- Ask students to try writing “James M. Smith” as it appears on the document without tracing it.

If you have access to computers, set up a time trial in which you and the students all take part. Use a watch and give everyone 15 seconds to write their signature as they usually do as many times as possible within the time frame. Now ask them to do the same on the computer in the same 15-second time span. If possible, print out the results.

- Ask students how their handwritten signatures compare to those on the computer. Which was faster, handwriting or keyboard? Easier to read? Less likely to have mistakes?
- Ask students to name the advantages and disadvantages of each writing format. (For example, handwriting, whether print or cursive, requires only pen or pencil and paper, but may be hard to read accurately. Computers are expensive, but it’s easy to make corrections.)

For homework, ask the children to repeat the exercise with their families, and to try to include some people over 50. Encourage grandparents to take part. If someone at home has an appropriate cell phone, add texting to the activity. How do family members’ results compare with the students’ results in class? Have students ask the adults in the family how they learned to write in school, and with what tools.

- Ask students to report on what they found. What different kinds of writing skills did children see? Did some people use the hunt-and-peck technique at the computer, and others used touch-typing? Did it make a difference in their speed or accuracy?
- Did some people actually print their names when they signed with a pen or pencil? In other words, did they pick the point up after each letter? Did it make a difference?
- Where did texting on a phone keyboard fit in? Did technique or experience matter?
- How did the skills of the oldest people compare with those of the youngest? Why would they be different?
EXPLORING THE HISTORIC CONTENT OF THE DiMENNA CHILDREN’S HISTORY MUSEUM

LESSON 5:

James McCune Smith continued

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• Is there a difference in skill level for children and adults? Who’s better at what? Why?
• Should children today be required to read and write cursive?
• Are there skills children think they will need as adults, which should be taught in schools?

To see other examples of 19th-century children’s handwriting, visit “Examination Days: The New York African Free School Collection” at https://www.nyhistory.org/web/africanfreeschool/##.

Dr. Smith: Open for Business

Introduce Dr. Smith’s ads, placed in the Colored American in 1837.
• Ask students to read all the ads and highlight Dr. Smith’s three ads for his office at 93 West Broadway. (Note that Dr. Smith’s name does not appear in all the ads.)
• Using the life story, ask students how old Dr. Smith was at the time, and how recently he returned from Scotland.
• Use a map of New York City today to locate the addresses mentioned in the different ads.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• How are the three ads different from each other?
• Why would Dr. Smith place three separate ads rather than one big one?
• What features of his practice did Dr. Smith choose to focus on?

• What kinds of information about his training or background has he left out of the ads?
• What other kinds of ads are in this selection? Are Dr. Smith’s ads different from the others?

LEARNING OUTCOME

Students will understand that schools teach skills that children are expected to need when they grow up, and that writing tools have changed over time. They will be able to discuss how medical practices were different in Dr. Smith’s day.

FOLLOW-UP

At the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, students will meet Dr. Smith as one of the top physicians of his day. Ask children to explore how Dr. Smith and other doctors treated various common ailments of the day.
• Why did doctors think it was a good idea to put leeches on people’s bodies to suck out blood?
• What other remedies did Dr. Smith recommend? What were they for?

Encourage students to research Shaker herbal remedies and compare them to present-day medicine.
In a class of smart children, James McCune Smith was perhaps the smartest. When a great hero was about to visit his school in lower Manhattan, James was the one chosen to take his teacher’s words, write them out in his perfect handwriting, and stand tall to deliver them. He was 11 years old, and he must have felt very proud. The elderly hero was the great Frenchman, Lafayette, who had fought alongside George Washington during the American Revolution. The school was the African Free School, Number 2, on Mulberry Street.

James was living with his mother, Lavinia. He had no brothers or sisters, and never knew his father, a white man. Later he would say his father was a merchant named Samuel Smith, but he may have made it up, just to have an answer to the question. His mother had been a slave in South Carolina. She was either sold to a New Yorker, or she had run away to New York City, where James was born. At the time, slavery was still legal in New York State, as it had been for two centuries. But a state law had been passed that was gradually freeing the slaves, and July 4, 1827 had been set as the final emancipation date. So technically, James and his mother may have been slaves when he was growing up, but they lived more or less free. This does not mean they lived well. There were many things black people were not allowed to do, such as ride the horse-drawn buses, or attend the new public schools. And they lived in constant fear of slave catchers who kidnapped black people off the street and sold them into slavery in the South.

The African Free School had a mission: to prepare free black children to be productive members of society. James and his classmates studied penmanship, a vital skill in those days, along with reading and arithmetic.

The boys learned a variety of skills related to life at sea, where many black men found work that paid fairly well. The girls learned needlework and other domestic skills. Boys and girls both studied religion. The teachers, all white, believed in the children and expected them to study and live decent lives, but no one thought they were capable of really great things—even if they were obviously brilliant.

James McCune Smith graduated from the African Free School, with honors, when he was 15. But he was hardly finished with his education. He worked as a blacksmith’s apprentice and continued his studies with the Reverend Peter Williams, Jr., the pastor of all-black St. Philip’s African Episcopal Church. His friends said they never saw James without a book in his hand. Reverend Williams encouraged him to become a doctor, and he taught him the Latin and Greek he would need. James applied to two American medical schools, but was rejected by both because of his race. Reverend Williams recommended the University of Glasgow in Scotland, one of the world’s top medical schools, and raised the tuition money when James was accepted. James left for Scotland in 1832, when he was 19. He returned to New York five years later, having again graduated with honors. He was Dr. Smith, the first black American to earn a medical degree.

Right away, he opened a medical office at 93 West Broadway and waited for patients. He placed ads in the Colored American so black people in New York would know that he was treating all kinds of medical problems and selling medicines...
James McCune Smith 1813–1865 continued

from his apothecary. But at a time when most practicing doctors did not have a medical degree, and anyone could call himself a doctor, white people were also drawn by his credentials. Dr. Smith turned no one away.

Some of what he learned at Glasgow was widely accepted and seemed like good medicine. No one knew yet that germs cause diseases. Like other doctors of his time, James McCune Smith believed that illness could sometimes be cured by bleeding patients to rid them of “bad blood.” But Glasgow had also taught him to trust the growing science of medicine. He dismissed the fads and gimmicks that quacks passed off as good treatments. Dr. Smith believed that medical ideas had to be tested and proven with statistics. He wrote case studies and was the first black physician to publish articles in U.S. medical journals.

Dr. Smith served as the physician to the Colored Orphan Asylum throughout his career. At first, he volunteered, but later was paid a salary of $100 a year. The children lived in fairly close quarters, and were frequently hit with common but very dangerous diseases: measles, tuberculosis, whooping cough. With his common-sense approach, Dr. Smith tried to reduce crowded conditions and to keep fresh air moving through the rooms. He also made sure every resident was vaccinated against smallpox, a deadly disease that killed many children and adults. He also recognized the value of fresh air, once taking the entire population of the orphanage to an estate in Westchester County so the children could spend a whole day running and playing outdoors.

Dr. Smith practiced medicine for almost 30 years, but it was only one part of his life. He was always a reader, thinker, and writer—and not just in English. He was fluent in Latin, Greek, and French, and also spoke German, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew. Today, he is best known as a leader of the abolitionist movement—he fought for decades to end slavery in the American South. But he wanted more than freedom for black people—he wanted full racial equality, and he pressed hard for it. He wrote fiery articles, spoke powerfully at public meetings, and argued strategy with Frederick Douglass and other leaders of the anti-slavery effort, black and white. He lived long enough to watch North and South go to war over slavery, and to see the passage of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which ended it for good. He died just before Thanksgiving, 1865.

