

Praise and Honors for *Washington at Valley Forge*

★ "Fascinating."— *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ "Another stunning work from the nonfiction virtuoso."

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

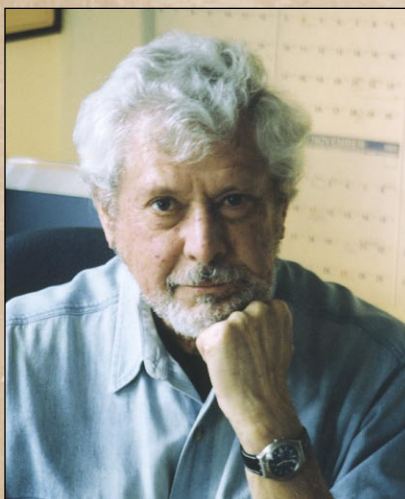
ALA Notable Children's Book

NCTE Orbis Pictus Honor Book

School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

Booklist Children's Editors' Choice

Kirkus Reviews Best Children's Book of the Year



Evans Chan

About the Author

Russell Freedman, one of America's most honored writers of nonfiction books, grew up in San Francisco and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley. After serving with the Second Infantry Division during the Korean War, he worked as a reporter and editor for the Associated Press and later as a publicist for several network television shows. His first book, *Teenagers Who Made History*, was published in 1961. Since then he has been a full-time writer.

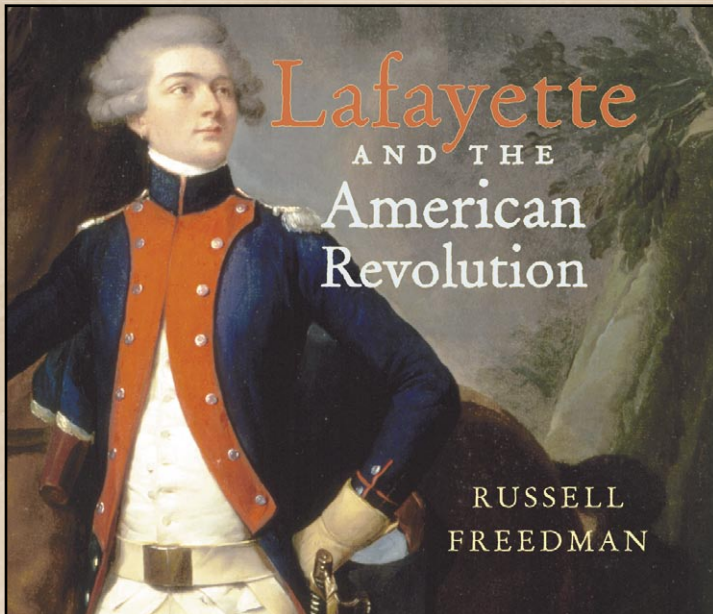
The Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, has called Russell Freedman "America's Historian for Young People." The author of more than fifty nonfiction titles, Mr. Freedman has received numerous awards, including the Newbery Medal, three Newbery Honors, the National Humanities Medal, the Orbis Pictus Award, the Robert F. Sibert Medal, the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award, and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for "a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children." Russell Freedman lives in New York City and travels the globe to gather material for his works.

"Like every other writer, a nonfiction writer is essentially a storyteller. Whatever my subject, I always feel that I have a story to tell that is worth telling, and so I want to tell it as clearly and simply and effectively as I can, in a way that will stretch the reader's imagination and make that reader care."

—RUSSELL FREEDMAN

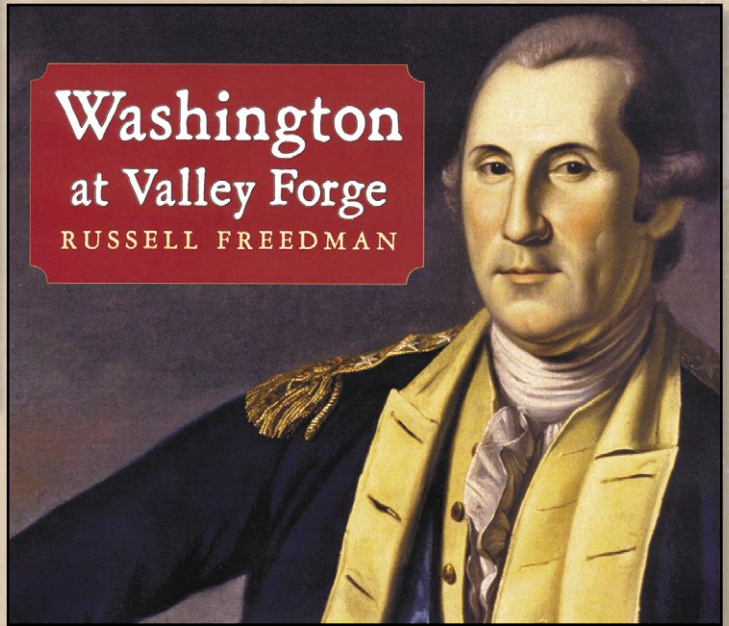
Guide prepared by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

