

ENGLISH



K-3
Foundational
Skills



GRADE 3
FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS UNIT 9

George Meets Mr. Henry

Reader

EDITION 1

Grade 3

Foundational Skills 9

George Meets Mr. Henry

Reader

Acknowledgement:

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A Note to Readers

This text is historical fiction, meaning that it is a type of story that takes place in the past. Some of the events in the story are true and some are from the author's imagination. Readers often enjoy historical fiction because it helps them to better understand the events of history and feel like they were there. The story you will read is told through the eyes of George. George is a made-up character, but many of the events that he experiences in the story really did happen. Williamsburg, where George lives, is a real town in Virginia. The historical figure that he meets, Patrick Henry, was a real person from history who is remembered today for the famous speech that George describes in this story.



Chapter

1 Chores to Do, Errands to Run

George woke up in the early morning darkness. He pulled the heavy quilt up to his nose and shivered. It was early March in the **colony** of Virginia. George had noticed the days were getting warmer, but the mornings were still chilly!

George could see that the sky outside his small window was getting brighter, and it was time to get up and start his day. There were chores around the house and **errands** to run in town. George shivered as his feet touched the cold floor, so he quickly grabbed his shoes. The chickens would be looking for their breakfast, and he was feeling pretty hungry, too!

The **aroma** of cornmeal mush floated into the sleeping loft he shared with his brothers. His mother was up and cooking breakfast. His father had probably already eaten and left for his silversmith shop on the main street of Williamsburg, where the family lived.

George's first stop today would be to his father's shop to drop off a meat pie for the midday meal. Many wealthy colonists lived in and around Williamsburg, so his father was always busy at his shop.

George's mother smiled as he sleepily approached the large table where she had set out a bowl and a mug for his breakfast.

"Feed the chickens then come eat breakfast," she said as she stirred the pot on the cooking fire. George grabbed his jacket and stepped outside into the cool morning air.



He was glad that his family lived in town and not on a farm, where there would be fields to plow and many more animals to tend.

Feeding the loud and fussy flock of chickens his mother kept in their yard was one of his least favorite chores.

They were waiting for him to arrive this morning and circled his feet as he approached. One very brave hen pecked at his ankle, causing him to trip and spill some of the feed. George, defeated, quickly completed his task and hoped his mother would ask one of his brothers to gather the eggs today. He didn't want to spend more time in the coop.

George returned to the house. His two brothers ate their breakfast of steaming cornmeal mush and dried apples from the **root cellar**. George smiled gratefully at his mother as she filled his bowl. He ate while his mother reminded him of the day's errands.





“Bring your father his meal first. He was up and out of here so early that he’ll be starving by midday. Then stop into the **inn** to see your uncle. Ask him if he’s bringing the whole family here for dinner tomorrow.”

Before George could open his mouth to reply, his mother began speaking again.

“Don’t go lollygagging at the inn or around town, George. A lot is happening these days. Stay focused on your errands. Do you understand me?”

George nodded. He knew he needed to do what his mother asked, but Virginia in 1775 was a fascinating place. How could his mother expect him to ignore the chatter about the British king’s new taxes and laws he was imposing on the colonists?

The arguments in the shops, inns, and even the streets of town were becoming increasingly **heated**.

Some of the men in town didn't think that the colonies could survive without the support of England, but many others disagreed. They wanted the colonies to form their own country, free from the king's rule.

His mother interrupted George's thoughts by handing him his father's meat pie. She shooed him out the door, saying, "You remember what I told you, George. Do your errands and come right home. There's wood that needs chopping and some weeds starting to pop up in the garden. You don't have time to listen to all those men talking nonsense about fighting and special meetings. Hurry now!"





Chapter

2 Freedom

George set off down the road toward the central part of town. All around him, Williamsburg was waking up. The blacksmith's hammer was already pinging as he **forged** horseshoes, and the tailor was opening his shop as George strolled past. Men were gathering in groups on the street and talking in hushed voices.

George longed to know what they were saying. He knew a larger meeting, called a convention, was being planned for later that month in Richmond. Could the men be talking about that **impending** meeting? How might their decisions affect George, his family, and his friends here in Williamsburg? George walked into town, while his thoughts about everything happening in the colonies continued to gnaw at him.



Because Williamsburg was the capital of Virginia, and Virginia was one of the largest and wealthiest colonies, exciting things had been happening over the past few years. George knew that Britain and its king relied on the colonies to grow bountiful crops and produce the goods England needed. England must maintain a strong connection to its colonies if it was to continue its economic growth and exploration of the world.

George knew from the talk he'd heard in town some of the colonists were growing **restless** under England's rule. They thought it was nonsense that they didn't have any say in the laws that the colonies had to follow. They wanted to make their laws and decisions for themselves.