In 1824 and 1825, the Frenchman Lafayette made a great public tour of the United States, with the nation’s newspapers following his every step. He was in his 60s then, but as a young man he had volunteered to serve in the American Revolution. He became one of the great generals of that war, and 40 years later, Americans still revered him as a hero. He had been born a marquis, but he dropped the title after the French Revolution (in which he also played a key role). Lafayette did not believe in aristocracy. He championed what were known as “the rights of man,” and he took opportunities all along his tour route to urge Americans to end slavery. It was Lafayette himself who asked, during his days in New York, to visit the African Free School.

James McCune Smith was chosen by the school to welcome the great hero. Some historians believe that the speech was written by one of the teachers, but the 11-year-old used his best penmanship to write out the address, and he stood to read it when Lafayette arrived at the school. The French visitor listened and thanked the young boy who would grow up to be the first trained black doctor in America, and one of the nation’s most powerful voices for abolition.

In 1837, Dr. Smith returned to New York after five years studying medicine in Scotland. Many people had known him since childhood and were aware of his return—he gave public lectures just weeks after his arrival. But he was a new, young doctor, and he needed patients. So he did what people still do when they want to publicize their business: he placed ads in the newspaper. This particular newspaper was the *Colored American*, which appeared every week and was less than a year old. It was published for African Americans, who at the time preferred to be known as “colored.” (Dr. Smith himself often used the word “black,” and was the first to suggest in public that it was a better term.)

Dr. Smith wanted people to notice, so he placed three ads, close to each other, in the edition that appeared in December, 1837. To be sure everyone knew exactly where he was located, all three ads mention 93 West Broadway, the address where he opened his office and apothecary. (An apothecary is a pharmacy, or drug store.) But each ad presented a different side of the young doctor’s practice. One mentioned “fancy articles” for sale, in addition to drugs and medicines. One focused on the Shaker’s Herbs he sold at low prices. And the third makes it clear that he was a doctor trained to treat any kind of medical problem.

Dr. Smith’s name appeared in the newspapers many times over his life, but usually for his efforts to end slavery in the South. He is best known today for this abolition work, but he was a practicing doctor all his life.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Students will understand how a young student in New York discovered unknown talents.

MATERIALS
- Life Story: Esteban (Steve) Bellán
- Classroom Resource: The Haymaker Nine
- Classroom Resource: Tabletop Baseball
- Map of the western hemisphere
- Photos of contemporary sports teams

ACTIVITIES
Begin with the life story of Esteban Bellán. Ask students to find Cuba, St. John’s College (now Fordham University), and Troy, New York, on a map of the western hemisphere. This is a story about early American baseball, but it is also about an immigrant to New York City who took a chance on a new sport and discovered his talent.

- Ask students to write about a skill they have. It can be any skill – playing an instrument or a sport, baking brownies, doing arithmetic, writing poems, playing video games. They don’t have to be the best in the world; they should just focus on something they do well.
- How did they learn this skill? Did someone teach it to them?
- Do other people in their family also have this skill?
- Can they remember what it was like to learn? What did they do when they made mistakes?
- What role did adults play in their learning this skill?
- How do they feel when they’re doing the thing they’re skilled at?
- Do they have a new goal they want to reach?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
In a class discussion, look for points in common in students’ stories.

- Based on your students’ experiences, what are the important ingredients in developing a skill?
- Is it different to learn a skill in school as opposed to outside it?
- What’s the difference between skill and talent?

The Haymaker Nine
Next, introduce the photo of the Haymaker Nine. Ask students to study the photograph and caption carefully. Ask them to find (or present them with) other team photos. They could be major professional teams, or Little League teams, or teams of community soccer players, but they should all be people playing today.

- What do all the pictures have in common?
- How is the photo of the Haymaker Nine different from a photo of a major league baseball team today? If you knew nothing about baseball, what would the pictures tell you about the differences between baseball then and baseball now?
- What role did adults play in their learning this skill?
- How do they feel when they’re doing the thing they’re skilled at?
- Do they have a new goal they want to reach?
- What’s the difference between skill and talent?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- Based on your students’ experiences, what are the important ingredients in developing a skill?
- Is it different to learn a skill in school as opposed to outside it?
- What’s the difference between skill and talent?

Tabletop Baseball
Introduce “The Game of Base-ball,” a 19th-century board game. Standing at home plate with a bat in your hands and a ball zinging toward you is different from sitting at a card table and moving pieces around a green board that represents a baseball field. But both games are based on rules that all the players accept.

- Ask students to use the printed “Directions for Playing Big League Baseball” and try to figure out how the game is played.
- Is it possible to hit a home run?
- The directions state that “all regular rules of baseball govern this game.” Is that true or do you see differences?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- Who would have enjoyed this game? Who would have found it difficult or boring?
- Do the board game instructions require a player to know the real game?
- How different is this board game from video games about baseball?
- Baseball was once dubbed “America’s pastime.” How does the game, whether it’s played on a real field or on a tabletop, contribute to people feeling connected to each other? Why is that important?
LEARNING OUTCOME
Students will understand that skills are learned and require practice.

FOLLOW-UP
When Esteban Bellán came to the United States in 1863, the game of baseball was already becoming popular here. But in the years since, a passion for the game has spread far beyond our shores. Today there are professional teams in many different countries, and players from all over the world star on American teams. Explore the international side of baseball at the Esteban Bellán pavilion in the DiMenna Children’s History Museum.

Before Steve Bellán became the first Latin American player in professional baseball, he had to learn how to play the game. When he was a boy in Cuba, where people called him Esteban, no one played baseball. It’s hard to believe now, because baseball is so important in Latin America today, but he may never have heard of the game at all.

But in the United States, many children his age did know the game. Americans had been playing a version of it at least since 1791, when Pittsfield, Massachusetts made it illegal to play baseball or anything like it, too close to the new meeting house. (Crash! Replacing windows was expensive.) That law is the earliest known mention of “baseball.” At the time, it was a casual game played by children and young men on summer days, or at night after supper. It remained a casual game for some time, but it became more popular. In 1845, a New Yorker named Alexander Cartwright decided the game needed written-down rules, now known as the Knickerbocker Rules. When you read them, you can see the game and the terms you recognize. For example: Rule 10: A ball knocked out of the field, or outside the range of the first and third base, is foul.

From there, baseball developed more rapidly. By the 1850s, people were saying it was the perfect American game, the national pastime. In 1859, Fordham University, then called St. John’s College, played against St. Francis Xavier College in the first college baseball game. This is where Esteban Bellán comes in. He arrived alone in New York City in 1863, when he was 14, to attend the high school run by St. John’s. His move here may not have been as hard or lonely as one might think. He probably spoke English perfectly, since his mother was Irish, and there were many other young Cubans studying in New York. He seems to have been hungry for American experiences. He told people to call him Steve, and despite knowing nothing about the sport, he joined the school’s baseball team, called the Rose Hill Baseball Club in honor of the section of the Bronx where the school was (and still is) located.

One lesson of Steve Bellán’s life is this: You never know what opportunities lie just around the corner. He moved to a new school in a new country, took a chance on a new sport, and he discovered talent he never knew he had. He learned to play baseball, and to play it well, during his time at St. John’s. When he left school in 1868, he stayed in the U.S. to continue playing with a team in the Bronx. Then he joined the Haymakers, an amateur team in Troy, New York. Just as they are today, baseball teams were associated with cities and towns. When he began playing, there were already teams in Chicago, New York, and Cincinnati. And there were already fans rooting for the local boys, whipped up by regular sports coverage in The New York Times and other newspapers.

