

# PARADE classroom®

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Sept. 4-10, 2005

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The May 8, 2005, PARADE featured citizens across the country who are revitalizing historic sites, including the Lincoln Cottage in Washington, D.C. (on the cover).

► This Week's Focus:

## Help Preserve America

In this week's guide, we invite you and your students to enter PARADE's Tell America's Story Preservation Award contest.

Find a local place with historic or cultural significance and tell us about it. You'll find details on p. 3 and on

[www.parade.com/history](http://www.parade.com/history). But hurry! The contest ends September 30. In another lesson plan, we ask whether high school is too easy. Should our schools have more

rigorous curricula? Ask your students to decide. Finally, we focus on the new meningitis vaccine. If your students haven't had it yet, they should definitely consider getting vaccinated. It could save their lives.

### Everyday Newspaper Activity

**Activity #2: Research.** Ask students what they know about a particular topic in the paper. What would they like to know? How would they research it? What would they use as sources? Then ask them to read the article. Did they find answers to their questions? If not, what questions do they think that the author started with?

### Coming Up Next Week

- Celebrating the Constitution
- The Pentagon's High School Database
- A Visit to Iran

► **In the News: Is High School Too Easy?; Do You Need the Meningitis Vaccine? p.2**

► **In PARADE: Help Preserve America p.3**

► **Skills Sheets: Be a Backyard Detective p.4; Why Is This Place Special? p.5**

## Is High School Too Easy?

**Curriculum links:** Current events, civics, social studies, college and careers, business

**Briefing:** More than 10,000 students recently took a survey from the National Governors Association. Most said that high school was not very hard. Nearly two-thirds said they would work harder if their classes were more difficult or more interesting. Less than two-thirds thought that their schools were doing a good job preparing them for college. And almost two-thirds said their senior year would be better if they could take classes that would count for college credit or help them prepare for jobs. These findings dovetail with those from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. This study found that, in general, 17 year olds had reading and math scores that were no better than when testing began in 1971. What's more, the creators of the ACT report that only 22% of those who took the test last year were prepared for college work in all three basic areas: English, math and science. Earlier this year, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates told American governors that U.S. high schools are obsolete. He advocated giving all students a more rigorous curriculum. Otherwise, he said, they will not be able to compete in the global economy as businesses outsource jobs to other countries.

**Newspaper activity:** **Look through the paper:** Can you find articles about education in this country? What do they focus on? Do they concern school testing? Improving schools? Other topics? Can you find news about U.S. companies outsourcing jobs to other nations? If so, what seem to be the reasons?

**Resources:** Web sites: Find out more about the National Governors Association survey. Learn about the NAEP study. Read about plans the Governors are considering to improve U.S. schools. View the ACT study on college readiness.\*

### Classroom Debates

• **Are U.S. high schools too hard, too easy or just right?** Are they good enough? When you graduate, will you be ready for college or a job? Would you be willing to work harder in school or spend more time on homework? What are the consequences if our schools are not as good as other countries' schools? If you were in charge of improving the nation's high schools, what changes would you make? How could you tell if your ideas were working?

## The Meningitis Vaccine and You

**Curriculum links:** Health, science, family and consumer science, personal development

**Briefing:** Meningococcal meningitis is a quick, contagious and deadly disease. It is often caused by a virus or bacteria and affects only about 3000 Americans each year. But you are particularly at risk. The disease, which infects the fluid around the brain and spinal cord, kills 20% of the adolescents who contract it. Someone could be at school at 2 p.m. and dead by midnight. Among survivors, 11% to 19% lose arms or legs, become mentally retarded, have strokes or seizures or lose their hearing. The good news is that a new, improved vaccine can help prevent it. This summer the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued recommendations on exactly who should get the vaccine. They say that 11 and 12 year olds should routinely get the vaccination at an annual doctor visit. If you are 15 or are starting high school and haven't gotten it yet, you should now. This vaccine is also important for those starting college, particularly if living in dormitories. If you are a concerned teenager of any age who has not been vaccinated, talk to your doctor about it. It could save your life.

**Newspaper activity:** **Meningitis is particularly dangerous for teens.** Look through the health or science section of your paper. Can you find stories on other health topics that are particularly relevant to young people? Can you find articles in other sections that could directly affect you?

**Resources:** Books: Kristina Routh's *Meningitis* (Heinemann, 2004), Brian Shmaefsky's *Meningitis* (Chelsea House, 2004) and Edward Willett's *Meningitis* (Enslow, 1999). Web sites: Get info on meningitis and the new vaccine from the CDC and Keep Kids Healthy.\*

### Classroom Debates

• **What are the dangers of meningitis?** Have you had the meningitis vaccine? If not, why not? Where could you get the vaccine? What other vaccinations have you had? Are there vaccinations you should have had that you have not? How does getting vaccinated help you? How does your getting vaccinated help others?

# Help Preserve America

**Curriculum links:** American history, social studies, personal development

**Briefing:** You and your students can help preserve America. How? Enter the Tell America's Story Preservation Award contest, sponsored by PARADE and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It's easy and can fit into your curriculum. First, have students find a place in your neighborhood that they'd like to see recognized for its cultural or historical significance. It can be anything from a place where a rap star grew up, to a barn where a famous racehorse lived, to the bus on which Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, helping to ignite the civil rights movement. Then visit [www.parade.com/history](http://www.parade.com/history) or [www.paradeclassroom.com](http://www.paradeclassroom.com) for complete rules and entry forms. You and/or your students will write 500 words or less on why preserving this site is important. Ten winners will receive special plaques telling what happened at their site; 50 more will get framed certificates. The best stories will appear in PARADE and on its Web site. Ask students to explore your neighborhood or town to find a site, either individually or as part of a field trip. You can use the "backyard detective tips" found on the Skills Sheet on p. 4. Then follow up with the essay Skills Sheet on p. 5. But hurry! The deadline is September 30.