One of the most recent laws forced colonists to allow British soldiers to live in or around their homes, use their resources, and eat their food. This was known as quartering. Many Virginians and other colonists felt it was wrong for the king to ask them to do this.

George liked the idea of the colonists getting to make their own rules. He'd heard people talking about a different kind of government, one that didn't have a king or queen in charge. They wanted to make their own choices about who represented them in the government and who got to decide about the laws. This sounded good to George, too, since he always felt proud when his mother or father let him help make choices for himself.






He felt grateful, knowing his parents trusted him to think carefully about his decisions, making him want to work harder to do the right thing.

He wondered if it was the same for the other colonists. If the king let them make some of their own decisions, wouldn't it make them feel like they were valued citizens? He felt like a valuable part of his family when he got to help make decisions that affected all of them. George wondered if anyone had tried to explain things to the king like that so he would stop making so many rules. Probably not, he decided, since you'd probably need to use fancy words when you talk to kings.

George turned the corner onto the main street in Williamsburg. Many people were out now. Women shopped at the dressmakers and admired the beautiful bonnets in the window. He was happy to see a few customers in his father's silversmith shop. Father was always happiest when he had a lot of work to keep him busy.

George entered the shop. He could hear his father talking with one of the farmers living just outside town. "These laws are just too much. Some winters, I can barely feed my own family. How can I also provide for British soldiers who are living in my house or my barn?

A colorful illustration of a street scene. In the foreground, a young boy with red hair, wearing a blue jacket and yellow pants, walks towards the left, carrying a small brown object. A brown dog follows him. To the left, a person in a blue dress and hat walks up a set of steps. A large wooden barrel sits on the ground. In the background, two women in long dresses and bonnets walk away. The scene is set in front of a yellow building with a window and a red building with a doorway. The sky is blue with some clouds.

I've worked hard to make a wonderful life here, and I don't understand why someone in England gets to tell me what I can and can't do."



The man slapped his knee for emphasis.

George's father shook his head **sympathetically**. "I see what you're saying, James, I really do. I couldn't understand what was happening in the Massachusetts Bay Colony at first, with them getting so angry about the tea tax. Now it's starting to make sense. The freedom to make choices is more valuable than anything else."

At that moment, George's father saw him and immediately stopped talking. His father did not want George to worry about these matters.

George offered him the wrapped meat pie. His father took it and told him to go on his way.

As George stepped back into the street, his father's meaningful words stayed with him: "Freedom is more valuable than anything else ..."



Chapter

3 Talk Around Town

George ran down the street to his uncle's inn. He hoped to get there before it got crowded for the midday meal. His feet raced, along with the ideas in his head. He had been hearing people talk about the discontent in the colonies for a while now, expressing their unhappiness with England. So why were things suddenly becoming more **urgent**?

George ducked through the door of his uncle's inn. It wasn't quite time for the midday meal, but a few groups of men had already gathered at the tables in the small room where his uncle served stew along with the cider he pressed in the fall.

“Most of my family still lives in England. I choose to live here, but I’m English. The king will always be my king. Why would the colonies want to leave the protection of England, the greatest country in the world?”

These words came from a man sitting at a corner table. The other man nodded his head in agreement.

“If we lose our ties with England, where will I get the goods I sell in my shop? We can’t make items like that here in the colonies.”



George realized that he hadn't thought about how breaking ties with England might cause problems for the colonists. Would his father have trouble getting silver? How could he do his job without the supplies sent from England? What would happen to his family if his father couldn't work in town?



Would they have to leave Williamsburg? Would they go live on a farm? He didn't think his father knew how to plant fields of crops, and George was certain that he didn't want to be taking care of any more chickens!

George spotted his uncle talking to some other men near the door to the kitchen. His uncle looked very interested in something the men were telling him.

George wondered if they were talking about the same thing everyone else was: the problems between England and its colonies. "They say the colonies will work together and support each other. They've sent the king messages telling him we won't pay his taxes. Some people think we should be training a **militia**."

“I don’t see how this can end without a fight, and I’m ready for it!” The man speaking to George’s uncle looked extremely excited as he said the last words.

George’s uncle silenced the man. “Quiet! Not everyone here in Williamsburg agrees with you. Some people would be angry to hear you talk like that!”

George thought the man was right. The freedom to make laws was important. The colonists would then be able to decide what mattered most to them and live the way that they wanted. George thought this might be worth fighting for, even though it seemed dangerous.





His uncle noticed that he was listening and winked at him.

“Do you like what you hear, George? Would you and your brothers like to grow up in a brand-new country with brand-new ideas?”

George nodded. He had many brand-new ideas floating around in his head today!

Remembering that his mother had sent him to the inn for a reason, George asked his uncle about dinner the next day and said goodbye. He could hear the conversation start again as he left. “Did you hear that Patrick Henry is in town? They say he’s preparing to give a speech at the convention in Richmond.”