Bellán was around 20 years old when he joined the Haymakers and moved to Troy. The U.S. Census for 1870 shows him living in Troy with Domingo Belan, age 20; Rossa Belan, age 21; and Hart Belan, a 50-year-old woman. (The name was usually spelled Bellán, and people often estimated their ages.) The family relationships were not identified in the census, but he was probably living with his brother, sister, and mother. By then, Cuba was fighting for its independence from Spain, and the family may have moved to Troy to escape the war’s danger. So Steve had his family with him, and they had the pleasure of cheering him on (and trying to understand the strange rules and lingo of baseball).

Until this point, baseball was an amateur game. Most players weren’t paid, and no one had to buy a ticket to see a game. (No one sold hot dogs yet, either.) But in 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings wanted to build the best team in the sport, so they offered all their players a salary. In no time, Cincinnati had the best lineup in baseball, and other teams began paying their players. In 1871, the paying teams (the Boston Red Stockings, the New York Mutuals, and others) formed a league called the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players. When the Troy Haymakers joined the league and presented
Steve Bellán with his first paycheck, he entered history as the first Latin American player in professional baseball.

By now, baseball fans were eager to read about every game that was played, and the early sports writers were churning out copy. When The New York Times covered baseball, the articles were usually long and detailed. But the paper also ran a regular column called “Telegraphic Brevities,” which included short news reports. Included in the August 4, 1871 column was this sports update: The Red Stockings, of Boston, and the Haymakers, of Troy, played a championship match in Troy yesterday. The game was closely contested, each club having its full nine out, and resulted in favor of the Haymakers by a score of 13 to 12. This game was Steve Bellán’s best as an American baseball player. With five hits, five RBIs, two runs scored, and one stolen base, he accounted for more than half of the Haymakers’ 13 runs.

Struggling with financial troubles, the Troy team folded in 1872. Bellán spent part of the next season with the New York Mutuals, who played at the Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey. His last game with the Mutuals—and in American baseball—was June 9, 1873. He returned to Cuba and took his baseball passion with him. The game was catching on there, thanks to others who had also learned to play in the U.S. Bellán organized the first formal game on the island on December 27, 1874. Showcasing what he had learned in the States, Bellán’s team, Club Habana, defeated its rival, Club Matanzas, by an astounding score of 51-9. Bellán himself had three home runs. In the late 1870s, he became a manager and player for the Havana team, and led them to three championships in their first five seasons.

Almost as soon as there was baseball, there were team pictures. This one shows Steve Bellán and the other members of the Haymaker Nine in 1871. Someone long ago wrote numbers on the photo to connect with the caption. Steve Bellán is number 6.

You can learn a fair amount about baseball history just by looking at this photo. For one thing, the players were already wearing matching uniforms, in this case a long-sleeved shirt, belt, knickers, and high socks. Uniforms helped players identify each other on the field, but they also built team spirit among the players and fans. It's easy to imagine children trying to dress like their favorite players, then grabbing a bat and ball and heading to a field for a game.

And even in 1871, teams had captains, and players had specific positions, which the caption identified with abbreviations. So team captain W. H. Craver played “2d B,” or second base. Steve Bellán played third base. J. F. McMullen was the “P,” for pitcher. By the way, the printed title identifies the team as the Haymaker Nine, but 10 players are shown. It is not a mistake. E. Conners was the team’s Tenth Man, a player who could fill in if others were sick or injured. Only nine players could be on the field at a time.

And finally, even in 1871, advertising was an important part of baseball. This photo appeared on a card that was given out by Burr and Penfield’s, a tobacco store in the team’s hometown, Troy, New York. The company made sure that its own name and address stood out. This was probably what would today be called “targeted advertising”—tobacco buyers were men, like baseball players and most of their fans.
Even in the early days of the game, Americans, especially men and boys, loved their baseball. They loved watching it played, and playing it themselves. But you couldn’t play baseball in rain, or darkness, or snow. Fans needed another way to indulge their passion for the game, and publishers were glad to oblige with board games that could be played indoors. McLoughlin Brothers, Inc., was known for publishing children’s books in full color, when this was still new and unusual. It was an easy next step for them to produce board games for the family.

The “Game of Base-Ball” had a board that provided the playing field. In two corners there were spinners that determined what happened when a batter faced a pitcher. Small metal figures in snappy red and grey uniforms were moved around the board according to where the spinner stopped. Family members playing this game also had scorecards and printed directions that covered all the ins and outs of the game. At the bottom of the instructions, players were informed that the “regular rules of baseball govern this game.” And like human players on outdoor fields, they were warned that “there can be no arguments.” If players disagreed, the umpire made the call (by way of an “umpire” dial).

The rules of baseball were set down in 1845 by the Knickerbockers, who played in New York. The 20 rules set down the game as we know it today. The first rule? Show up on time.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Students will understand that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, children often worked long hours to make money, and many sold newspapers on city street corners.

MATERIALS
♢ Life Story: Newsies
♢ Classroom Resource: A Place to Sleep
♢ Classroom Resource: Extra! Extra!
♢ Map of lower Manhattan

ACTIVITIES
Introduce the life story and give children an opportunity to understand that in the 19th century, and into the 20th, even very young children often worked long hours, many of them selling newspapers on street corners. They were nicknamed “newsies.”

Introduce the classroom resources, together or separately, to help students see some of the details of newsies’ lives.

Ask students to write a diary entry for a newsie in the summer of 1895. They should use the life story and the two resources to imagine a day in the life of one child, addressing questions like these:

♢ Where do you wake up?
♢ What time do you head to Printing House Square?
♢ How much money do you need in your pocket when you pick up the papers? (Students should notice that 1895 is before the 1899 newspaper strike.)
♢ How heavy are the papers? What if you drop them or they get wet?
♢ What kind of corner do you sell from? (Students should pick a corner by looking at a map. An area near Wall Street would put them in a good spot for selling to businessmen on their way to work.)
♢ How much walking do you do in a day? (Students can plot the locations of the lodging houses and Printing House Square, as well as Wall Street.)
♢ How do other newsies treat you? Who’s your best friend? Does he or she have a nickname?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
♢ What was the hardest thing about being a newsie?
♢ Are there things about their lives that appeal to you?
♢ The Fair Labor Standards Act put an end to almost all child labor in 1938. Do you think kids should be able to work today? At what age? What kinds of jobs do you think are appropriate for kids today?

LEARNING OUTCOME
Students will be able to write a diary narrative that demonstrates their understanding of life as a newsie.

FOLLOW-UP
Selling newspapers on the street is only one of the jobs young children did, and despite many hardships, in some ways it was the most appealing. Children had independence, the camaraderie of other kids, and the run of the streets. But other jobs were much harder, and often very dangerous. Visit the DiMenna Children’s History Museum to learn about the kinds of child labor that caused reformers to raise a protest in the early 1900s. Ask children to look for the story of young Manuel, and find out what he did to make money for his family—beginning when he was four years old!
Today, no one expects kids to work for a living—it's even against the law. But in earlier times, people had a different idea about childhood. Most kids worked unless their parents were rich. If they grew up on a farm, they had regular chores, like milking the cows. Other children learned skills by working as an apprentice to a blacksmith, tailor, or other tradesman. In the 1800s, when more and more goods were made in factories, children became especially useful as workers. They had small hands and nimble bodies, and there were some jobs they could do more easily (and more cheaply) than adults. Factory owners were always looking for very young workers. So were mine owners, who hired children to separate coal and slate.

Children who lived in New York City, especially those from poor immigrant families, had their own ways of making money. They shined shoes, or swept the street in front of a shop, or climbed inside a (cool!) chimney to brush out the soot. They sold things from a cart, ran errands, made deliveries. Their parents allowed it, because they needed the money. So while other children went off to school, poor children learned to be inventive about finding work. The job they turned to most, especially the boys, was selling newspapers on street corners. They were called newsies, and many were only five or six years old.

