

The following activities encapsulate concept knowledge gained from the National Holidays set. The Finish Line activities at the bottom of the page are designed as assessment opportunities.

Objectives:

The student will:

- Investigate the sequence of historical events.
- Explore ways we acknowledge the past.
- Understand a simplified election process.

Entry Point—Engaging the Learners:

- Ask students to share their ideas about why they enjoy holidays. Accept all responses, including, “No school!”
- Share that there is a reason why these days are holidays. On national holidays, some businesses, schools, and government agencies close to honor our country’s past. On these days, people remember the history of the country and the people who fought to make it a better place for everyone to live.
- Discuss with students how Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln made our country a better place. Also remember soldiers and the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Help students conclude that these people had one goal: to make the United States a place where people of all races could live peacefully.
- Finally, let students share the ways in which they celebrate each national holiday.

Preparation:

- Cut three lengths of mural paper, about 2–3 yards long. Have on hand painting supplies, along with newspapers to protect surfaces and smocks to protect clothing.
- Obtain an American flag. Also, create a flag reproducible. Students will color the copies.
- Collect brochures, maps, and books about Washington, D.C. Visit web sites such as <http://www.thedistrict.com>, <http://www.dchomepage.net>, and <http://www.nps.gov>. These sites display information about monuments.
- For students to study elections, bring in a shoe box for a ballot box and cut slips of paper to serve as ballots.

Activities:

- Point out that these books explore moments in American history. Spread out three lengths of mural paper, one to represent each century—the 1700s, the 1800s, and the 1900s. Divide the class into three groups, and assign each to a century. Provide students with paints, brushes, and smocks, and line the floor with newspaper. Invite students to illustrate moments in American history that occurred in their century. Meet with each group to discuss what they will paint. Discuss students’ paintings with the entire class. Display the murals in century order in the school hall.
- Call attention to the American flag, and ask students if they know what the stars and stripes stand for. Pass out the flag reproducible, and invite students to color in the flag as you explain each part. Invite students to count the stripes and stars and tell you what the numbers represent. Confirm that the 13 stripes represent the 13 original colonies and that 50 is the number of states in the United States.
- Display the books, brochures, and other resources you found on Washington, D.C. Ask students why this city is special, and confirm that it is the capital of the United

States. Divide students into groups. Ask the groups to create brochures about Washington, D.C. Tell students to include both drawings and words. Let groups share their completed brochures with each other.

- Discuss with students how the president of the United States gets to be president. Remind students that he or she is elected by the people. Explain that this is different from the way countries were ruled hundreds of years ago. When America was part of Great Britain, the leader was a king or queen who was born with that title. The people did not choose who would lead them. Invite the class to hold an election for a class mascot. Encourage students to come up with ideas. Ask students to write their votes on slips of paper and place their votes in the ballot box. Invite volunteers to help you count the votes to determine the winner of the mascot election.

Challenging and Checking:

Have students define what a national holiday is. Hold up the books, and ask students to explain why we celebrate each.

Reflecting:

Assess what questions students can ask and answer about these national holidays, such as, “Why was Martin Luther King, Jr., an important man in American history?”

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ideas for Theme-Based Instruction:

- Geography—Review with students the states that were the original 13 colonies. Have students locate them on a map.
- Art—Invite students to create statues or plaques that commemorate the historical figures they met in the books. Pass out clay, along with plastic knives and toothpicks to etch in details and mold their statues.
- Reading/History—Pass out copies of the Declaration of Independence to the class. Read the document to the class, asking students to follow along.
- Writing—Encourage students to make a card for each national holiday. Have them write a greeting on the cover and a message inside. Let them illustrate their cards.

HOME EXTENSIONS

- Encourage students to share with their families the national holidays they explored. Have students staple together their writing projects, then share their work at home. Suggest that they challenge their families to explain the purpose of each holiday.

FINISH LINE

Possible Assessment Activities:

- Cover the title on each book cover. Challenge students to recall the holiday based on the cover photograph. Reveal the book and discuss.
- Have students explain the difference between a national holiday and other holidays. Start a Venn diagram for students to note how holidays are the same and different.

Teaching Guide for the Pebble Books *National Holidays Set*



WELCOME TO PEBBLE BOOKS

Social studies, geography, and language arts are natural partners in education. Thematic units can connect the exploration of our world with reading and writing activities for a meaningful classroom experience.

Pebble Books and their accompanying Teaching Guides link leveled nonfiction texts with social studies and geography content. As a result, each set powerfully consolidates social studies, geography, and language arts instruction and promotes a strategic approach for early literacy learning.

The On Your Mark section of this guide, featured below, highlights the social studies and geography standards that can be supported through the use of this set. These standards are supported by the reading of the texts and the activities featured on the back page.

The next two pages of this guide give instructions for using each of the texts in a guided reading session. The Get Set section highlights supports and challenges present in the texts. The Go portion provides instructions for facilitating the reading of the texts with small groups and following up with level-appropriate writing activities.