Holiday House Educators' Guide



Lafayette and the American Revolution

978-0-8234-2182-4



Washington at Valley Forge

978-0-8234-2069-8

Russell Freedman

Grades 5 up

About the Books

Newbery Medalist Russell Freedman has written, in his inimitable style, two intriguing works about the American Revolution.

Lafayette and the American Revolution is the thrilling account of a daring soldier, a strong-willed nineteen-year-old who had never set foot on a battlefield but who quickly earned the respect of his fellow officers with his bravery, devotion to liberty, and incredible drive. He joined George Washington over the difficult winter at Valley Forge, and won his lifelong affection.

In *Washington at Valley Forge*, Freedman tells the powerful story of the survival of American soldiers while camped at Valley Forge during a crucial period in the American Revolution. The army was at its most vulnerable; but when the harsh winter drew to a close, the soldiers had survived, and marched away from Valley Forge more determined than ever. The British were defeated in 1783; and Washington, for the rest of his life, said that the credit for the American victory belonged to the soldiers who had braved the horrific conditions at Valley Forge.

Both books are illustrated with prints, drawings, and full-color paintings; and each includes a time line, index, source notes, and bibliography. Both will capture the imaginations of—and fascinate—young historians.

Pre-Reading Activity

Divide readers into small groups and ask them to take a Quick Revolutionary War Tour: www.ushistory.org/march/phila/background.htm. Challenge them to compose and perform a rap called "The American Revolution in Summary."

Classroom Discussion

- ★ Explain why Freedman refers to Lafayette as the "Mysterious Stranger" (p. 1, *Lafayette and the American Revolution*). How do events of Lafayette's childhood foreshadow his later yearning to distinguish himself as a soldier?
- ★ When Lafayette was eleven, his mother took him to Paris to begin his education as a gentleman. Discuss what this type of education included. How was Lafayette different from the other boys at the Collège du Plessis? Lafayette was considered quite spirited. How did his behavior and temperament make him unsuited for a life as a French gentleman?
- ★ Lafayette's marriage advanced his military career in France because his wife's father had great influence and was able to get his son-in-law an attractive commission. Why was Lafayette so dissatisfied with his military role in France? Discuss why it was so important for Lafayette to "seek glory across the Atlantic" (p. 16, *Lafayette and the American Revolution*).
- ★ Upon reporting to George Washington, Lafayette said, "I am here to learn, and not to teach" (p. 33, *Lafayette and the American Revolution*). What did Lafayette expect to learn from Washington? At what point did Washington realize that Lafayette was ready to take command of a large military unit?
- ★ Washington referred to Lafayette, Alexander Hamilton, and John Laurens as his "military family" (p. 41, *Lafayette and the American Revolution*). How did Washington become a father figure to them? Discuss the relationship that developed among the three young men.
- ★ Lafayette was quite well-known for his personal charm. How did his charm ultimately win over his critics in France?
- ★ At seventeen years of age, Private Joseph Plumb Martin was already "a battle-tested veteran" (p. 2, *Washington at Valley Forge*). He had enlisted in the Continental army at age fifteen. Compare his hunger for battle to that of Lafayette. Young Martin and Lafayette became "boy" soldiers. At what point did they become men?
- ★ Explain why John Adams thought that Washington was the logical choice to be the commander in chief of the Continental army. Why was Washington reluctant to accept the post? Benjamin Rush, a Congressional delegate, described George Washington as having "martial dignity in his deportment" (p. 8, *Washington at Valley Forge*). Explain what he meant by "martial dignity." How did this observation by Rush qualify Washington for the job?
- ★ Discuss Lafayette's contribution to both the American Revolution and the French Revolution.
- ★ The Oneida Indians made an important contribution to the Continental army during the American Revolution. Why were they such good scouts? There was mutual trust between the Oneida Indians and George Washington and Lafayette. How did each party earn this trust? The Oneidas adopted Lafayette and gave him the name Kayewla. Discuss the significance of this honor.
- ★ Valley Forge wasn't a battlefield but an encampment for George Washington's troops. Think about the hardships that the soldiers endured during the winter at Valley Forge. What did Washington do to boost the morale of his troops? Debate why historians call Valley Forge a turning point in the American Revolution.
- ★ What is the significance of Washington's surprise attack on the British on Christmas Day, 1776?
- ★ Discuss the inaccuracy of the painting of Washington crossing the Delaware (p. 15, *Washington at Valley Forge*). What is symbolic about Washington's towering statue?