Their work day began around 5:00 in the morning, in Printing House Square, located on Park Row near City Hall. There were several newspapers in New York at the time, and most were published here. In winter, the newsies huddled around the buildings’ steam vents to stay warm while they waited. When the papers were ready, they picked the ones with the biggest stories and flashiest headlines, because they were easiest to sell. Then they reached into their pockets for some money, because they had to pay for the papers in advance. In the 1890s, one hundred papers cost 50 cents. They picked up an armload—the papers were heavy—ran to a busy street corner, and began calling out the headlines in a good loud voice. People would stop, pay a penny, and tuck the paper under their arm as they hurried on.

The newsies had a big advantage over people today who sell used things on the street: people needed them. In the days before radio, television, and the Internet, the only way to get the news was to read it in a newspaper. And if you wanted a newspaper, you needed a newsie. The newsies also needed the customers. They had to sell almost every paper they bought, or they lost money. The publishers refused to buy back unsold papers.

For many kids, being a newsie was a full-time job. But they had breaks during the day, when they could get together with other newsies to play marbles or craps on the sidewalk. They gave each other catchy names like Spot, and Racetrack, and Crutch. Sometimes they would take themselves to a theater to watch funny skits or listen to noisy singing. If they passed a candy cart on the way, they shelled out for some chocolate. Being a newsie was hard, but it was a good time too. They had the run of the city.

For many newsies, the fun stopped when the city got dark. If they didn’t have a family to go home to—and many did not—they had to find a place to sleep. In warm weather, they could curl up with some friends on a sidewalk or under a bridge. In winter, they had to be clever. One group of boys discovered they could slide down a coal chute into the boiler room of the post office, and they spent many comfortable nights there until they were discovered.
At the time, there were no government programs to help homeless children, but a private organization called the Children’s Aid Society built special hotels for street kids and tried to help them. One place, the Newsboys’ Lodging House, was located at 9 Duane Street in Lower Manhattan. Kids could go there to learn to read, have a good meal, play on the trapeze in the gymnasium, and, maybe best of all, stay overnight in a real bed with a blanket. “My eyes, ain’t it nice!” one boy said as he drifted to sleep. It was not charity. The children paid six cents for a bed, or for bread and coffee in the morning, or for pork and beans at night. The big lunchtime meal was 20 cents. The newsies were encouraged to save, and learn to handle money. The main rule was written over the entrance to the house: “Boys who swear and chew tobacco cannot stay here.” Otherwise, the doors were open, just as they were open for girls at the lodging house on E. 12th Street.

Six cents doesn’t sound like much. But most days, the newsies only cleared about 30 cents. A bed and one good meal would leave them nearly broke. Every single penny counted. So in 1899, when two of the newspapers (the World and the Journal) decided to increase the newsies’ price from 50 cents to 60 cents per hundred, the angry boys did something they had seen adults do: they went on strike. They were just kids, led by kids (including a partially blind boy nicknamed Kid Blink), but they had power. For two weeks, they only sold the newspapers that hadn’t raised their prices. The panicky editors of the World and the Journal watched their sales go down by more than half. They still refused to go back to the lower price per hundred, but they promised to buy back unsold newspapers at the end of each day. The newsies had wanted this for a long time, and when they got it, they went back to work two weeks after the strike began.

The newsies must have celebrated that moment! But they never had another big one to match it. In the years after the strike, children were pushed out of the newsie business. Older boys took their corners. Adults opened newsstands that kept the papers dry in bad weather, and built up steady customers. Some newspapers offered home delivery. At the same time, a new state law required children to be in school during the day, not out hawking papers on the street.

But the problem of poor kids working hard did not go away. There were weak laws against it, but they were ignored. All around the country, children worked for almost no money. If you were a small boy or girl, you might be told to sit and roll cigars for hours every day. You and your family might be paid a few pennies to make artificial flowers late into the night. You might work in a mill and climb barefoot onto a huge textile machine so you could reach spools of thread. It was not work for children, and many people were determined to end it. Newspapers published articles against it. Lewis Hine’s photographs of working children shocked people whose kids slept in warm beds and went to school every day. Finally, in 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act made most child labor illegal in the United States. This is why, today, no one expects kids to work for a living.

If they had nowhere else to go, and if they could afford to pay a few pennies, newsies could stay overnight in the Newsboys’ Lodging House at 9 Duane Street. It was one of the special hotels run by the Children’s Aid Society. There was a house for girls as well, at 307 E. 12th Street.

The newsboys’ house held several hundred boys at once, in big dormitory rooms filled with bunk beds. The house was more crowded in winter than in summer, when the boys could sleep outside if they wanted. Around 1874, the staff kept track of why 100 of the boys needed a bed that night. Another list, done on a different night, might have given a slightly different picture of what life was like in New York City for poor boys. But it is clear that for these young newsboys, going home to bed was not an option.
In 1908, photographer Lewis Hine began taking pictures of children who worked long hours at hard jobs. He was hired by the National Child Labor Committee to publicize the children’s lives and to make average Americans demand laws to end child labor. Hine took pictures of children in different jobs, all over the country. Among them were many of newsies.

This photograph was taken in July 1910. By this time the life of newsies was starting to change. More adults were in the business, and more kids were in school. Poor children still needed to work, but if they sold newspapers, it was probably in the afternoon, or in the summer. The children in this photo are picking up the afternoon editions from the newspaper offices on Park Row. This area was called Printing House Square or Newspaper Row. The city’s major newspaper offices were here.

These newsies are ready to head off to whatever corner they consider a good location—a place where businessmen will pass after work and stop to pick up a paper. But before they run off, they pose for the photographer, and he writes down some information about the picture. He records the date and the place, and the name of the girl in the white dress. She was Mary Malchade, and she was nine years old. Hine did not keep track of who the boys were. He may have taken the photograph just to show a girl among the newsies, who were usually boys.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that the care of homeless or neglected children has changed over time, and that one early program involved placing city children with farm families in the Midwest and other locations around the country.

MATERIALS

➧ Life Story: Orphan Train Riders
➧ Classroom Resource: Ready to Go
➧ Classroom Resource: Staying in Touch

ACTIVITIES

Introduce the life story of the Orphan Train Riders to give children an overview of the Children’s Aid Society’s program to relocate needy city youngsters to new lives in the country. Then focus the classroom discussion on the children’s own experiences with moving and traveling.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

➧ What’s the farthest you have ever been from home?
➧ Have you traveled alone for a long distance?
➧ What was that like?
➧ Have you ever been on a train?
➧ Did you ever move to a place very different from where you had been living? What was it like? How long did it take to feel at home in the new place?

Ready to Go

Now introduce “Ready to Go,” a photograph showing a group of boys about to leave for the train station.

Encourage the students to study the photo closely. Look at each boy’s clothing and expression.

➧ Which child looks oldest? Youngest?
➧ What emotions do you see on their faces?
➧ What do you imagine they are thinking?
➧ How would you feel if you were in the same situation?

You could also set up a tableau activity with this photograph.

➧ Select 13 children to recreate the photograph by posing just as the boys are standing in the picture.

➧ Let each child decide what the character’s name and age is. If they did the diary entry for a newsie in the previous activity, students may be able to use the same character here, because many of the orphan train riders were former newsies.

➧ Select children to play other characters who are unseen: the photographer, the Children’s Aid Society chaperones who traveled with groups of children to their destination. In addition, you could select someone to play the driver of the wagon that is moving behind the boys in a blur, and possibly someone watching from a window in the background.

➧ Invite the rest of the class to ask questions of the boys, based on what they have learned from the life story. Encourage children to ask the kinds of questions they would like to have asked the boys if they met them in person after this photograph was taken: Do you know where you going? Are you scared? Can you milk a cow? Did your parents send you away? What do you hope your new family will be like?

