

Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds

Objective: The student will be able to identify and describe the contributions made by Lafayette after the American Revolution.

Materials: *Marquis de Lafayette – The Hero of Two Worlds* from the Children’s Biography Books series by Baby Professor

Introduction: Ask students to recall ways Lafayette contributed to America’s success in the American Revolution. They might mention how he convinced France to support the colonists against the British with money, soldiers, and the Navy; how he commanded troops; how he spent his own money to aid the American cause. Then explain that after the war, Lafayette returned to France and joined another revolution.

Lesson: The book for this lesson covers Lafayette’s entire life, but you might skip over the American Revolution and start with the chapter “Working for Reform in France.” Read and share the photos.

Pause at the page about the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Explain that Thomas Jefferson helped Lafayette write this document. Ask students if they recognize a similar American document (the Declaration of Independence). Ask how the two are alike.

Keep reading. Chapter “Danger” – Explain that the French Revolution was a period of time in France when the people overthrew the monarchy (rule by kings) and took control of the government. It began in 1789 when the revolutionaries stormed a prison called the Bastille. The French celebrate July 14 as Bastille Day much like we celebrate the 4th of July. Before the revolution, people were divided into strict social groups in which the commoners paid most of the taxes and the nobility lived lives of luxury. One of the extreme leaders wanted to stamp out any opposition to the revolution, so he passed laws that said anyone suspected of treason could be arrested and executed by guillotine. Because he was considered nobility, Lafayette was viewed as an enemy even though he supported the commoners and rights of all people.

Keep reading.

Ask students why they think Lafayette turned down the offer to become dictator of France.

Assessment of understanding: Give each student a card divided into 2 columns, one side marked America and the other marked France. Ask students to identify one contribution Lafayette made to each country.