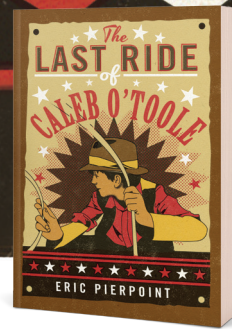


EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



THE LAST RIDE OF CALEB O'TOOLE

By: Eric Pierpoint

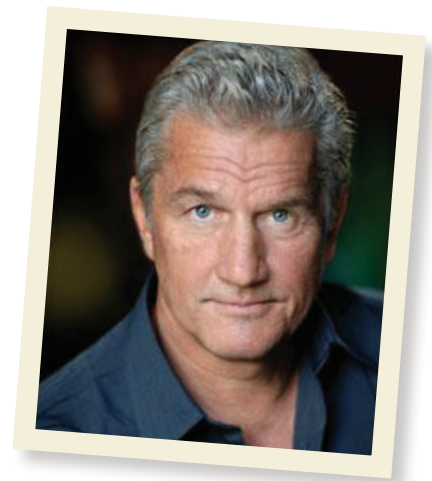
A Common Core State Standards-Aligned Activity Guide
Grades 4-7

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Caleb O'Toole, 12, and his sisters Julie, 15, and Tilly, 6, are left orphaned in the dangerous cattle town of Great Bend, Kansas. When he and Tilly witness a murder by the thieving Blackstone gang, Caleb must fulfill the last wish of his mother by escaping the killings and burnings in Kansas and taking his sisters to live with their aunt in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana. With the help of a gunfighter, they make a run for their lives along the treacherous Oregon Trail, desperately trying to elude the relentless pursuit of the bloodthirsty Blackstones. Along the way, they encounter tornadoes, hungry wolves, friendly Indians, and desperadoes as they travel through the rugged beauty of the American West in 1877, when the frontier was opening to settlers and the land was changing forever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eric Pierpoint was born in Redlands, California; raised in Washington, DC; and now lives in Topanga, California. He is a veteran Hollywood character actor whose credits include dozens of film and television productions. Now he has begun a writing career, and *The Last Ride of Caleb O'Toole* is his first book for children. Drawing on his family's colorful pioneer history, he has created a rousing Western adventure story, just like the ones he loved growing up. As he sat down to pull this story from his mind, he found that many of his "facts" about the Wild West came from Hollywood. He decided he had to experience for himself the journey he was going to write about. Setting out with his dog, Joey, he traced the route the O'Toole children take in the summer of 1877; from the flat prairies of Great Bend, Kansas, along the Oregon and Bozeman Trails to the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana.



PRAISE

"A suspenseful adventure with heart...the fast-paced adventure serves up a hearty history lesson with side dishes of political, social, and environmental commentary. Realistic and complicated characters give the familiar story of the pioneer's journey fresh life."

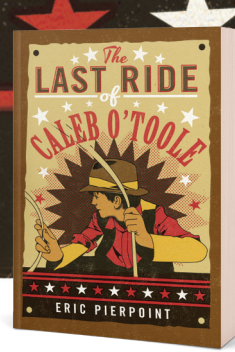
—Kirkus Reviews

"A rowdy Wild West adventure."

—Publishers Weekly



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Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Have students read the title and tagline of the book, and look at the cover illustration. Read the summary on the back of the book. Discuss their first impressions of the book. Will this be a comedy? Will it be serious? In what time period will the story take place? What sort of adventures will Caleb O'Toole and his family face?

1,300 MILES FROM HOME

Over the course of this book, the main characters will travel 1,300 miles along the trails across the American frontier. Use a large-scale map of the United States to measure out a length of string 1,300 scale miles long. Place one end on your community. Use the string to identify where you might end up if you were to travel 1,300 miles. Ask students to think about what it would take to make such a journey. Do they think they could travel that far? What means of transportation would they use? What troubles would they encounter? What would they need to bring?

WILD WEST HISTORY

What do students know about the Wild West? Have they read any other books about it? Have they seen TV shows or movies? What do they know about life in pioneer days? Discuss what things they have seen or read. Encourage them as they read the book to be aware and notice how this book is the same as the stories they know and how it is different.

