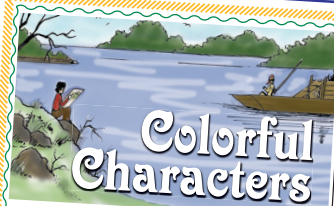


Colorful Characters

Companion Teaching Activities to the historical fiction serialized story

Teaching Activities written by
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Colorful Characters Chapter 1 - by Kay Hively

Nine-year-old George Bingham looked out the south window of the Square and Compass, his father's inn and tavern. Heavy rain was falling on already-muddy streets.

The year was 1820, and Franklin, Missouri, was a bustling town on the Missouri River. It was a trader's town, but today the streets were empty.

The Square and Compass had only two customers.

The rain was depressing to George, who liked seeing teams of oxen pulling the big wooden carts up and down the streets. When people came to the inn, they told exciting stories, so he liked having many people at the inn. The rough and colorful bullwhackers, with long leather bullwhips at their sides, always had the best stories.

Strangers who came to the inn brought news that had been carried upriver by the

boatmen. Traders and the boatmen always had news, and they always had money. Sometimes George dreamed of being a boatman. But for now, his job was to help his parents and get an education.

Turning away from the window, George began cleaning the fireplace. It was his job to keep a good fire. That meant removing the

ashes each day and building a new fire so his mother could cook and keep food warm.



George carried the ashes out the back door and dumped them into a pit. As raindrops fell on them, the ashes sizzled and popped. Usually George took time to draw in the black ashes, hoping to find a glowing coal to give a dot of color to his artwork. But the rain was too cold to spend time drawing pictures.

Hurrying back inside, he started a new fire. As the fire gently flamed, George's mother brought pots and kettles from the kitchen. George helped hang pots on the big hooks above the fire, and placed big black kettles on an iron grate. He liked helping his mother because she worked very hard in the kitchen and took care of his younger brothers and sisters.

With the new fire going, George went to the kitchen to wash the black smudges off his face and hands. Large crates of supplies had come that morning, so he stacked them away at the back of the kitchen. Because it was close to the Missouri River, the Square and Compass always had plenty of food and supplies.

When his kitchen chores were done, George went back to the dining room just in time to see the door open. From across the room he saw the silhouette of a large man in the doorway. The man's body filled the entire door frame.

As the stranger stepped inside, rain dripped off his coat and puddled on the floor. The man walked across the room to an empty table by the fireplace. Carefully, he set a large canvas bag on the floor.

Young George Bingham could tell this was no ordinary bullwhacker or boatman.

This man was different, and George suspected the stranger had a story to tell.

Next Chapter: A Wonderful Opportunity

Things to Think About and Do

1. On a U.S. map, find the Missouri River. Trace the river from its beginning out west until it dumps into the Mississippi River. Figure the length of the river between those two points.
2. The stranger was "silhouetted" in the doorway. Ask a friend to pose for you and then draw a silhouette of his or her head and shoulders. Color the silhouette with a black crayon.
3. George's family runs an inn and tavern called the Square and Compass that is important in his community. Use clues from the story to determine what roles the business serves. Look for ads in your newspaper for businesses in your community that fill similar roles.

GLEs: R1G, R1H, R2C, R3C, MM1A, SS5A, IL1B

Learn more about George Bingham by visiting the following Web sites:
<http://jhs.umsystem.edu/famousmissourians/artists/bingham>
bingham.stnml@boone
www.georgecallebingham.org/bio.htm
www.vangoghgallery.com/artists/bos/George_Caleb_Bingham.html
www.binghammuseum.org

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both from Neosho, MO. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation, ©2000



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“Colorful Characters”

By: Kay Hively

Elementary Curriculum Guide

Created by: Jennifer Hawkins
St. Clair RXIII, Gifted Education

“Colorful Characters” is a historical fiction story that takes place in the early 1800s. This story is a great springboard for discussions about US history and geography. It also offers many great writing opportunities. The questions have been designed to help students prepare for state-mandated testing. The questions are best suited for grades 3-5 but can be easily modified to meet the needs of other grade levels.

