

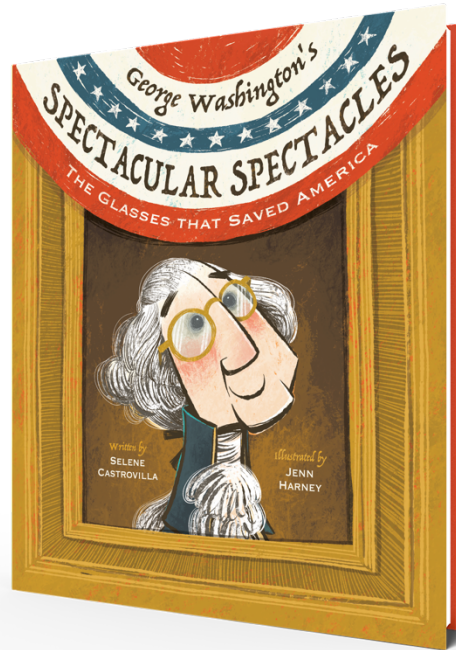
DISCUSSION GUIDE

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SPECTACULAR SPECTACLES: THE GLASSES THAT SAVED AMERICA

Written by Selene Castrovilla
Illustrated by Jenn Harney

\$18.99 US/\$24.99 CAN
ISBN 9781662680434 HC
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Grades: 2-5
Ages: 7-10



ABOUT THE BOOK

Did you know that George Washington had a secret? He wore glasses! While initially embarrassed by his reliance on this reading aid, Washington's spectacles proved to be nothing short of spectacular in this charming, funny, and little-known picture book story from American history.

The Revolutionary War was over, but Washington's officers had not received their wages from the Continental Congress in years. Afraid they would never get their money, the officers planned to storm Congress and demand it right away. Luckily, George Washington found out about the plot just in time. He delivered a passionate speech to his men, but they were unaffected. It was only when he struggled to read aloud a letter from Congress and had to put on his glasses, that they realized how much he had sacrificed for their country along with them. The officers dropped their plan and pledged their loyalty to America and to Washington.

Selene Castrovilla's carefully researched, playful prose and Jenn Harney's energetic illustrations bring Washington's more human side to life in this story about true American loyalty.

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PRAISE FOR GEORGE WASHINGTON'S SPECTACULAR SPECTACLES

★ "The author of many children's books based on research into American history, Castrovilla tells her latest story with wit, pathos, and attention to detail. Harney's quirky illustrations suggest the look of the period while capturing the amusing tone of the narrative."—**Booklist, starred review**

"Allowing readers to experience this event through Washington's lens, literally, makes for an original, thought-provoking framing... an enlightening tale, enlivened by droll, retro illustrations."
—**Kirkus Reviews**

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STORY

- Why did everyone think George Washington was grouchy? What does grouchy mean?
- Why did George Washington keep the fact that he wore glasses a secret? What do you think it tells us about his character?
- Like George Washington, the army officers also had a secret. What was their secret?
- What were three emotions both George Washington and the army officers felt?
- After George Washington found out the army officers intended to storm the Congress, what did he do to stop them?
- Why did George Washington's epic speech backfire?
- After George Washington read Congress' letter to the army officers, their attitude changed, and they agreed to wait for their back pay. Why?
- Did the army officers love and respect George Washington? What in the story tells us this?
- How do the illustrations in this book help tell its story? What are some of the emotions the pictures make you feel about the characters?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Many people, including children, wear eyeglasses today. Why was George Washington worried about people finding out he wore glasses when it doesn't matter to us these days? What has changed?
- George Washington's secret was he wore spectacles. The army officers' secret was they were going to attack the Congress. Why are some secrets good and why are some secrets bad? How do you think secrecy can be both a strength and a challenge for a leader? Can you think of other moments in history where secrecy played an important role?

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- The Newburgh Conspiracy was a real historical event where Washington's officers almost rebelled because they hadn't been paid. Why do you think Washington's leadership was so important during this time?
- What would happen to the army officers' family if the officers did not get paid their back wages?
- Imagine yourself in George Washington's position. How would you feel when you found out about what your officers were planning? Do you have other ideas about what you could do to stop them? Do you think George Washington did the best thing?
- Imagine yourself in the unpaid officers' position. How would you feel? What would you do to try and get paid? Would you consider doing what the officers almost did? Why or why not?
- What might have happened if George Washington didn't put on his glasses?
- What is the difference between a speech and a letter? In your opinion, which is more effective in getting your message across? Why?
- In what ways can we still relate to the idea of keeping secrets for a good cause today?

EXTRA CREDIT

- Why was George Washington living in New York?
- How did people earn their living in colonial times in America? Draw a picture, make a chart, or write a report showing the difference between making a living in 1783 and now.
- In colonial times, people wrote in cursive using pen and ink. Write a letter to George Washington describing your life using cursive writing and a pen.
- Brainstorm an issue you feel strongly about. Decide whether to give a speech or write a letter about the issue. Present your speech/letter to your classmates. Did you convince them of your point of view? What went right? What went wrong?
- On page 28, the author explains the Newburgh Conspiracy, the historical event behind the story. Alexander Hamilton was behind the conspiracy. Who is Alexander Hamilton and why is he a famous and influential character in American history? Write an essay about what you think about Alexander Hamilton's role in the Newburgh Conspiracy, and his role in the American Revolution.
- The Newburgh Conspiracy almost ended democracy. What would have happened to America if there was no democracy? Would we have had a king? Who might have been the king? Write an essay about what democracy means, and why/if it is important.
- If you could create a pair of "spectacular spectacles" to help someone see the world more clearly, what would they do? What powers or abilities would they have?