



A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers

Aligned to the Common Core Grades 1-3

Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *Alexander Hamilton: American Hero* as classroom read-aloud or as a selection for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

About the Author and Illustrator

Barbara Lowell loves writing for children and history. Combining the two, she writes nonfiction biographies and historical fiction picture books based on true stories. She is the author of *Daring Amelia*, *Sparky and Spike*, *My Mastodon*, and more books for children. Visit her at: <https://www.barbaralowell.com>.

George Ermos is an illustrator and avid reader from England. He works digitally and enjoys illustrating all things curious and mysterious. Teens and young readers are the preferable audience, but he has catered for most young audiences.

Common Core Aligned for Grades 1-3

1st: ELA.RI.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7; W.1.2, 1.3, 1.7, 1.8; SL.1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5; L.1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5

2nd: ELA.RI.2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6; W.2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 2.8; SL.2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.4, 2.5; L.2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5

3rd: ELA.RI.3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7; W.3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8; SL.3.1, 3.2, 3.4; L.3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5

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Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the cover illustration of *Alexander Hamilton: American Hero*. Describe what you see. Which person do you think is Alexander Hamilton? What do you think he is doing? How do you think he feels?
2. Can you predict when the story takes place? What clues can you find in the cover to support your prediction?
3. Read the text on the back of the book. What do you learn about the story from this blurb? What questions does it raise about the story?
4. Using all this information, can you make any predictions about what might happen in the book?

Reading Nonfiction...

While reading *Alexander Hamilton: American Hero*, have students take notes using the table below. They should pause before each page turn to add notes to the columns. These columns can either be done individually or hung on the board and worked on as a class.

Things We Learned (Facts)	Questions We Have	Answers We Found

Once the story is read, discuss the *Questions We Have* column.

- Were any of these questions answered as the story went along?
- If so, ask students to find the answer within the text.
- Record the answer next to the question in a third column labelled *Answers We Found*.

For all remaining questions in the *Questions We Have* column, that have yet to be answered, students will need to take the steps to find answers, either through the Internet or book research.

- Discuss how to find answers to questions through research.
- Assign students to specific questions to help them focus.
- Record all answers in the *Answers We Found* column.

After the answers have been shared with the class, engage in a discussion on research practices.

- What was most difficult about finding answers?
- Was it easier to find answers on the Internet or in a book?
- Which source is more reliable, the Internet or a printed book? Why?
- How can you determine whether to trust a source?
- What tips would you give someone who is about to do research?

As You Read...

1. Alexander Hamilton was an American Founding Father.
 - a. What is a Founding Father? Explain in your own words.
 - b. Alexander Hamilton was not born in America. Where was he born?
 - c. Find where Alexander Hamilton was born on a map.
 - d. Research information and images of Nevis on the Internet.
2. Who was Alexander Hamilton? Draw an outline of a human figure on a large piece of paper to represent Alexander.
 - a. As you read *Alexander Hamilton: American Hero*, write any known details about Hamilton inside the outline. Outside of the outline, discuss and write any questions about Hamilton that you might have.
3. Describe life for Alexander Hamilton when he was ten years old.
 - a. How is his life different from yours?
 - b. Are there any similarities to your life?

- c. Based on the text and illustrations on pages 6-7, what three words would you use to describe Alexander Hamilton?
4. What is an orphan?
5. Why do you think Alexander Hamilton's uncle saved his mother's books for him?
6. What do you think Hamilton liked best about working at the shipping company?
 - a. Why do you think he finally decided he wanted a better life? What changed?
7. Because of his impressive writing about the hurricane that hit his island, Alexander was sent to America to study. Read segments of this writing here: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letter_by_Alexander_Hamilton_on_the_hurricane_of_August_1772
 - a. Why do you think Hamilton wanted to write to his father about the hurricane?
 - b. Why do you think people were impressed by this writing?
 - c. Listen to the song "Hurricane (clean version)" from the musical *Hamilton*. Raise your hand, or make notes, when you hear information that was included in the first thirteen pages of *Alexander Hamilton: American Hero*. How many references can you find?
8. What is a patriot?
 - a. What did the patriots that Hamilton met in America believe in?
9. List the many leadership positions and actions that Alexander Hamilton took during the Revolutionary War.
10. After the Revolutionary War, why was the Constitution needed?
 - a. What role did Hamilton play in creating and putting the Constitution into place?
11. President George Washington appointed Alexander Hamilton as his secretary of the treasury. What is the role and purpose of a secretary of the treasury? Research on the Internet.
 - a. Alexander Hamilton was the first secretary of the treasury. Using the internet, research who the current secretary of the treasury is.

- b. How many secretaries of the treasury have there been?
12. In what ways did Hamilton use his position as secretary of the treasury to strengthen America?
13. How did Alexander Hamilton die?
- a. What is a duel? Watch the following video for more information:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7krrriXVaRk>
- b. On YouTube, search for videos about the Hamilton-Burr duel. Watch a few of these videos and create a newspaper with a headline about the duel, detailing what you find. One link to watch is:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3z7aBj4SbI>

After You Read...

Here are a few extension activities to further the learning and the fun!

Step into History

Have students work together to create a newscast about one of the following events in the life of Alexander Hamilton to present to their classmates.

- The hurricane of St. Croix and being sent to America.
- The Revolutionary War as George Washington's "right hand man."
- The Battle of Yorktown.
- Defending the Constitution.
- Position as secretary of the treasury.
- The duel with Aaron Burr.

Students will write a script and take on the roles of anchors and on-site reporters. Students can choose to interview characters and eyewitnesses. Videotape the final newscasts so that students can watch themselves on TV.

On the Money

As the Founding Father who set up America's financial system, Alexander Hamilton appears on the ten dollar bill. But who is on the rest of our money? And why?

Research one of these other faces on our money:

- George Washington
- Thomas Jefferson
- Abraham Lincoln
- Andrew Jackson
- Ulysses S. Grant
- Benjamin Franklin

Possible sources for information:

- Nonfiction books
- Encyclopedias
- The Internet

Take notes and gather as much information as possible.

- Who was this person?
- Most significant events in their life.
- Legacy (their contributions to America)
- Other fun facts
- When they first appeared on money

Once the information is gathered, work to create either an illustrated poster or booklet of the findings. Include your opinion as to WHY this face was included on our money.

BONUS: If we were to create new money with a different face of someone contemporary, who has contributed a lot to America, who would you pick and why?

- Design the bill with this new face on it.

Hamilton's legacy

A eulogy is a speech that is often given at a funeral to highlight the key events of a person's life and their legacy or what they leave behind.

Write a eulogy for Hamilton.

Then, in groups of 3-4, create a "still or frozen image" of a statue to Hamilton's memory.

Decide as a group where this statue would be erected: his birthplace, Weehawken where he died, in front of the treasury building, his home in Manhattan, or another location.

Share these statues with the rest of the class as eulogies are read.

Hamilton: An American Musical

Look closely at the poster of the Broadway musical *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Why do you think the designers chose to use these colors and images for a musical about the life and legacy of Alexander Hamilton?

Using evidence from *Alexander Hamilton: American Hero*, re-design the Broadway poster to include specific elements from his life's story.