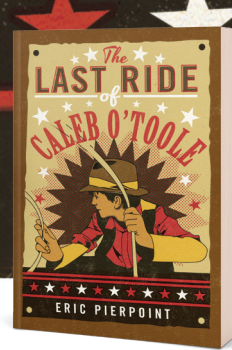
Discussion Questions and Activities

VOCABULARY BULL'S-EYE

Give students a sheet of paper with a bull's-eye drawn on it. As they read the book, ask them to note interesting words. If they know the meaning of the word, write it in the center of the bull's-eye. Words that they might recognize or understand from the context of the story go in the middle ring. The outside ring is reserved for words about which they have no idea. Ask them to: "Think. Pair. Share:" Think about what they're reading and the words they know. Pair up with another student and share their words. See if they can help each other with the word



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Discussion Questions and Activities Continued

meanings. Students should consult a dictionary for any words still not understood. Periodically through the book, come together as a class and have pairs share their words, especially the ones that stumped them. Pay particular attention to words with regional significance, or words related specifically to the period. Examples include “buckboard,” “Redleg,” “bleeding,” etc.

RL 4.4, 5.4, 6.4 RF 4.4, 5.4 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1 L 4.4, 4.6, 5.4, 5.6, 6.4, 6.6

CALEB'S PERSPECTIVE

This book is told from Caleb's point of view. Discuss the concept of the narrative voice (first person, third person, etc.), and the point of view character. As a class, select a part of the book and how it might look from a different character's point of view. Encourage students to imagine how this book might be different if it were told from other points of view, such as Caleb's sister Julie, the Blackstone gang, Henderson the gunfighter, or even Tumble the dog. Have each student select a pivotal scene and rewrite it as seen through the eyes of a different character.

RL 4.3, 4.6, 5.3, 5.6, 6.6 W 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

FACT OR FICTION

This book is a work of historical fiction. It blends real historical events with fictional characters and a fictional plot. Have students break into small groups and choose one or two facts or events that stand out from their reading of the book. Using the Internet or other reference tools, have them research these events and determine if they are true or not. Examples of events include: the Railroad Strike of 1877, Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce flee through Yellowstone, cholera epidemics, women being trained as doctors, etc. When they are done, have groups present their research to the class.

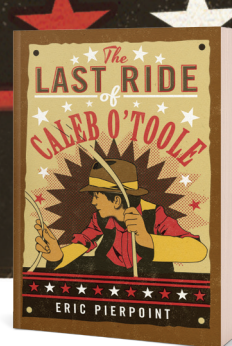
RL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1 W 4.7, 4.9, 5.7, 5.9, 6.7, 6.9 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

HIGH POINT

Ask students to identify their favorite part of the book. Have them review that section, reading it carefully. Working as individuals, have them write a one-page essay explaining their choice, citing specific reasons for it and sections of text they find effective or well-written. Break the class into pairs and have them discuss their selections. Based on feedback from this conversation, instruct students to refine and rewrite their paragraphs. When they are done with the revisions, have students share their favorite part of the book with the rest of the class.

RL 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 6.1 W 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10 SL 4.1, 4.4, 4.6, 5.1, 5.4, 5.6, 6.1, 6.4, 6.6

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Discussion Questions and Activities Continued

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

Have students create a comic strip/graphic novel style treatment of a sequence of events from the book. What's different about this format versus the book? Was it challenging to tell the story in this way? Have students present their comic strip to the class and explain what scene was illustrated, why that scene was chosen, and what details and elements were included. Create a display showcasing students' work.

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5 SL 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5

OR...

MAKE A SCENE

Ask students to choose a favorite scene from the book. Using the medium of their choice, have them create a diorama of that scene and write a description of the scene to accompany their diorama, summarizing the action they are depicting. Create a display showcasing students work.