To learn more about Arrow Rock, Missouri, visit these Web sites:

www.friendsar.org
www.arrowrock.org
www.lyceumtheatre.org

"Colorful Characters"—Create a Book

"Colorful Characters" will be published one chapter at a time for 8 consecutive chapters. Have students create their own books with the chapters of the story.

Materials Needed:

- Newspapers
- Newsprint or Construction Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Crayons, Markers, or Colored Pencils
- Table of Contents Worksheet
- Glossary Worksheet
- Stapler, yarn and hole punch, or any other materials you'd like to use to bind the book together

Steps for creating the book:

1. Create a cover for the book with the title, author, name of the book creator and picture.
2. Create a simple title page with the title and author.
3. Put the book pages in order
 - Cover
 - Title Page
 - Table of Contents
 - 4 Blank Pages (paste chapters on these as you read them)
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Back Cover
4. Bind the pages together
5. Each day the story is published, cut and paste the new chapter in the book and complete the Table of Contents and glossary excerpts.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: _____

Chapter 2: _____

Chapter 3: _____

Chapter 4: _____

Chapter 5: _____

Chapter 6: _____

Chapter 7: _____

Chapter 8: _____

Glossary

Directions: Write the definitions to the following terms that can be found in the story. Because most words have more than one meaning, just record the definition that pertains to this story.

admire _____

apprentice _____

bullwhacker _____

canvas _____

collision _____

deliberate _____

flatboat _____

guidance _____

intrigued _____

mentor_____

merchant_____

optimism_____

portrait_____

preliminary_____

routine_____

silhouette_____

territory_____

torrent_____

unruly_____

vessel_____

Directions: Create a map of the US geographic locations mentioned in this story. Make a map key for the following geographic locations then label your map.

- Franklin
- Arrow Rock
- Boonville
- Missouri River
- Santa Fe Trail
- New York
- Mexico border



1. The story begins in the year of 1820. Compare and Contrast 1820 to today in regard to the following categories. You may use reference materials to help you.

1820	In Regards To	Today
	Transportation	
	Clothing	
	Shelter	
	Communication	

2. Use context clues to explain what a bullwhacker does.

3. What was George's main chore in this chapter and why was his job important?

4. Describe the setting for the story.

5. Design a sign for the Square and Compass.

Writing Connection:

- Research important events from 1820. Write a front page news story for a newspaper during that time period.

Newspaper Connection:

- Write five headlines that would be found in a newspaper during the 1820s period.
- Bullwhackers, traders and boaters always told stories at the inn. Locate the "Help Wanted" section in your local newspaper. Cut out job descriptions of job opportunities that might give people interesting stories to tell. Explain your choices.

1. Do you think George is a hard worker? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

2. George's father gave him a gift. What was it? If you could have a special gift, what would it be? Why?

3. Think about the time period and predict who you think is the subject of Chester Harding's oil drawing? Why?

4. If your family owned a hotel, who would you like to stay there? Why?

Writing Prompt:

- Chester Harding was a master artist of his time. Using library resources and the Internet, research Chester Harding or another famous artist. Using what you learn, write a biography or create a poster about the artist.

Newspaper Connection:

- What is your idea of art? Locate a picture or drawing from the newspaper that is worthy of being framed. Cut it out and frame it with construction paper. Describe its special qualities.
- A gift does not always need to be something purchased. Find a picture or headline in your local newspaper that shows a special gift being given (one that was not purchased at a store).

1. Why do you think George was so excited to learn Chester Harding was drawing Daniel Boone?

1. Why did Chester Harding choose the Square and Compass to finish his drawing?

3. Using information from the story, calculate the following:

What year was Daniel Boone born? _____

What year did Lewis and Clark end their journey? _____

What year did George's family moved to Franklin? _____

4. George said that he didn't think he would ever get a chance to travel very far from home. Why do you think he felt that way?