On the back page of this guide, the Home Stretch section expands on the social studies and geography knowledge introduced in this set. As written, the activities are meant to be used after the four reading sessions. You may choose to reverse this order, using the activities to lead into the topics that are explored in the four texts.

Finally, this guide offers ideas for curriculum connections in other subjects, home activity extensions, and assessments. We hope you find this guide useful in connecting social studies, geography, and language arts instruction in your classroom.

ON YOUR MARK

The National Holidays set supports the following standards:

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (NCSS, 1994)

- Standard II c: Time, Continuity, and Change: compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places, or situations, identifying how they contribute to our understanding of the past.

National Standards for History (K-4) (NCHS, 1996)

- Standard 4D: The student understands events that celebrate and exemplify fundamental values and principles of American democracy by:
 - Describing the history of holidays, such as the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving, that celebrate the core democratic values and principles of this nation.

GET SET

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Early-Intervention Level 13

Starting Blocks (Supports):

- Familiar subject matter

Hurdles (Challenges):

- Concept vocabulary: *honor, justice, national, peace, segregation*
- No sentence repetition

Text Features:

- High-frequency words: *a, about, all, and, be, by, every, for, he, him, his, how, in, not, of, on, some, the, that, they, this, to, up, was, went, with*



Presidents' Day: Early-Intervention Level 15

Starting Blocks (Supports):

- Some sentence repetition

Hurdles (Challenges):

- Concept vocabulary: *Civil War, honor, national, president, Revolutionary War*

Text Features:

- High-frequency words: *a, about, all, an, and, every, for, have, in, is, of, on, some, the, their, they, to, was, were, what*
- R-controlled vowel *ir* (*first, third*); r-controlled vowel *-or* (*honor, works/born, George, memorials*)



GO

Guided Reading Introduction:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Level 13)

Brainstorm with students a list of holidays. Mark those that are national holidays. Explain that national holidays are those days that the federal and most state governments celebrate. Offices, schools, post offices, and banks are closed.

First Reading:

- At the title page, ask, “Who is in the photograph?” Help students recognize the title and author’s name.
- Review with students the purpose of a table of contents, explaining that the table gives a glimpse of a book’s topics.
- On page 4, ask students to find Martin Luther King, Jr., then find his name on page 5. Challenge students to show you the two sentences on this page.
- With page 7, help students understand the words *segregated* and *segregation*. Have students study page 6 for ideas. Also make sure students recognize the root word *segregate*.
- For page 9, focus attention on the words *great leader*. Point out that both words have the vowel pattern *ea*, but different sounds. Challenge students to identify the sounds.
- Explore pages 11 and 13 by letting students find matching words, such as *Martin, people, and laws*.
- For pages 14 and 15, gently guide students through the delicate topic of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death.
- Challenge students to read and match two words on page 16 with two words on page 17 (*peace* and *justice*).
- On pages 18 through 21, explain that they will learn a few more ways Martin Luther King, Jr., has been remembered.

Rereading:

Invite students to reread the book. Listen closely as students read to make sure they are aware of basic print concepts.

Coaching (Teaching Points):

Silent letters: *listened, wrong*; inflected ending *-es* (*races, speeches*); hard *g* (*gave, segregation*), soft *g* (*change, Georgia*)

Writing Connection:

Recall with students the text and photograph on pages 18 and 19 that feature students learning about Martin Luther King, Jr. Challenge students to write a sentence that tells something they learned about him. Guide students’ writing with a sentence starter, such as: I read about Martin Luther King, Jr. I learned that _____ .

Guided Reading Introduction: *Presidents' Day* (Level 15)

Ask students to name a few presidents. When students name George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, ask if they know why each president was special. Ask, “Why do we celebrate Presidents’ Day?” Write students’ ideas to check after reading.

First Reading:

- On the title page, speculate with students who is in the photograph. Help them read the title, then confirm that they are former presidents of the United States.
- Read with students the table of contents entries. Ask them to trace along the dotted lines and read the page numbers.
- Explore page 4. Ask, “Which president do you see here?” On page 5, challenge students to find the two similar words. Have students tell you how the words are different.
- On page 7, tell students that the phrase *Presidents’ Day* appears twice, and ask them to find it. Have students match the calendar word on page 6 with the word on page 7.
- Examine page 9 by encouraging students to recognize and read the repeated phrase: *was born on February*.
- Introduce pages 11 and 13 by explaining that we will learn why we honor these presidents. Let students share any prior knowledge to prepare for reading.
- For page 15, point out that the first sentence is similar to the sentence on page 5.
- With pages 17 and 19, help students notice that the first sentence on each page starts with *Some people* and ends with *Presidents’ Day*. Challenge students to work through the text as they study pages 16 and 18 for ideas.
- Encourage students to read page 21 on their own.