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.7, 6.1, 6.2 SL 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5

SURVIVOR: OREGON TRAIL

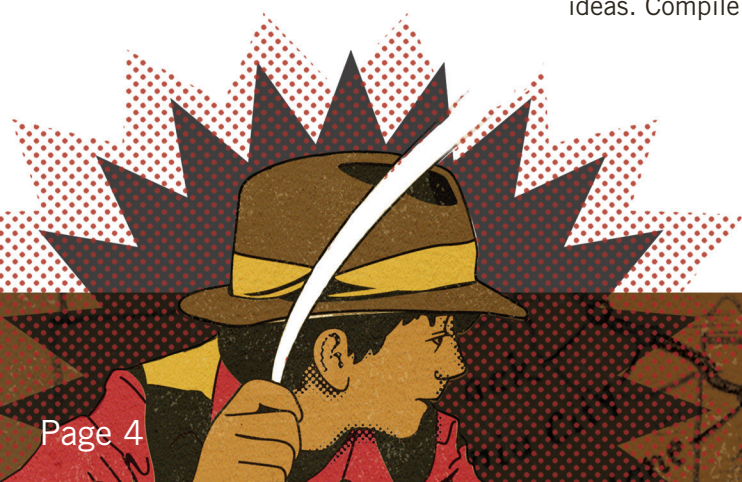
One of the big themes of this book is coming of age. From the beginning of the book to the end, all the children grow and change. Have students identify what specific skills the O'Toole children learned (shooting, tracking, first aid, etc.). Build from these specifics to identify more general life skills the children developed. Discuss how they changed and grew over the course of the story. Cite specific evidence from the text.

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

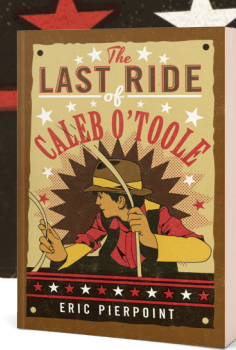
HELPING HANDS

A recurring message in this book is that we all need help, and working together can make it possible to achieve great things. Ask students to think about the different adults who helped the O'Toole children on their journey. Have students break into pairs to discuss the most important characters who helped the children, the effect they had on the children, and any skills they taught them or gifts they gave them. Come together as a class to share ideas. Compile a comprehensive list of the influential characters in this book.

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Discussion Questions and Activities Continued

A PIVOTAL MOMENT

Caleb and his sisters were traveling this land at a pivotal point. One of the major changes was the way the American Indian tribes were being removed from their lands and the settlers were moving in. A way of life was changing, disappearing for good. Ask the class to describe Caleb's interactions with the different Indians and tribes he met. Have students discuss how Caleb responded to each encounter, and how he felt toward the Indians. Have students cite specific passages. Be sure to look at the encounters from the Indian viewpoint as well. Discuss how the Indians responded to him. Discuss the main concerns of each group of Indians as presented in the book. Identify how other settlers felt and acted toward the Indians. Discuss how the army, different officials, and government representatives behaved.

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Caleb uses several different guns during his journey—both rifles and pistols. When he has reached the ranch that is their destination, he must trade his rifle for supplies they need. Have students describe how Caleb feels about trading the Henry. Using evidence in the text, discuss whether the deal was fair. Ask students to discuss how they felt about the episode—did it make them feel any empathy? Were they surprised it concluded as it did?

RL 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.3 SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

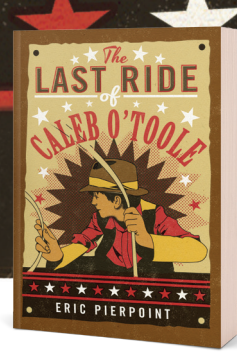
READER'S THEATER

Break students into small groups to discuss the book. Have them select 2 or 3 important scenes that would be fun to read aloud and that would work well when dramatized. Come together as a class to share the scenes each group has selected and the reasons why each scene would work. List them on the board. Have each group select a unique scene to perform. Working as a class, arrange the performances in the proper sequence. Once students have had ample time to practice, have each group present their scene to the rest of the class, in sequential order. Encourage students to use distinctive voices when reading their character's part. If the resources are available, make a video recording of all the performances. View the entire video sequence as a class. Discuss how the scenes work together, how the plot unfolds in the series of episodes, and how the characters respond and change between the critical scenes that have been read aloud.

RL 4.1, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.7 SL 4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 5.4, 6.1, 6.4



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Internet Resources

www.ericpierpoint.net ~ Author Eric Pierpoint's official website. Look for more information about him and the journey he took, as well as detailed information, including pictures, and a map charting the O'Toole Family's journey.

www.nps.gov/oreg ~ National Park Service's website about the Oregon National Historic Trail.

www.america101.us/trail/Introduction ~ America 101 has lots of interesting information about the Oregon Trail.

www.sparknotes.com/history/american/gildedage/section5.rhtml ~ This Sparknotes guide contains dates and information about important events and people that appear in the book.

www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/events/1870_1880.htm ~ PBS Timeline of Events in the West 1870–1880.

www.octa-trails.org/learn/people_places/articles_disrupt_natives.php ~ Information about the effect of settlers and the Oregon Trail on the way of life of the Plains Indians.

www.native-languages.org/kids ~ Resources about Native Americans for kids and teachers.

www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Comic-Book ~ Great tips for making a comic strip!

www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Diorama ~ Great tips for making dioramas!