➧ The unseen characters can be questioned too: What do you think of these boys? Are you glad to see them go? Do you feel sorry for them?
Staying in Touch
Next introduce “Staying in Touch,” the letter from the girl in Iowa. Ask students to use this letter, and other quotations mentioned in the resource description, as a model, and write a letter that might have been sent from one of the boys in the photograph, after his arrival in Texas. The letter can be addressed to someone at the Children’s Aid Society, or to a friend who was left behind, or to the child’s own family back in New York.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Several of the people who are the focus of the pavilions in the DiMenna Children’s History Museum were orphaned, or nearly so, as children. Cornelia van Varick, Alexander Hamilton. Many of the newsies were orphans, and many, though not all, of the orphan train riders. They represent an historic fact of life: parents often died young, and families did not always stay together.

In your classroom, you may have children today who have lost parents, or are being raised by someone other than their parents. It is up to you to decide whether to raise these issues with your students, but if you choose to, here are some questions that could focus your discussion:

➧ In what ways were the experiences of Cornelia van Varick, Alexander Hamilton, and the orphan train riders similar? Different?
➧ What difference did it make whether the children were well-off or poor?
➧ What difference did a family or community make?

LEARNING OUTCOME
Students will be able to describe, verbally or in writing, the purpose of the orphan train and use language that demonstrates empathy for the children presented in the lesson.

FOLLOW-UP
At the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, visit the large interactive U.S. map, under the title “All Aboard!” This map allows students to explore the stories of seven children who rode the orphan train. As a geography lesson, ask the children to focus on the locations where each child was placed. What do the photos convey about the United States around 1900? Which locations would have seemed most foreign to a child raised in New York City? Which one looks the most inviting? When you return to the classroom, you could continue this activity by asking students to write about places they have visited, and how it feels to be in an unfamiliar location far from home.
LESSON 8: Life Story

Orphan Train Riders

1854–1929

One morning in 1854, a group of children arrived in a Michigan town with a name they could hardly pronounce: Dowagiac. Most were 10 or 11 years old, but one was only six. They had been on the train for hours and hours, all the way from New York City. Their brand-new clothes were wrinkled and spilled on. Mr. Smith, who had traveled with them, told them to neaten up and remember what he had taught them. As he led them off the train, they had their first look at this tiny town. It was nothing like New York City, which was their home just days ago. But no more.

Mr. Smith took them into the meeting house, where the benches were crowded with people from the town and nearby. They did not look or dress like anyone the children had known in New York. Mr. Smith said he was from the Children’s Aid Society, and he repeated what the people already knew: that the children were orphans and were there to be placed in new homes. The children smiled and tried to look appealing. They answered questions politely. They let people squeeze their arms to see how strong they were. Over the next two days, most of them were taken home by one farm couple or another, strangers they prayed would be nice. The others, mostly too young to be good workers, went back to the train and continued on to the next town.

They were the first group, but later there were many others who rode what was called the Orphan Train. It is not a very accurate term. There was no single train that delivered the children around the country. They rode regular trains, most leaving New York from Grand Central Station. And while some of the children were true orphans, many others were not. But all were poor, and life was going badly for them.

In the 1850s, New York was bursting at the seams with new people, many of them poor immigrants. They struggled to make enough money, and crowded into neighborhoods where they could afford to rent a tiny apartment. The children worked for whatever they could earn. At age five or six, they were polishing shoes, or sweeping streets, or selling matches or newspapers. Sometimes they begged, and a few stole or picked pockets. The families could not always stay together. If parents died or neglected them, children were on their own. Some slept on the streets.

The Children’s Aid Society did not think well of poor parents, and did not try to keep troubled families together. But it did believe that their children would thrive in a new home far from a city, where they worked hard in the fresh air. So it set up what it called the Placing-Out Program—usually known as the Orphan Train—to relocate youngsters to new homes far from New York. Since most of the children would be working on farms, Children’s Aid set up special schools to teach city boys how to milk cows, pitch hay, and plow fields. Rich New Yorkers donated money for these programs because they felt sorry for the children, and also because they were afraid of the wilder kids, whom they saw as little criminals.

The Children’s Aid Society hired agents to go around the country and put up flyers announcing that children would be coming soon on a train. They looked for good people who would be willing to give a child a home, maybe even to adopt the child as their own. And in New York, the agents looked for children who needed rescue. They went to orphanages. They even went to prisons, because children were sometimes jailed for being homeless. The agents encouraged poor parents to sign papers so their children could have new lives elsewhere. They held meetings where they talked to homeless children about
LESSON 8: Life Story
Orphan Train Riders 1854–1929
continued

the great West. One boy, listening, was so eager that he lied about being an orphan in order to board the train and escape his abusive father. His name was John Brady and he was later Governor of Alaska.

Regardless of how the children came to be on the train, they were all transformed before they started their trip. The boys were taken to the offices of the Children’s Aid Society, and the girls to a house on Staten Island. They were told to shower and given new clothes. They were told how to make a good impression: to smile, to say “please” and “yes, ma’am.” Some agents taught the kids a few jokes or songs that might convince a family to take them. When the time came to leave, the children were given a small suitcase and a card that read “Children’s Aid Society” on one side, with the child’s name and birth date written on the other. The children traveled west in groups with an adult from Children’s Aid. Often they posed together for a photograph, either before they boarded the train or when they arrived at the place that would now be home.

Over the next 75 years, many thousands of children were relocated from New York and other Eastern cities to new homes in the West. In the program’s early years, “the West” meant the Midwest—states like Michigan, Nebraska, Kansas, and Ohio. But over time, the Orphan Train relocated children all over the country, and the experience was mixed. Some Western states feared that they were the dumping ground for kids who would always be problems. Back in the cities, Catholic parents complained that their children were being presented and raised as Protestants. And the children themselves did not always find the family life they were hoping for. Some were treated as little more than servants. One girl reported that she never had enough to eat or a glass of milk. A few clashed so badly with their new family that they either ran away, or were sent back to the Children’s Aid Society.

But for other children, things turned out well. One woman remembered being a frightened girl at the end of her long train ride. She saw a couple approach her with a strawberry ice cream cone. Later she said, “I could not have had more loving parents. They are the ones who wanted and loved me.” Another man, adopted at the age of six, said, “My life began when I got off that train. My mind is a total blank before that day. I don’t think the good Lord wanted me remembering those first six years.”

The Orphan Train continued until 1929. It is considered America’s first foster care program. The program is criticized today for not screening potential parents carefully enough, and for not closely monitoring children’s experiences. But the Orphan Train contributed to ideas we take for granted today: that children have a right to a stable home, and that it’s better for them to live in a family than in an orphanage.

These boys are ready to ride the Orphan Train. They are freshly showered, maybe for the first time in weeks. They have new suits and hats, and warm-looking coats. They are meant to look like decent young men, not children who have been homeless or neglected. They have not been told too much about what will happen next, except that they will be going on a long train ride to a new life. They may or may not have known they were heading for Texas. Next stop is Grand Central Station, and they probably have their fingers crossed.

Girls rode the Orphan Train too, and had their own preparation spot in a Staten Island mansion that had been donated to the Children’s Aid Society. But many of the children who were placed in the West were boys of 10 or older. This is partly because boys were more likely to live on the streets and sometimes got in trouble. But it was also because Western farmers needed strong boys who could lend a hand. These farmers were not usually looking for sons, but they were willing to give the boys a home and education in exchange for their help. It was a big leap to go from New York City to a rural farm. But chances are in a few years these boys thought of themselves as Westerners. They were probably skilled with horses and cattle, and comfortable in cowboy hats. Most never lived in New York again.
Children were placed in homes all over the country, and agents of the Children’s Aid Society visited now and then to see how they were doing. They encouraged the children to send letters or drawings to the office in New York and let the people there know how they were doing.