He wants to convince the delegates who are attending that it is time to get the colony of Virginia ready to defend itself,” said the man to his uncle.

“I hope that he can do it!”

Patrick Henry is here in Williamsburg! George thought.

He'd heard people talking about Patrick Henry. Henry believed it was time for the colonies to stand against England's rules and taxes. He thought the colonies could do a better job ruling themselves than the king. George also knew that Patrick Henry gave speeches people listened to. If anyone could convince the important men at the meeting that it was time to fight for freedom, it was Patrick Henry!





Chapter

4 Patrick Henry

George knew it was time to head home. His mother would be wondering why he had been gone for so long. He passed a beautiful church, an important building in Williamsburg that townspeople often used for meetings. This morning, however, it was empty—or so George thought. But when he walked by, he noticed the door was slightly open. Someone was inside, and whoever it was, they were stomping around, sounding very frustrated.

George could not contain his curiosity. He **crept** up the front steps and applied slight pressure to open the door very slowly. He sneaked in quietly and sat in one of the back pews.

The man up front didn't detect George's arrival. He kept talking to himself as he paced back and forth. George could see that the man was unhappy and likely did not want to be disturbed. He decided to sneak back out before the man saw him. But when he stood up, he knocked a book to the floor. It landed with a loud BANG, and George knew he had been discovered. It was too late to sneak out now!

The man spun around quickly and stared at George. George tried to smile, but the man looked furious.

"What are you doing here?" the man demanded. George gulped and took a deep breath.



“Hello?” he said. “I heard you talking and wanted to see what was going on.”





“I’m sorry that I disturbed you. I’ll go now.” He turned to leave, but the man’s voice stopped him.

“No,” he sighed. “It’s all right. I could use a break. I can’t seem to find the words that I’m looking for. I shouldn’t have yelled at you, but you startled me. When I am working on a speech, I get very focused.” The man reached out to shake George’s hand and said, “My name is Patrick Henry. Who might you be?”

George couldn’t believe he was face to face with the famous Patrick Henry.

“M-m-m-y name is George,” he answered nervously. “I’m very pleased to meet you, Mr. Henry. I’ve heard so much about you!”

Patrick Henry **chuckled**. “I hope you’ve heard only good things! Tell me, George, how are you at giving speeches? I am struggling a bit myself.”

“I’ve never given a speech, sir. But I’m sure that yours will be fantastic,” George replied. “Why are you having trouble?”

“I need to convince some very skeptical people that we are at a moment in our history of great importance. They may disagree with me, but they must understand that our **liberty** is at stake. My experience tells me that the time for hoping Britain will change their ways has passed. Our arguments have been useless so far. We must prepare to make greater sacrifices!”





“Well . . .” George started. “I don’t know what *skeptical* means . . . or *useless* . . . or *sacrifices* . . . but I think that what you’re saying is that the king doesn’t seem to be listening to the colonies. He wants to make laws and **impose** taxes without letting us have any say. Is that what you mean?”

“Mainly, yes, but I feel that it’s more complicated than that . . .” Patrick Henry answered.

“You’re probably right, sir. But I’ve been thinking a lot lately about the changes that might happen if the colonies try to break away from England.

“It makes me worried when I think about it, but then I think about how exciting it would be to grow up in a new country where people like me could have a say in important decisions.

“Maybe Father is right when saying nothing is more important than our freedom.” George took a deep breath and looked at the floor. He shouldn’t have tried to correct Mr. Henry. He was just a kid!

“George, my young friend, you may be right. I might be making this more complicated than it is. That gives me an idea.” Patrick Henry jumped up and walked back to the front of the room.

He waved briefly at George and then went back to muttering as he paced. George quietly got up and left the building. He couldn’t believe that he had just spoken to Patrick Henry. Even Mother couldn’t be angry at him for being late when he told her about this!





Chapter

5

News from Richmond

Days passed. George thought often about his talk with Patrick Henry. People in town continued to discuss their biggest concerns about the colonies' future. Some people wanted to stay a colony under the king's rule, and others believed even more strongly than ever that the colonies should fight for their freedom.

George fed the chickens and did his other chores back at home, including scrubbing the floors and running more errands for his parents. He dreamed about a new country where he could be a leader one day, even though he wasn't a king or a prince.

He understood that the cost of freedom might be significant, but it would be worth the fight.

News reached Williamsburg a few weeks later. People talked about Patrick Henry's speech, convincing many that it was time to prepare for a break from England and the controlling king. He spoke of many important ideas in the speech, but everyone remembered the straightforward ending: "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

He smiled when George heard people talking about how **impactful** that simple phrase was. He wasn't regretting how he had interrupted Patrick Henry now.