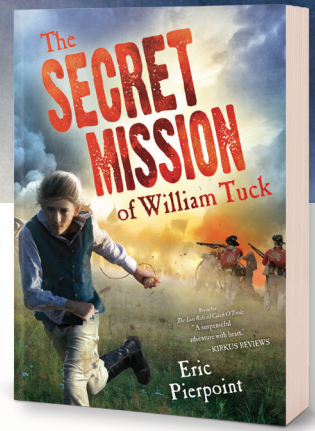
www.aaronsherp.com/rt/Tips.html ~ Tips for performing Reader's Theater by Aaron Shepard—includes information regarding scripting, staging, and reading.

Teacher's Guide prepared by We Love Children's Books, August 2013.

The Secret Mission of William Tuck

By Eric Pierpoint

A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades 4, 5, and 6



Note: The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for grades 4, 5 and, 6, but standards for other grades may also apply.

Prepared by We Love Children's Books

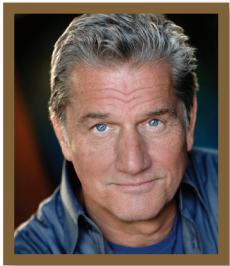
ABOUT THIS BOOK

William Tuck is set on justice. For his brother killed by British soldiers, for his friend Rebecca's father held prisoner by the redcoats, and for the countless other rebel Americans struggling beneath the crushing weight of British rule.

The whispered words of a dying man give William a mission he can't afford to fail. He bears a secret message intended for the leader of the rebel army. His friend Rebecca disguises herself as a boy, and she and William embark on an epic journey that draws them into a secret network of spies, pits them against dangerous gunmen, and leads them on a quest to find General George Washington himself.

The War of Independence blazes across the pages of this action-packed novel and keeps readers on the edge of their seats until the very last battle.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Eric Pierpoint is an award-winning author of historical fiction for middle grade readers. His first novel *The Last Ride of Caleb O'Toole* won the MPIBA award for best children's book and *The Secret Mission of William Tuck* has received a prized *Kirkus* starred review. He is a veteran Hollywood character actor whose credits include dozens of film and television productions. Eric was born in Redlands, California, raised in Washington, D.C., and now lives happily in the beautiful and rustic hills of Topanga, California. "Here, there's nothing but owls, crickets, and coyotes. I can just put my feet up and write!"

PRAISE

"The familiar events and historical figures surrounding the birth of the United States are made personal in this riveting story of one boy's unparalleled courage... Richly detailed and exhilarating."

—*Kirkus Reviews*, STARRED REVIEW

"The fast pace combined with nonstop violence and unflinching descriptions of unsavory aspects of 18th-century medicine and combat will engage readers who may not normally choose historical fiction. Instructive end notes provide an extension to the novel."

—*School Library Journal*

The Secret Mission of William Tuck

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A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades 4, 5, and 6



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

What do students know about the Revolutionary War? Have they read any other books about it? Have they seen TV shows or movies? What do they know about life in Colonial America?

Discuss what things they have seen or read. As they read the book encourage them to notice how this book is the same as the stories they know and how it is different.

The book students are about to read is filled with many examples of bravery, on a personal level and on a national level. Discuss with students what it means to be brave and provide examples. Are there times when they've had to be brave?

Many characters in this book are passionate about the cause of independence for the Colonies from Great Britain. Have students ever felt passionate about a cause? Have they ever stood their ground and fought for what they believed in?

VOCABULARY

Prepare a sheet with three columns and instruct students to keep an eye out for new words, or words used in an interesting manner, as they read the book. When they find such a word they should copy down the passage in which it was used, including the page number, in the first column. In the second column, they should define the word or phrase from context. Then they should look up the dictionary definition and record it in the third column. Break students into pairs to review their word choices and practice using them in sentences with each other. When they are done, come together as a class and discuss favorite vocabulary words from the small group sessions. What words and phrases are part of the language of the period in which the book is set? Why do students think the author chose a particular word instead of one similar in meaning?