Many did, writing and spelling as well as they could, and most of those who wrote seemed happy. (Many children also stayed in touch with their birth families.) In a postcard to the staff at Children’s Aid, one boy wrote, “I am well. Am now in 6th grade at school. I can play two little pieces on the piano.” From a girl in upstate New York: “I am getting better than I was when I came here. I’m not much lame any more. I got so that I can run pretty spry …. When Mrs. H. goes for a drive she takes me along …. Mrs. H. thinks she will keep me but she would like to have a talk with you.” Another child said, “I have three little brothers the oldest 4 years. I lik them very well. I like to here about my mother.”

The girl who wrote this “Dear Friend” letter had been living on the farm for nearly five years. She seems to be writing to another child at the “home,” perhaps an orphanage where the children had met. She filled her letter with details of her new life, but she did not have much to say about the family she was now living with.

This is an actual letter from a girl who rode the orphan train. But to protect her privacy and that of her families, her name and the name of her new town have been obscured.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will understand that New York City was the first capital of the United States, and that George Washington played a direct role in the early history of the city.

MATERIALS

➧ Life Story: George Washington in New York
➧ Classroom Resource: Taking the Oath
➧ Classroom Resource: The House on Cherry Street
➧ Map of present-day New York City

ACTIVITIES

Introduce the life story of George Washington in New York. Make sure children understand that it is focused on a specific period of Washington’s life, from the early days of the Revolution through the first year or so of his presidency. On a map of New York City today, ask children to find the locations mentioned in the life story. Focus on the actual day of the first inauguration. Ask students to use the map to get a sense of the distance between Cherry Street and Federal Hall. Washington rode in a horse-drawn carriage. Would it be an easy distance to walk?

Taking the Oath

Ask students to study the two pieces of art included in Taking the Oath: the painting by Guiseppe Guidicini and the color lithograph by Montbaron & Gautschi.

➧ These are portraits of the same event. How are they different?
➧ What did each artist think was important to show?
➧ Why would Guidicini make Federal Hall fill his canvas, but show George Washington as just one of several small figures on the balcony, too small to identify? What is he saying about the presidency?
➧ Why would Montbaron and Gautschi focus on the events on the balcony? What reactions do you see in the other men on the balcony? What are these men doing during this dramatic moment in the country’s history? What are the people in the windows across the street doing? Who sees the new president as a hero?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

➧ Washington worried about being treated as too much of a hero. What do you think he would have thought of these pieces of art, which were done after his death?
➧ How did the work of these artists reflect the debate about the difference between a president and a king?
➧ Based on what you have read, do you see inaccuracies or omissions in the artwork?

The House on Cherry Street

Now introduce the photograph of the model of Washington’s first New York home.

➧ Ask students to read the resource description of The House on Cherry Street, and study the photo of the model.
➧ Explain to students that in the beginning of Washington’s presidency, the nation was trying to figure out what it meant not to be a monarchy. Some people criticized the president and Mrs. Washington for throwing parties as if they were royalty, so this house in New York City became the focus of much of the criticism against Washington.

➧ Ask students to imagine that after a particularly grand dinner, a newspaper article appeared that criticized the president. Ask them to take the part of one of three people—George Washington, a congressman who was at the party, or a female kitchen slave who was one of the party staff. What would each one say in response to the newspaper article?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

➧ How do we treat the American president today?
➧ Does he seem anything like a king?
LEARNING OUTCOME

Students will be able to explain why George Washington did not want to be treated like a king.

FOLLOW-UP

At the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, visit the pavilion devoted to George Washington in New York, and ask students to look at the model of the Cherry Street house where Washington and his family lived at the beginning of his presidency. Make sure students know that models are a way to understand and study something very large. Ask them: What can you learn by looking at a model of a building that you can’t learn from looking at the building itself? (Explain to students understand that the Cherry Street house was torn down more than 150 years ago, so in this case looking at the building is not an option.) Ask students to think about what the model does not tell them. For example: Were there other houses on the property? Was the road busy? How close were the neighbors?
LESSON 9: Life Story

George Washington in New York

1776–1790

When you think of George Washington, do you think of New York City? Maybe not, but some of the biggest moments of his life took place here.

The first of those big moments came in 1776, the second year of the American Revolution. The British had abandoned Boston, and General George Washington was sure they would try to take New York City. The deep harbor and the Hudson River made it the perfect stronghold. So Washington led his small army south from Boston to defend the city, and he discovered that his hunch was right. The British landed in Brooklyn with an enormous army of 32,000 redcoats. General Washington’s soldiers were outnumbered, three to one. It was no contest. Washington prevented an early and complete defeat for the revolution when he managed to flee with his army. The British took over the city and controlled it for the next seven years.

So imagine how it felt for General Washington to win the war and take back New York! In November 1783, after the final British defeat, he arrived north of the city and led his men south, from Tarrytown to Yonkers. In Harlem, he waited for word that the last of the British had rowed out to their ships and left the city. Then, he marched south toward Lower Manhattan. People poured onto the streets in celebration. One witness said that the soldiers looked forlorn and weather-beaten, but they’re ours! American flags were hoisted, and fireworks were shot into the air. The one-time British headquarters was now an American city, and George Washington had his second big New York moment.

A few days later, his work completed, he left the city to make his way slowly home to Virginia. He stopped at Annapolis, then the nation’s capital, and tearfully resigned his military commission. No longer “General Washington,” he returned to his beloved Mount Vernon. He hoped to live a quiet, private life.

But his quiet life did not last long. In 1789, Washington returned to New York to become the first president of the United States. He was chosen, unanimously, by the electors named or elected by the individual states. But if the people had voted directly that year, George Washington would almost surely have won. Americans adored him. On April 23, 1789, Washington made his second grand entrance into New York. Noisy crowds greeted him everywhere as he made his way slowly toward Cherry Street, where Congress had rented a house for him.

His inauguration as president took place one week later, on April 30, 1789. That morning, Washington dressed in a brown wool suit, the kind of suit that men of the time wore to work. He did not put on fancy clothes, did not want to look more important than anyone around him. He certainly did not want to look royal. People still talk about this choice, and about how well he understood that the new nation needed a president, not a king.

Around noon, as church bells rang, George Washington was escorted from his home to Federal Hall, which would serve as the headquarters of the new federal government. He stood at the railing of the second-floor balcony, in full sight of the crowd standing below, and raised his hand. He repeated the oath of office in the brief and clear words the Constitution spells out. “I do solemnly swear* that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.” The new nation had its first president.

Since Washington’s arrival in New York a week earlier, Congress had been debating what title to give him after his inauguration. The Constitution referred simply to “the president,” but to some ears that seemed too ordinary. A few people, including his war-time aide Alexander Hamilton, addressed him as “Your Excellency.” Both houses of Congress set up committees to consider the question. The Senate, hoping to elevate the American leader in the eyes of Europe, proposed this: “His Highness, the President of the United States of America, and Protector of their Liberties.” The House of Representatives, and many former soldiers, resisted any title that smacked of monarchy. Washington, the man who chose a plain brown suit for his inauguration, agreed. In the end, Congress agreed to the term he wanted: Mr. President.
For the next 16 months, New York City was the capital of the United States. President Washington, Vice President John Adams, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, both houses of Congress, and the Supreme Court all worked in Federal Hall. This is where the decision was made to build the nation a spectacular new capital on the Potomac River. In August of 1790, the government held its last session in Federal Hall. Over the next weeks, all the offices were moved to Philadelphia, which would be the interim capital while Washington D.C. was under construction.