- ★ Certain high-ranking officers criticized Washington's leadership and felt that he should have been removed from his command. What prompted their criticism? Why did Washington remain silent to their criticism? Discuss the term "seeing is believing." How did members of Congress change their attitude toward Washington once they met him and saw the condition of his army?
- ★ Lafayette was granted a leave of absence from the Continental army and sailed home on a ship named the *Alliance* (p. 54, *Lafayette and the American Revolution*). Why was this an appropriate name for the ship? He took with him a resolution from Congress that praised his service. They called him "wise in counsel, gallant in the field, and patient under the hardships of war" (p. 54, *Lafayette and the American Revolution*). Document each of these qualities with examples from the text.
- ★ How was Lafayette a trailblazer and a man beyond his time? How did his desire for military glory turn into something far more important by the end of the American Revolution?

Research and Activities

- ★ Write a eulogy that Lafayette might have written for George Washington.
- ★ Take a look at the following site on the American Revolution: www.theamericanrevolution.org/. There are a number of biographies of people who made a contribution to the American Revolution. Think about why Lafayette isn't included. Then write an entry for him. Include photos or artwork collected from the Internet.
- ★ Silas Deane promised Lafayette a commission as a major general in the American army. This was highly irregular since Deane had been instructed to award rank based on previous service. Prepare an oral argument that Deane might have made to the Continental Congress defending his promise to Lafayette.
- ★ Ballads are poems that tell a story and are often set to music. Read some of the ballads from the American Revolution at the following site: <http://americanrevolution.org/warsongs.html>. Think about the mutual admiration between Lafayette and George Washington. Write a ballad that one of these men might have written about the other.
- ★ The National Park Service website (nps.gov/vafo/index.htm) says Valley Forge is "fundamental to both American history and American myth." Discuss the difference between history and myth. What are the distinguishing characteristics between fact and fiction? Have students take a documented fact about Valley Forge and write it as a myth. Ask them to share their myths in class. How do simple word choices mask the "truth"?
- ★ Design a poster for Women's History Month that honors Molly Pitcher's contribution to the American Revolution.
- ★ Write a feature story for a newspaper about George Washington's surprise attack on the Hessian garrison at Trenton on December 25, 1776. Include who, what, when, where, why, and how. Make the story interesting by including eyewitness accounts and quotes from key people such as George Washington. Don't forget a snappy headline.
- ★ Washington loved the theater and had a stage built at Valley Forge. Those performing became known as Washington's Strolling Players. Read "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Divide students into small groups and ask them to take Longfellow's poem and write it as a one-act comedy, tragedy, or musical.
- ★ Lafayette returned to Paris in 1782 to seek more aid for the Americans. By this time he was a hero among the French. Poems and pamphlets praising him were on sale at bookstalls throughout Paris. Write and illustrate a pamphlet about Lafayette and his success as a soldier in the Continental army. Include an appeal to the French for supplies, clothing, and financial aid.
- ★ Take a virtual field trip to learn about the *American Turtle*, the one-man submarine used during the American Revolution: mayflowerfamilies.com/a_1776_submarine.htm. Write and illustrate a comic book about this submarine, its failed mission, and its success in frightening the British.
- ★ There are many towns, cities, and counties in the United States named for Lafayette. Locate a list of these places and plot them on a map. Write a tribute to Lafayette that each of these places may include in their history.