RL 4.4, 5.4, 6.4

RF 4.4, 5.4

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

L 4.4, 4.6, 5.4, 5.6, 6.4, 6.6

POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

In the course of this book, we learn a great deal about William Tuck. He is a complex character, motivated by his belief in the Patriot cause, personal grief over the death of his brother, and the desire to help the new friends he meets on his quest. Have students pretend they are the spy hunter Shaw and write a profile of William Tuck from his point of view—that of a loyal subject of the Crown, dedicated to fighting rebel spies. Be sure students draw on all four sources of character information—what he looks like, what he does, what he says, and what others say about him—when writing the profile. How does Shaw's viewpoint change how William Tuck's character is described?

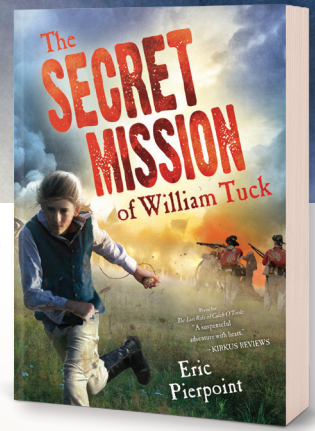
RL 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 5.1, 5.6, 6.1, 6.6

W 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10

The Secret Mission of William Tuck

By Eric Pierpoint

A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades 4, 5, and 6



YANKEE DOODLE MAPS

William and Rebecca travel a great distance through Colonial America on their mission to bring their secret message to General Washington. Using the Internet, library, or other resources, obtain a Colonial-era map of the area. Break the class into groups, one per chapter or several chapters, and have them read their section closely to determine where the action of their chapter takes place. Come together as a class and have each group trace the path covered in their section, describing how the children traveled and why they went where they did. When you are done, review a modern map and trace their route on it. How would their journey have been different in the modern day?

RL 4.1, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.3, 5.7, 6.1, 6.5

SL 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5

THEMATICALLY SPEAKING

Working as a class, discuss the major themes in *The Secret Mission of William Tuck*. One of the main themes in this book is bravery. As a class, track the theme of bravery through this story. Identify the moments in the book when characters exhibit bravery. What motivates them to be brave? After preparing their thoughts through this discussion have each student explore one of the other themes from the book in an essay. Remind students to cite specific evidence from the book to show how the plot, the setting of the book (both in place and in time), and the characters and their interactions communicate this theme. Do students feel the author is trying to express a specific opinion about this theme, or just exploring it? Break students into pairs to exchange their papers and edit and revise them based on peer feedback before submitting a final version.

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5

W 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.9, 4.10, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.9, 5.10, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.9, 6.10

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH

Patrick Henry wrote many pamphlets and spoke passionately about the cause of liberty. At one point, Rebecca quotes him, saying “Give me liberty or give me death.” On page 105, Peter Francisco, the Hercules of Virginia, is talking to William and Rebecca about his adventures in the Revolution. He says, “Once you’ve heard the words of Patrick Henry and the like, you do things you never thought possible.” What does this mean? What examples of heroic acts do we see in the story?

RL 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.5

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

A PIVOTAL MOMENT: LOYALIST VS PATRIOT

William and Rebecca were part of the American Revolution when many in the Colonies were fighting for freedom. During their journey, they encounter both Loyalists and Patriots. As a class, discuss the different attitudes expressed by colonists on both sides of the fight. How does the author develop their points of view? What reasons does the book give for the colonists on both sides feeling the way they do? Do these arguments make sense to the reader? What are the attitudes of the British soldiers in this book? The members of the Continental Army? Be sure to cite specifics from the text.