J. Goussier del.

Palais de l'Assemblée Nationale, le 20 Septembre 1792

J. Goussier fecit.



George remembered the great man agreeing it was a simple idea: Nothing is more important than freedom. He was proud that he had played a small part in helping Mr. Henry convince other colonists that it was time to look ahead to a bright future and a new country.



As the years went by and the colonies' fight for freedom continued, Patrick Henry's cry, "Give me liberty or give me death!" became a famous reminder of the importance of the revolution.

Americans remember this phrase today, and remember that the right to vote, have a say in our government, and express our ideas freely make America a special place to live.



Author's Note

This story is historical fiction, which means it's made up but based on actual events. For example, Patrick Henry, known for his speeches, could have been in Williamsburg, Virginia's capital at the time. In March 1775, a momentous event, The Second Virginia Convention, took place in Richmond, Virginia, not in Williamsburg. They chose Richmond instead of Williamsburg for this meeting because the Governor, who supported the king, lived in Williamsburg.

At this convention, Patrick Henry stated that the colony of Virginia should create militias, groups of trained citizen-soldiers, to resist British forces. He believed this might stop Britain from sending so many soldiers to the colonies to enforce their laws. After he made these suggestions (called resolutions), he delivered his famous speech.

Historians, people who study history, say that Patrick Henry didn't usually write his speeches down. He kept his ideas in his head and spoke spontaneously. So, we don't have proof that he precisely said, "Give me liberty or give me death!" However, other figures, like Thomas Jefferson, who attended the convention, wrote about his speech, leading us to believe he likely said this phrase or something similar.

GIVE ME
LIBERTY



Patrick Henry's warning that the colonies would need a militia against the British proved correct. His words, "Give me liberty or give me death," became a powerful motto, symbolizing the importance of freedom to Americans.

OR GIVE ME DEATH

Glossary

A

aroma (uh-ROH-muh): an odor or smell arising from spices, cooking, etc., especially a pleasant smell

C

colony (KAH-luh-nee): land or settlement connected to a parent country

crept (krept): moved slowly and carefully

chuckled (CHUHK-uhld): laughed quietly

E

errands (ER-uhnds): short trips taken to collect or accomplish something

F

forged (forjd): formed by heating and hammering

H

heated (heet-id): excited or angry

I

impactful (im-PACT-ful): having a large effect on something

impending (im-PEND-ing): about to happen

impose (im-POHZ): to set as something that needs to be followed, done, or obeyed

inn (in): a place providing accommodations, food, and drink, especially for travelers

L

liberty (LIH-bur-tee): freedom from external rule; independence

lollygagging (LAH-lee-gag-ing): wasting time

M

militia (muh-LIH-shuh): a group of citizens who are called for military service (not professional soldiers)

R

restless (REST-luss): uneasy, not able to remain at rest

root cellar (SELL-er): an underground storage area where fruits and vegetables are stored

S

sympathetically (sim-puh-THET-ik-lee): in a way that shows an understanding of others' feelings

U

urgent (UR-jent): requiring immediate action; important

About this Book

This book has been created for use by students learning to read with the program. Readability levels are suitable for early readers. The book has also been carefully leveled in terms of its “code load,” or the number of spellings used in the stories.

The English writing system is complex. It uses more than 200 spellings to stand for 40-odd sounds. Many sounds can be spelled several different ways, and many spellings can be pronounced several different ways. This book has been designed to make early reading experiences simpler and more productive by using a subset of the available spellings. It uses *only* spellings students have been taught to sound out as part of their phonics lessons, plus a handful of Tricky Words, which have also been deliberately introduced in the lessons. This means the stories will be 100% decodable if they are assigned at the proper time.

As the students move through the program, they learn new spellings and the “code load” in the decodable Readers increases gradually. The code load graphic on this page indicates the number of spellings students are expected to know in order to read the first story of the book and the number of spellings students are expected to know in order to read the final stories in the book. The columns on the opposite page list the specific spellings and Tricky Words students are expected to recognize at the beginning of this Reader. The bullets at the bottom of the opposite page identify spellings, Tricky Words, and other topics that are introduced gradually in the unit this Reader accompanies.

TRICKY WORDS:

gone, immediately, Massachusetts, Virginia, Williamsburg

Code Knowledge added gradually in the unit for this Reader:

- Identify and explain synonyms and antonyms.
- Identify the meaning of words with affixes (*im-*, *non-*, *-ful*).
- Identify and explain homophones.
- Identify and explain homographs.
- Decode multisyllabic words with digraphs (*gn*, *kn*, *wr*).
- Decode multisyllabic words using soft 'c' and soft 'g.'
- Decode words using suffixes that change the base word by dropping final 'e.'
- Decode words using suffixes by changing 'y' to 'i.'
- Decode words using suffixes by doubling final consonants.

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