**Newspaper activity:** Newspaper archives can help you uncover the past, and today's newspapers can help you to preserve it. Think of at least three ways you can use the paper to help save your town's heritage.

**Resources:** Books: *Saving America's Treasures* (National Geographic, 2000) by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Nina Silber's *Landmarks of the Civil War* (Oxford, 2003), James Horton's *Landmarks of African American History* (Oxford, 2005), Page Miller's *Landmarks of American Women's History* (Oxford, 2003) and Gary Nash's *Landmarks of the American Revolution* (Oxford, 2003). Web sites: Visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Register of Historic Places, the Civil War Preservation Trust and National History Day.\*

## Classroom Debates

- **Think about your town or neighborhood.** What three places would you like to see preserved for your grandchildren? Why? What is their significance? What would your town lose if they were torn down? What three things could you do individually to help preserve them or draw attention to them? What three things could you do as part of a group? How would preserving them help your area? How could getting involved help you? Does seeing history help you understand it better than just reading about it in books? Why or why not?

## ASK MARILYN

### Brainteaser

**Question:** What pattern do these numbers follow:  
1 7 11 27 77 117 127 177?

**Answer:** When spoken, each number is one syllable longer than the previous one.

**Interact:** Do students have questions or comments for Marilyn? Send them to Ask Marilyn, PARADE, 711 Third Ave. N.Y., N.Y. 10017, or e-mail [marilyn@parade.com](mailto:marilyn@parade.com).

## FRESH VOICES

### What Makes You Laugh?

**For class discussion or writing assignment:** Elvina, 15, likes to comb her mother's hair into weird styles. Shawnee, 14, laughs at herself when she does something embarrassing. Allison, 17, likes really dumb jokes. What makes you laugh in general? What was the last thing that made you laugh until your stomach hurt?

**Interact:** Ask students, "What superpower do you wish you possessed? Why? How would you use it?" Have them send their answers to Fresh Voices, Box 5103, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-5103. Or e-mail them to [freshvoices@parade.com](mailto:freshvoices@parade.com). Students whose letters are published in PARADE will receive Fresh Voices T-shirts.

## Answer Key:

**Be a Backyard Detective (p. 4):** Answers will vary.

**Why Is This Place Special? (p. 5):** Answers will vary.

## Be a Backyard Detective

**Saving our heritage is a good thing.** But first you have to know that it's there. The good news is that discovering history is fun. And once you've uncovered it, you can help make sure that it is not lost forever.

Maybe you've heard a rumor about a place in your town: A famous astronaut was born there. Or it was the spot that inspired a great song. Or it was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Well, start investigating. What you'll need: time, your eyes, your ears and your feet!

- 1. Looking at a building tells you a lot.** First, check to see if there is a cornerstone. Often, when an important building was constructed, the builder included a cornerstone. The cornerstone is at the base of (you got it!) one of the corners. It may include important information, such as the year the building was finished, the first owner's name and its first use. If you can't find a cornerstone, search for any plaques on the exterior of the building.
- 2. Next, check the building's style.** Like fads, building styles come and go. Sometimes you can tell whether the rumors about a place are true just by knowing a little bit about architecture. Most buildings reflect the era in which they were built. For example, most buildings built between the early 1600s and the American Revolution were in the rustic, simple Colonial style. They used local materials. The highly decorative Victorian period ran from 1840 to 1910. So if you're looking at a Victorian house, it's unlikely that George Washington slept there!
- 3. Make it an inside job.** Try to get permission to look around inside an old building. Many craftsmen and builders signed and dated corners or eaves. Sometimes you can even get information by looking at the light fixtures or wallpaper! (To learn more, visit [www.parade.com/history/resources.html](http://www.parade.com/history/resources.html).)
- 4. Walking around can teach you more about your neighborhood.** First, be sure to read the signs. You may find a street or a building named after a famous resident, maybe an athlete or an activist or a war hero. Write down the names you notice.
- 5. Check out the library.** You can find lists of early residents and their jobs in old city directories. Look up the names you noticed earlier. Old newspapers let you know about important events—wars, natural disasters, crimes—from the early days. Or you may find references to the people whose names you wrote down.
- 6. Take it to court.** The courthouse has records of land transfers, estates, births, deaths, marriages and more.
- 7. Visit a graveyard.** Tombstones tell a lot. For example, you'll soon know if lots of people died in a war or a tornado. If there are many children's graves, it may reveal an epidemic or information about mortality rates. If it's OK with the cemetery, make rubbings of some of the gravestones.
- 8. Talk to an older person.** One good way to learn about earlier times is to talk to people who lived through them. They can be great sources of information.

*(Adapted from the National Trust for Historic Preservation)*

## Why Is This Place Special?

To enter your historic site in PARADE magazine's *Tell America's Story* contest, first take the time to research your selection and answer the questions below. Doing this will take you a long way toward explaining what makes a particular place worth preserving.

1. Describe the site you have chosen.  
Where is it?

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2. What is its history?

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3. How has it helped shape the culture or history of your area or our nation?

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4. Give at least three reasons why you think the site should be recognized.

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