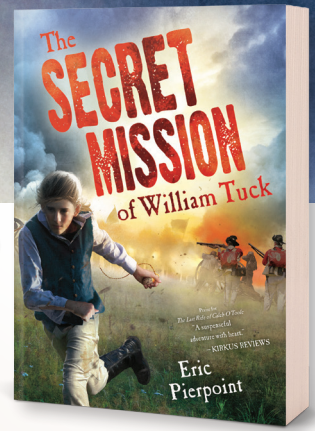
RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

The Secret Mission of William Tuck

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A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades 4, 5, and 6



A PIVOTAL MOMENT: SLAVERY

During their journey, William and Rebecca encounter many slaves. How is slavery depicted in this novel? Come together as a class and review William's interactions with the different slaves he come across. How do William and Rebecca's attitudes differ, and why? Be sure to look at the encounters from the viewpoint of the slaves as well. How did they feel about the Revolutionary War? How does the author convey the wide variety of attitudes toward slavery at this time through the different characters' experiences and points of view?

RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

HISTORICAL FICTION: THE WAY IT WORKS

As a class, discuss the process of writing and reading historical fiction. How is reading historical fiction different from reading a nonfiction book about the subject? What do readers get from *The Secret Mission of William Tuck* that they don't get from a nonfiction book or a biography? What can historical fiction teach more easily than other sorts of books about history? When writing historical fiction, what things can the author do that someone writing a text book can't? What are the most important things an author needs to research in order to write good historical fiction? (e.g., transportation methods, food, clothing, patterns of speech, etc.) What did students learn about the American Revolution from this book that they did not know before? What is the most important thing students learned from this book? Could that have been communicated as effectively by a work of nonfiction?

RL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 6.9

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

HISTORY: REAL PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

This book gives the reader insight into colonial life during the American Revolution. We meet soldiers, drummer boys, doctors, and more. The book describes the personalities and professional skills of these people in detail. In addition, many of the characters in this book were real people who lived and fought during the American Revolution. These details make the book immersive, and are educational for the reader. As a class, discuss these elements. Have each student select their favorite period activity, occupation, historical person, or event from the book for further research. Using the Internet and library resources, have students write a research paper on their chosen topic. The paper should include an assessment of how accurate the depiction was and specific citations showing how the author conveyed historical details about the person or topic through the story. Break students into pairs and have them revise and edit their paper based on peer feedback. Establish a template for students to follow and have them enter their papers into the computer. Publish these final pieces into a collection entitled *The History behind the Story*.

RL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

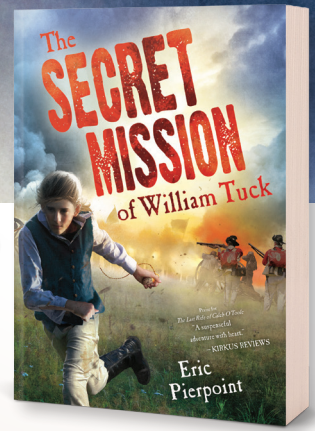
W 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.10, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

The Secret Mission of William Tuck

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GRUDGE MATCH: THE CONTINENTAL ARMY VS THE REDCOATS

The army that opposed the British in the Revolution was called the Continental Army. Come together as a class and discuss the Continental Army. What sorts of units made up the Continentals? What was their training and how were they organized? What other army fought with them? How did these armies compare? Why did the Colonists enlist—what were they fighting for? What were they fighting against? How did the Continental Army differ from the British Army? How did they treat each other during battle and after they were captured? Discuss the concepts of prison ships, prisoner exchanges, and granting “parole” to enemy soldiers. Be sure students cite specifics from the text and encourage them to use library and Internet resources to explore these topics further. If there are any Revolutionary War reenactment groups in your area, they could provide an impressive addition to the students’ learning experience.

RL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

W 4.7, 5.7, 6.7

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

VISUALIZING THE SECRET MISSION OF WILLIAM TUCK

The Secret Mission of William Tuck is an action-packed adventure story that lends itself to a visual treatment. Have students select a section of the book and create a graphic novel or comic book-style version of it. Break them into small groups to share their work with each other, discussing what part of the book was illustrated, why that scene was chosen, and what details and elements were included. Come together as a class to discuss the challenges they encountered in converting a text novel to an illustrated format. What is different about telling a story this way? What was easy to do? What was hard? Put the pieces in the proper chronological order and create a classroom display. Working with the help of an adult, have students digitize their graphic novel pages and publish a class version of The Secret Mission of William Tuck: Graphic Novel Edition.