Rereading:

Encourage students to read the book again in small groups. Monitor the group reading, making sure all students can follow along, even though it might not be their turn to read.

Coaching (Teaching Points):

Long /a/, spelled CVCe (*became, celebrate, make*); word ending *-er* (*better, remember, together*)

Writing Connection:

Instruct students to share with others what they learned about Presidents’ Day. Write the following sentence starter on the board for students to copy and complete: We celebrate Presidents’ Day to _____ .

Memorial Day: Early-Intervention Level 15**Starting Blocks (Supports):**

- Two sentences on each page
- Consistent print placement

Hurdles (Challenges):

- Concept vocabulary: *Civil War, decorated, half-mast, Memorial Day, national, soldiers*

Text Features:

- High-frequency words: *a, about, after, all, and, at, have, in, many, now, of, on, the, these, they, this, to, too, was, with, who*
- Word ending *-al* (*national, Memorial, special*)

Guided Reading Introduction: Memorial Day (Level 15)

Show students the cover, and help them sound out the word *Memorial*. Reveal the word in chunks. Challenge students to recall when and why we celebrate Memorial Day.

First Reading:

- On the title page, ask, “Where is the girl?” Explain that these graves are a clue to what Memorial Day is for.
- At the table of contents, read the entry: *Honoring People Who Died*. Ask, “Is this why we celebrate Memorial Day?”
- Work through each sentence on page 5 with students, reading short phrases at a time.
- Ask students to describe the action on page 6. Help them read page 7 to confirm that it shows a war battle.
- For page 8, ask students to identify the setting, confirming that it is a cemetery. Ask students who the graves might be for, then read with them page 9 to find out.
- On page 11, ask students to point to two words that begin alike: *Decoration* and *decorated*. Help students read both words. Remind them that *-tion* can sound like /shun/.
- Prepare pages 12 and 13 by telling students that on these pages, they will learn why we celebrate Memorial Day.
- Ask students to identify the images on pages 14 and 16. Note that they will read about these on pages 15 and 17.
- Ask students what the girl and two women on page 18 could be a part of. When someone suggests, “Family,” challenge students to find the word on page 19.
- For page 21, ask students to find two words that have the long /e/ sound: *peace* and *freedom*. Have students find a word that has the same vowel pattern as *peace* (*learn*). Explain the different sound here.

Rereading:

Encourage students to reread the book with partners. Observe if students can apply reading strategies, such as looking at photographs to help decipher unfamiliar words.

Coaching (Teaching Points):

Consonant blends: l-blends (*flags, flowers, fly*), r-blends (*celebrate, graves*), s-blends (*last, respect*)

Writing Connection:

Share with students that soldiers often receive medals for brave deeds in battle. Invite students to draw a medal. Ask students to write a sentence about Memorial Day.

Independence Day: Early-Intervention Level 18**Starting Blocks (Supports):**

- Consistent print placement
- Two to four sentences on a page

Hurdles (Challenges):

- Concept vocabulary: *celebrate, colonists, colonies, Declaration of Independence, independence, tradition*
- Many words with three or more syllables

Text Features:

- High-frequency words: *a, also, an, and, are, at, be, but, for, have, he, how, in, new, of, on, or, said, the, they, this, to, was*

GO

Guided Reading Introduction:**Independence Day (Level 18)**

Ask students when we celebrate the birthday of the United States. Invite them to share their July 4th experiences. Explain that the Fourth of July is also called Independence Day.

First Reading:

- Have students match the title and author’s name on the title page with those on the cover.
- At the table of contents, say, “I think this book is divided into two main parts. How do I know this?”
- Start page 5 by letting students read words they recognize, including *America, Americans, and Independence Day*.
- Preface pages 6 and 7 by telling students that on the next few pages, they will learn about American history. The pictures will be old paintings or drawings. In the text, ask students to find the words *America* and *American*.
- Investigate page 9 by asking students to find the proper nouns. Model how to read *Revolutionary*. Have students say the word and count the syllables.
- On pages 11 and 13, model for students how to concentrate on one line of text at a time. Show them how to cover up most of the text, revealing one line at a time.
- Discuss that the photograph on page 14 is in the present. Ask, “How can you tell?”
- With pages 17 and 19, let students read the short, slightly repetitive sentences on their own. This will boost their reading confidence.
- Have students identify the image on page 20. Say the word *fireworks*, enunciated as two words. Challenge students to find the word on page 21.

Rereading:

As students read again, assess that students can track print, moving from the end of one line to the beginning of the next.

Coaching (Teaching Points):

Root-word changes (*colony: colonies, colonists, colonial*); plural, changing *-y* to *-ies* (*colonies, communities, families*)

Writing Connection:

Encourage students to draw a scene that illustrates how they celebrate the Fourth of July. Below the picture, ask students to write a caption. Present a sentence starter for students to complete, such as: On the Fourth of July, I _____ .