

About the Book

In this inspiring tribute, award-winning author Barb Rosenstock and *New York Times* bestselling artist Elizabeth Baddeley tell the true story of one of America's greatest founding mothers: Abigail Adams.

Everyone knew Abigail was different.

Instead of keeping quiet, she blurted out questions. Instead of settling down with a wealthy minister, she married a poor country lawyer named John Adams. Instead of running from the Revolutionary War, she managed a farm and fed hungry soldiers. Instead of leaving the governing to men, she insisted they "Remember the Ladies." Instead of fearing Europe's kings and queens, she boldly crossed the sea to represent her new country. And when John became President of the United States, Abigail became First Lady, and a powerful advisor.

Leave it to Abigail—an extraordinary woman who surprised the world.

About the Creators

About the Author:

Barb Rosenstock likes true stories about real people. She is the author of nonfiction and historical fiction children's books that combine deep research and playful language to bring history to life. Her book, *The Noisy Paint Box*, illustrated by Mary Grandpré, received a Caldecott Honor in 2015. Other awards include an Orbis Pictus Honor, a Sydney Taylor Honor and the California Library Association Beatty Award as well as numerous national and state recognitions. Barb loves sharing stories and inspiring students in schools and libraries across the country. She lives with her family near Chicago.

About the Illustrator:

Elizabeth Baddeley New York Times best-selling illustrator of *I DISSENT: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes her Mark*. She has illustrated many other biographies and non-fiction books for children including: *The Cat Who Lived with Anne Frank*, *An Inconvenient Alphabet*, *The Good Fight*, *A Woman in the House (and Senate)*, and more! Elizabeth has also self-published the leading/only Kansas City themed coloring book for adults and children: *Color Me Kansas City* as well as the very personal *Swimmer Girls* which earned her a gold medal from the Society of Illustrators in 2011. She resides in a historic neighborhood in Kansas City with her husband and son.

Note About This Guide & *Leave It to Abigail*

This guide consists of classroom extension activities and discussion opportunities that can be used when reading, teaching, or discussing *Leave It to Abigail!* (together, in a small group, or individually).

Leave It to Abigail! allows readers to use reading comprehension strategies such as predicting and checking predictions, comparing and contrasting, letter writing, and character analysis. It also gives opportunities for word study, research, and history extensions.

The classroom extension activities and discussion opportunities in this guide are designed to be used in 2nd through 5th grade as the text is read as a whole group, small group, or independently. Although this guide primarily focuses on this text's use in elementary classrooms, that does not mean it should be limited to these grade levels. *Leave It to Abigail!* would be an asset to any classroom K-16 discussing Abigail Adams, the founding of America, and revolutionary women of history.

Common Core Standards Connections

The Common Core English Anchor Standard, National Core Art Anchor Standards, and National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strands that can be met using this guide are:

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1](#): Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#): Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3](#): Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4](#): Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5](#): Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6](#): Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4](#): Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- [Responding: Anchor Standard #7](#): Perceive and analyze artistic work
- [Responding: Anchor Standard #8](#): Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strand 1](#): Culture
- [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strand 2](#): Time, Continuity, and Change
- [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strand 3](#): People, Places, and Environment
- [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strand 4](#): Individual Development and Identity
- [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strand 6](#): Power, Authority, and Governance
- [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Strand 10](#): Civic Ideals and Practices

Activities

Use these activities to extend students' learning with *Leave It to Abigail!*

Prediction then Check

Have students closely view the cover of the book. Then, before reading the book, have students complete the PRE-READING portion of the graphic organizer. When finished with the text, have students circle the correct parts of their predictions, then fill out the AFTER READING portion of the graphic organizer.

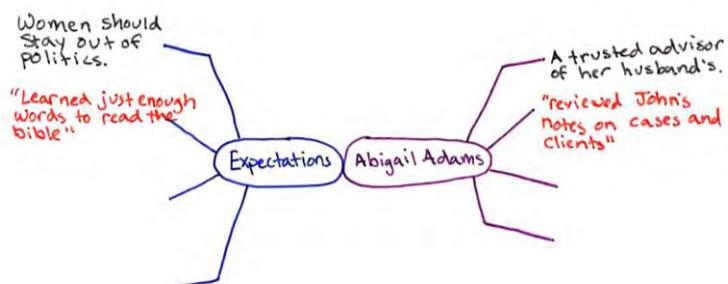
| What do you think the papers mean on the cover of the book? | |
|---|---------------|
| PRE-READING | AFTER READING |
| | |

| Why do you think a quill was included on the cover of the book and connected to Abigail's name? | |
|---|---------------|
| PRE-READING | AFTER READING |
| | |

Contrasting Abigail with Societal Expectations of Women

Abigail Adams did not fit the mold of what was expected of a woman in colonial America. Use *Leave it to Abigail!* to contrast Abigail with the expectations of society during her time period.

One option of a graphic organizer to use is a modified double bubble map (Thinking Maps ©) where comparisons are eliminated. This graphic organizer eliminates some of the space issues with a Venn diagram. Color coding is a great strategy to use with this activity to show which statement/quote on each side contrasts with the other side.



Letter Writing

Much of what we know about Abigail Adams comes from the thousands of letters that she wrote. Use this opportunity as a jumping off point to teach proper letter writing organization and structure.