Writing Connection:

- Harding was drawing a portrait of Daniel Boone, a famous Missourian. Read about Daniel Boone. Choose a person from history who you feel has contributed greatly to our state, and write a persuasive essay about that person. You must persuade your audience that your person deserves the honor of "Most Famous Person in our State's History."

Newspaper Connection:

- In your local newspaper, locate a picture of someone you feel is worthy of having their portrait painted or sketched. Sketch their picture and describe why you chose that person for the honor.

1. What did *George* learn from Mr. Harding?

2. List three details that prove *George* likes Mr. Harding.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. List two sets of antonyms used in this chapter.

_____	_____
_____	_____

4. Describe the most exciting thing you've done in your lifetime. How does that compare to *George's* experience?

5. Using a map scale, estimate how many miles it is from St. Louis to New York.

Writing Connection:

- Write a song, jingle, or poem about *George Caleb Bingham's* life.

Newspaper Connection:

- The boatmen sang as they worked. Locate an interesting article in your local newspaper and write a short song about it.
- Create a newspaper ad promoting the Square and Compass.
- Locate and circle antonyms in the newspaper.

1. Who opened the Santa Fe Trail and what was its significance to our history? Be specific.

2. Name at least three major cities the Santa Fe Trail passed through.

3. Describe the events that caused hardship to *George's* family.

4. Use library resources or the Internet to read about Missouri entering statehood. Describe the important issues dealing with Missouri becoming a state.

5. Predict who you think the familiar figure is getting off the boat.

Writing Connection:

- Becknell told stories about the money he made in Mexico after returning from his journey on the Santa Fe Trail. Pretend you are William Becknell and create a journal about your experiences on the trail.

Newspaper Connection:

- In your local newspaper, locate a picture or an article about someone you'd like to hear make a speech. Write a speech that you might hear that person give.

1. Use context clues to describe what the word torrent means.

2. What simile was used to describe the words coming out of George's mouth as he shared what had happened since 1820 with Chester Harding?

3. Why do you think George was nervous when Mr. Harding looked at his drawings?

4. Do you think Mr. Harding liked George's drawings? Why?

5. What is an apprentice? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

Writing Connection:

- When George met Mr. Harding again, he told him about everything that had happened since their last meeting. Pretend you are George, and summarize the important events that have happened since they last saw each other.

Newspaper Connection:

- In the "help wanted" section of the Classifieds, locate a job that you'd like to have an apprenticeship. Cut and paste the ad on a separate piece of paper and describe why you'd like to learn that particular profession.

1. Why did the author choose to print the word WANTED in uppercase letters?

2. What was George's favorite place to be, and who did he like to be with? What is your favorite place to be, and who do you like to be with?

3. What did Chester Harding suggest George draw? Why?

4. Was Chester Harding a good teacher? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

5. What did Chester Harding teach George about drawing people?

Writing Connection:

- Create a shape poem. Use the words of things you find "close to your heart" to trace the shape of a heart on a piece of white paper. Then cut out your heart shape and paste it on red or pink construction paper.

Newspaper Connection:

- George Caleb Bingham promised to draw things that were "close to his heart." Locate pictures and words from the newspaper that are "close to your heart," and paste them on a separate piece of paper to form a collage.

1. Compare and contrast a flatboat to a steamboat using the chart below.

steamboat	both	flatboat

3. What did *George* mean by "one day the river he had always known would be gone?"

4. Describe at least three ways the Missouri river is different today than it was in the 1820s.

5. Do you think "The Missouri Painter" is a good nickname for *George Caleb Bingham*? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

Writing Connection:

- Create an acrostic poem using the words "The Missouri Painter." Include words and phrases that tell about *George Caleb Bingham* and his life.

Newspaper Connection:

- *George* liked talking politics at his local newspaper. Locate an article in your local newspaper that involves politics. Create an editorial cartoon depicting the article.
- *George* was given the title "The Missouri Painter." Look through the newspaper for someone from your state who is exceptionally good at what he/she does and give that person the title of "The (your state) _____." Describe why he/she deserves that title.