RL 4.1, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.5, 5.7, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5

W 4.5, 4.6, 5.5, 5.6, 6.5, 6.6

SL 4.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.5, 6.1, 6.5

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

William and Rebecca encounter many interesting characters on their quest, some help them on their way and some try to stop them. Break students into small groups and have them make a list of the people our heroes encounter, identifying them either as “allies” or “enemies.” Come together as a class and share these lists. In what ways did people help them succeed in their mission? There are situations where William and Rebecca think they are being helped by an ally, only to be betrayed. Review these instances of betrayal. Does the author provide any clues that something is going to go wrong? Do William and Rebecca become suspicious? How do these episodes contribute to the plot of the story?

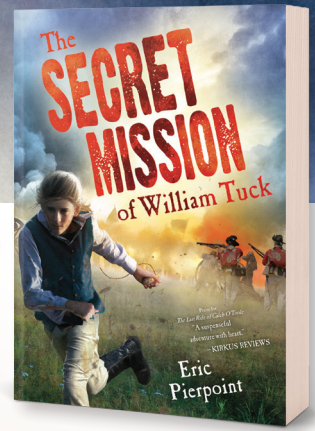
RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

The Secret Mission of William Tuck

By Eric Pierpoint

A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades 4, 5, and 6



CODES AND SECRET MESSAGES

Codes and secret messages were very important to the patriots and their cause during the Revolution and are very important to the plot of this story. Some codes are described in detail and used in the plot—such as the thirty-five code. Others are referred to in passing, such as the Culper Code. There are also many methods of sending concealed messages—from hiding notes in roasted chickens to using invisible ink. As a class, review the different sorts of codes and secret messages that William and Rebecca encounter during their adventures. How do codes differ from secret messages? What secret messages were sent in this book, and how were they sent? Break students into pairs and have them create messages for each other using the thirty-five code. Was it easy or hard to encrypt messages in this way? Students can also try to write “secret messages” of their own by using lemon juice and making the letters appear using a light bulb or other heat source. Was it difficult to write a note using this method? Encourage students to explore this topic further using Internet and library resources.

RL 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5

W 4.4, 4.7, 5.4, 5.7, 6.4, 6.7

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

REVOLUTIONARY READER'S THEATER

Break students into small groups and have them review the book. Have each group select an important scene that would work well when read aloud. Come together as a class to share the scenes each group has selected. After ample practice have each group present their scene to the rest of the class, arranging the performances in sequential order. Encourage students to use distinctive voices when reading their characters' parts. Use this exercise to discuss how the scenes work together, how the plot unfolds in this series of chosen episodes, and how the characters respond to events and change.

RL 4.1, 4.3, 4.7, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.7

RF 4.4, 5.4

SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What pivotal moment makes William leave his family and join the Continental Army?
2. What is William's role in the Continental Army? What is the importance of a drummer boy? How did he learn his skills?
3. In William's first battle, he helps a dying soldier. What happens in this encounter and how does it set his course for the rest of the story?
4. What clues did William and Rebecca have that made them suspicious at the Pendleton estate?
5. After being captured by Shaw at the Pendleton estate, where was William imprisoned and what were the conditions?
6. How does William escape the prison ship, and who helped him?
7. What message did William carry and why was it crucial to the success of the Revolution?
8. How did Washington respond to the message William carried? Why was he suspicious?
9. Describe the final encounter between William and Captain Scroope. How did it end?
10. How did William's family fare during the war? What was the farm like when he left? What was it like when he returned?

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Visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards listed in this guide:

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>



INTERNET RESOURCES

<http://www.ericpierpoint.net/> ~ Author Eric Pierpoint's official website. Look for more information about him and his books.

http://www.ducksters.com/history/american_revolution.php ~ Look here for a wealth of information for kids regarding the American Revolution, including information about the events, people, battles, and more.

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/after1500/history/revolution.htm>
Succinct summary of the American Revolution for kids.

<http://www.revolutionary-war.net/> ~ A colorful, storytelling overview of the American Revolutionary War, with biographies of the founding fathers, little-known facts, and information on the spies, soldiers, women, and other famous Americans involved in the War for Independence.

<http://mrnussbaum.com/american-revolution/> ~ Another good site filled with information, including timelines, biographies, interactive battles map, and additional resources for teachers and students.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Comic-Book> ~ Great instructions for making a comic strip!

<http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt/Tips.html> ~ Tips for performing Reader's Theater by Aaron Shepard—includes information regarding scripting, staging, and reading.