On August 30, 1790, the day he left for Philadelphia, the president tried to slip out of New York quietly in the early morning. He left home with his wife, grandchildren, aides, servants, and slaves. (Yes, George Washington owned slaves, both in New York City and at Mount Vernon.) But when they arrived at the Battery, they were greeted by yet another cheering crowd, and a band playing a march named in his honor. Washington never liked being adored, and it worried him. It seemed dangerously like the way kings were treated in Europe. He greeted the governor and chief justice, who had come to see him off, and boarded the barge that would take him across the Hudson River. Now he was leaving New York for good, the city he had once lost, and then won, and won again. A 13-gun salute rang out as he departed.

April 30, 1789 was the day of the nation’s first presidential inauguration. Around noon, mounted soldiers and members of Congress escorted George Washington from his residence on Cherry Street to Federal Hall, followed by a jubilant crowd. When his carriage arrived at Federal Hall, he found cheering people everywhere—packed on Broad and Wall Streets, waving from windows, sitting on rooftops. He entered the building and walked upstairs to the room where members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives had gathered. John Adams, who had already been sworn in as vice president, delivered an official greeting and announced that the time had come for Washington to take the oath of office. Accompanied by members of Congress, he walked onto the balcony where the oath would be administered in full view of Congress and the public.

The people gathered below roared when they saw him, and Washington bowed several times in response. One witness said that the tall, stately Washington had the “soul, look, and figure of a hero.” Robert R. Livingston, the chancellor of New York State, read the brief oath of office, which Washington repeated: “I do solemnly swear* that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the constitution of the United States.” He picked up the bible held for him by Chancellor Livingston, and kissed it. There is a debate about whether he then added, “So help me God.” Chancellor Livingston, thinking that Washington’s voice had been too soft for the crowd to hear him repeat the oath, said clearly, “It is done.”

*The Constitution allows presidents to use the word “affirm” if they have religious objections to swearing.

Cameras were not invented until long after Washington’s inauguration, so there are no photographs of this event. And no artist was there recording the event exactly as it happened. But many later painters have tried to picture this important moment in the nation’s history, and capture not only what it looked like, but what it meant.
George Washington’s home was in Virginia, but New York was the nation’s temporary capital, and the president and his family would need a place to live. So Congress rented a mansion on Cherry Street, and Washington spent his first night here when he came to the city a week before he was sworn in as president. His wife, Martha, arrived a few weeks later. She brought the two grandchildren she and the president had adopted and six slaves. George Washington was the first of several presidents who owned slaves.

The house on Cherry Street was considered very grand. One visitor called it a palace. Washington oversaw many of the details of furnishing and decorating himself. He ordered a silver tea service, special wine coolers, and mirrors to reflect the candlelight. Cherry Street was not simply the president’s home, it was also where he and Mrs. Washington entertained, just as presidents today hold important state dinners in the White House. A large staff made it possible—including 13 servants and seven slaves.

For some people, it was all too much. They criticized the Washingtons for behaving like a king and queen. But for the president and his wife, entertaining well was important and part of the job. They found the house on Cherry Street too small for their purposes—the dining room would only hold 14 people. After less than a year, they moved to a larger house on Broadway. The house on Cherry Street was torn down in the 1850s.
abolition: The ending of slavery in the U.S.
apothecary: A pharmacy, or drug store.
Articles of Confederation: The constitution adopted by the 13 original states, during the American Revolution. It was replaced in 1789 by the U.S. Constitution.
board game: Games designed to be played indoors, on a tabletop, with cards, dice, or spinners.
bodkin: An ornament for pinning up women’s hair.
carpet: In colonial times, a thick piece of cloth, often made of wool, that could be used on a floor, bed, or tabletop.
counterfeit: A forgery presented as real.
currency: The money in circulation, whether coins or bills.
diaper: In colonial times, a fabric, usually linen, woven with a simple diamond pattern. Later, it came to mean underwear for babies.
dollar: Originally, Spanish money. After the American Revolution, the word was adopted for the new U.S. currency.
ducat: A Dutch gold coin.
Dutch Reformed Church: A Protestant denomination in Holland and the established church in New Netherland until 1664, when England took control of the colony.
farandine: In colonial times, a cloth made of silk combined with either wool or hair.
federalism: A system of government in which both the states and the central government exercise power.
Federalists: In the late 1780s, proponents of the new U.S. Constitution. During the 1790s, members of a new political party, which favored a strong central government; their opponents were the Democratic-Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.
financial system: Several connected parts, including banks and the U.S. Mint, that allow governments to lend and borrow money, and pay bills.
Flatbush: A section of Brooklyn, New York, settled by the Dutch.
inventory: A list of related items. Stores make regular inventories of every item on their shelves. After someone dies, an inventory is often done to determine in detail what the person owned.
kast: A Dutch word for a large cupboard where families stored their prized possessions; also called a “great chest.”
knickers: Short pants that ended just below the knee, worn by young boys in the 1800s (and by many baseball players).
lenticular: A printing technology that allows an image to be seen in different ways from different angles.
lodging house: A place to stay overnight, like a hotel or inn.
Malacca: A port in Indonesia, Southeast Asia.
mantua: A loose-fitting dress.
monarchy: A government in which power is held by a king or queen.
napkin: In colonial times, a piece of linen used to wipe the hands and mouth at a meal, or as a towel or handkerchief.
newsies: Children, usually boys, who sold newspapers on street corners in the 1800s and early 1900s.
oath: A formal promise, like the one recited by a president of the United States during an inauguration.
 orphan train: The name given to a program to relocate poor city children to new homes in other parts of the country. The program began with a Boston-based charity in 1853. The Children’s Aid Society orphan trains were in operation from 1854 to 1929.
parsonage: A house, usually provided by a church congregation, where the minister’s family lives.
pavilion: Usually, a free-standing structure. In the DiMenna Children’s History Museum, the word is used to describe the areas devoted to specific people or topics.
petticoat: An underskirt worn by girls and women, sometimes decorated and meant to show as part of the outfit.
quack: An untrained person practicing as a doctor.
Shaker’s herbs: Plant-based medicines grown, processed, packaged, and sold by Shaker religious communities, and considered the most reliable medicines available in the 19th century.
smallpox: A contagious, often fatal disease of adults and children.
stiffen: A clothing pin.
suff: In colonial times, a reference to fabric that had been filled out or stiffened.
troy weight: A system for weighing gold, silver, and jewels, in which 12 ounces is equal to one pound.
turkey worky: An old term for Turkish or Oriental carpets. “Turkey work” referred to the way the threads were knotted.
will: A legal document in which people declare what should happen to their possessions after they die.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND BOOKS FOR TEACHERS

NOTE: For a complete reading list, click here.


BOOKS FOR CHILDREN


OTHER MEDIA


Key Ideas and Details: 1) Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text; 2) Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas; 3) Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### Grades 6-8 students:

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<td>Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</td>
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<td>Identify key steps in a text’s descriptions of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law; how interest rates are raised or lowered).</td>
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Craft and structure: 4) Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone; 5) Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole; 6) Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

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Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7) Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words; 8) Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence; 9) Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

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Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10) Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
Grades 6-8 students:

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

<table>
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<td>Lesson One: What Did You Do Last Halloween?</td>
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<td>Lesson Two: Old Stuff</td>
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<td>Lesson Three: Cornelia Van Varick</td>
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Types and Purposes: 1) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence; 2) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

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<thead>
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<th>Grades 6-8 students:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content</td>
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<td>2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and</td>
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<td>information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization,</td>
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<td>and analysis of content.</td>
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Production and Distribution of Writing: 4) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; 5) Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach; 6) Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

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<tr>
<th>Grades 6-8 students:</th>
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<td>4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization,</td>
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<td>and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
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<td>5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen</td>
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<td>writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new</td>
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<td>approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.</td>
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<td>6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to</td>
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<td>interact and collaborate with others.</td>
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Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation; 8) Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

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<tr>
<td>7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated</td>
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<td>question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused</td>
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<td>questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.</td>
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<td>8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using</td>
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<td>search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and</td>
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<td>quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism,</td>
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<td>and following a standard format for citation.</td>
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<td>9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and</td>
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Range of Writing: 10) Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research,  
reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two)  
for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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<th>Grades 6-8 students:</th>
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<td>10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision)</td>
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<td>and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-</td>
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<td>specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</td>
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</table>
# 1. History of the United States and New York

Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

## Key Idea 1: The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture. Students will:

### Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1a. know the roots of American culture, its development from many different traditions, and the ways many people from a variety of groups and backgrounds played a role in creating it.</th>
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<tr>
<th>1.1b. understand the basic ideals of American democracy as explained in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and other important documents.</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1c. explain those values, practices, and traditions that unite all Americans.</th>
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### Intermediate

**explore the meaning of American culture by identifying the key ideas, beliefs, and patterns of behavior, and the traditions that help define it and unite all Americans.**

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## Key Idea 2: Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives. Students will:

### Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.2a. gather and organize information about the traditions transmitted by various groups living in their neighborhood and community.</th>
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<tr>
<th>1.2b. recognize how traditions and practices were passed from one generation to the next.</th>
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<tr>
<th>1.2c. distinguish between near and distant past and interpret simple timelines.</th>
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### Intermediate

**investigate key turning points in New York State and United States history and explain why these events or developments are significant.**

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## Key Idea 3: Study of the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups. Students will:

### Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.3a. gather and organize information about the important accomplishments of individuals and groups living in their neighborhoods and communities</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.3b. classify information by type of activity: social, political, economic, technological, scientific, cultural or religious</th>
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<tr>
<th>1.3c. identify individuals who have helped to strengthen democracy in the United States and throughout the world.</th>
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A Teacher's Guide to the DiMenna Children’s History Museum • 54
### Intermediate

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gather and organize information about the important achievements and</td>
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<td>contributions of individuals and groups living in New York State and</td>
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<td>the United States.</td>
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<td>Describe how ordinary people and famous historic figures in the local</td>
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<td>community, the state, and the United States have advanced the</td>
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<td>fundamental democratic values, beliefs, and traditions expressed in</td>
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<td>the Declaration of Independence, the New York State and United States</td>
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<td>Constitutions, the Bill of Rights, and other important historic</td>
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**Key Idea 4:** The skills of historical analysis include the ability to:
- explain the significance of historical evidence;
- weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence;
- understand the concept of multiple causation;
- understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments. Students will:

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<td>1.4a. Consider different interpretations of key events and/or issues</td>
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<td>and understand the differences in these accounts.</td>
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<td>1.4b. Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions</td>
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<td>of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and state.</td>
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<td>1.4c. View historic events through the eyes of those who were there,</td>
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<td>as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.</td>
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<td>Understand how different experiences, beliefs, values, traditions,</td>
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<td>and motives cause individuals and groups to interpret historic events</td>
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<td>and issues from different perspectives.</td>
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<td>Describe historic events through the eyes and experiences of those</td>
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<td>who were there.</td>
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*(Taken from the National Standards for History for Grades K-4)*

### World History

**Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.**

**Key Idea 1:** The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives. Students will:

#### Elementary

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1a. Read historical narratives, myths, legends, biographies, and</td>
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<td>autobiographies to learn about how historical figures live, their</td>
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<td>motivations, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.</td>
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<td>2.1b. Explore narrative accounts of important events from world</td>
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<td>history to learn about different accounts of the past to begin to</td>
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<td>understand how interpretations and perspective develop.</td>
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#### Intermediate

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<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs,</td>
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<td>traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living,</td>
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<td>education and socialization processes, gender roles, foods, and</td>
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<td>religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures</td>
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<td>and civilizations.</td>
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<td>Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant</td>
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<tr>
<td>developments and events in world history.</td>
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</table>
Key Idea 2: Establishing timeframes, exploring different periodizations, examining themes across time and within cultures, and focusing on important turning points in world history help organize the study of world cultures and civilizations. Students will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Idea 2</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2a. Distinguish between past, present and future time periods</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X X X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key Idea 3: The study of major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups. Students will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Idea 3</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2b. investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key Idea 4: The skills of historical analysis includes the ability to investigate differing competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain the importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time. Students will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Idea 4</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4a. Consider different interpretations of key events and developments in world history and understand the differences in these accounts</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4b. Explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4c. View historic events in the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X X X</td>
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3. Geography

Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

Key Idea 1: Geography can be divided into six essential elements, which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Idea 1</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1a. Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X X X X X X X</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1c. Locate places within the local community, state, and nation; locate the Earth’s continents in relation to each other</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X X X</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1e. Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment</td>
<td>L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9</td>
<td>X X X</td>
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</table>
### Intermediate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>understand the characteristics, functions, and applications of maps, globes, aerial and other photographs, satellite-produced images, and models</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>investigate why people and places are located where they are located and what patterns can be perceived in these locations</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x</td>
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<tr>
<td>describe the relationships between people and environments and the connections between people and places.</td>
<td>x x x x x</td>
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</table>

**Key Idea 2: Geography requires the development and application of the skills of asking and answering geographic questions; analyzing theories of geography; and acquiring, organizing, and analyzing geographic information.**

### Elementary

| 3.2a. ask geographic questions about where places are located; why they are located where they are; what is important about their locations; and how their locations are related to the location of other people and places. | x x x x x x |

### Intermediate

| formulate geographic questions and define geographic issues and problems. | x x x x x x x x |

### 4. Economics

**Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the U.S. and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and non-market mechanisms.**

**Key Idea 1: The study of economies requires an understanding of major economic concepts and systems, the principles of economic decision making, and the interdependence of economies and economic systems throughout the world.**

### Elementary

| 4.1a. know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources | x x x |
| 4.1c. know that scarcity requires individuals to make choices and that these choices involve costs. | x x |
| 4.1d. study how the availability and distribution of resources is important to a nation’s economic growth. | x |
| 4.1e. understand how societies organize their economies to answer fundamental economic questions: What goods and services shall be produced and in what quantities? How shall they be produced? | x x x |

### Intermediate

| explain how societies and nations attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce capital, natural, and human resources | x x x x |
| understand how scarcity requires people and nations to make choices which involve costs and future considerations | x x |
| understand how people in the United States and throughout the world are both producers and consumers of goods and services. | x x x |
5. Civics, Citizenship, and Government

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments, the governmental system of the United States and other nations, the United States Constitution, the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy, and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

Key Idea 1: The study of civics, citizenship, and government involves learning about political systems; the purposes of government and civic life; and the differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power, authority, governance and law. Students will:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1a. know the meaning of key terms and concepts related to governments, including democracy, power, citizenship, nation-state, and justice.</td>
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<td>5.1b. explain the probable consequences of the absence of government and rules.</td>
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<td>5.1d. understand that social and political systems are based upon people’s beliefs.</td>
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**Intermediate**

analyze how the values of a nation affect the guarantee of human rights and make provisions for human needs

| **Key Idea 3: Central to civics and citizenship is an understanding of the roles of the citizen within American constitutional democracy and the scope of a citizen’s rights and responsibilities. Students will:** |

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<tr>
<td>5.3a. understand that citizenship includes awareness of the holidays, celebrations, and symbols of our nation.</td>
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<td>5.3b. examine what it means to be a good citizen in the classroom, school, home, and community.</td>
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**Intermediate**

understand that the American legal and political systems guarantee and protect the rights of citizens and assume that citizens will hold and exercise certain civic values and fulfill certain civic responsibilities

explain how Americans are citizens of their states and of the United States

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