Read Write Think provides examples of business and friendly letter structures:

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1083/lettersamples.pdf

Have each student pick a cause they find unjust and write a business/professional letter to someone who has the power to change the injustice. Then write a friendly letter to a friend sharing what cause the student chose and why.

Ex. Climate Change

Business letter: To President Trump about remaining in the Paris Agreement

Friendly letter: To friend about why climate change was their choice

Ex. Dress Code

Business letter: To principal about the unfairness of aspects of the dress code

Friendly letter: To teacher about why dress code was their choice



Women's Rights

Abigail Adams is considered by many to be one of the first advocates for women's rights because of her letter to John Adams that stated "Remember the ladies." Starting this letter, create a collaborative timeline showing the fight for equal rights for women up to current day.

- Group students into pairs or threes and give them a time period to research. (Not all time periods will be the same number of years; try to spread out significant events.)
- Provide students with a notetaking guide and reliable/valid sources such as history.com, equalmeanequal.org, nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org, time.com, and history.house.gov.

○ Ex.

| Event | Notes | Summary | Resources |
|-------|-------|---------|-----------|
| | | | |

- Synthesize all information gathered into a class collaborative timeline.
 - Can be done on paper or digitally
 - <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/timeline-30007.html>, Google Slides or Google Sheets, or <https://www.sutori.com/>
- Have groups present their events to the class and their rationale for including each event on the timeline.

Ship Travel

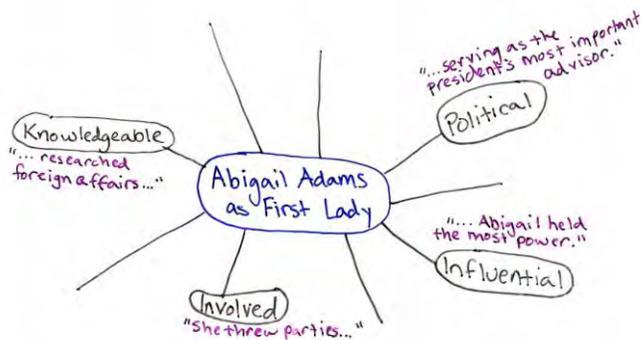
Abigail Adams couldn't hop on a plane to fly to France. She had to ride a ship across the Atlantic, which took over 30 days. Using National Geographic's "Crossing the Atlantic: Then and Now" activity (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/crossing-the-atlantic-then-and-now/>), help students compare modes of transportation between those of colonial times and today.



Role of the First Lady

Abigail Adams was the second First Lady of the United States. As no founding document states the roles or responsibilities of First Ladies, it was over time that the role was set. Although "everyone knew that the president's *wife* should stay out of politics," Abigail did the opposite and was an important advisor to President Adams.

First, have students create a description web with text evidence describing how Abigail Adams acted as First Lady. Use text evidence to support the adjectives.



Then, as a class, read about the history of First Ladies in the United States (<https://d1y822ghq55g6.cloudfront.net/pdfs/CRP-Roles-of-the-First-Lady.pdf>).

After reading, have students look at the last paragraph on page 3 where the four areas of First Lady's focus are listed. Although these weren't set until many years after Abigail Adams served, she definitely met many of the expectations list. As a class, make a list of how Abigail Adams met these focus areas.

Lastly, compare and contrast Abigail Adams with a modern First Lady showing how the title has changed, or not, since the United States came to be.

Inquiry: Revolutionary Women

The author ends the book by saying how foundational revolutionary women like Abigail Adams “left the hope of freedom to America’s women,” and the author shared the names of twelve other revolutionary women. In the Author’s Note, she lists another thirteen women.

Using this list, assign each student a different revolutionary woman and create a mini-picture book about the woman using *Leave it to Abigail!* as a mentor text.

Students may draw the illustrations or use images found for the illustrations.

Have students complete three-five spreads using the template below.

The left side should include a narrative of a part of the subject’s life and end with “Everyone knew that a woman couldn’t...” or “Everyone knew that a woman shouldn’t...”

The right side should include 3 ways that the woman proved “everyone” wrong.

| | | |
|--|-------------------|--|
| | LEAVE IT TO _____ | |
| | | |
| | | |

More Resources to Extend Learning

Abigail and John’s Letters: <https://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/letter/>

History.com Abigail Adams: <https://www.history.com/topics/first-ladies/abigail-adams>

C-Span segments on Abigail Adams: <http://firstladies.c-span.org/FirstLady/3/Abigail-Adams.aspx>

Discussion Questions

Use these questions as whole class discussion, text-dependent questioning, or as writing prompts with *Leave it to Abigail!*

- Abigail’s grandmother said, “Wild colts make the best horses.” What does this saying mean and how does this statement describe Abigail?
- Why was letter writing so important to Abigail?
- What does John’s response to “Remember the Ladies” show us about the general point of view surrounding women’s rights at the start of our country?
- How do the terms “Mrs. President” and “Founding Mothers” fit Abigail Adams?
- How did women assist during the Revolutionary War?
- What is the a theme of the story? How did the author develop this idea throughout the text?
- What is a central idea of the story? How did the illustrator and author use text structure to assist in supporting their central idea of the text?
- How did the illustrator’s use of cross stitch affect the visuals within the story?
- What color did the illustrator primarily use for Abigail? Why do you think she chose that color?

Vocabulary

Use these vocabulary words in the book as a starting point for a vocabulary study with *Leave It to Abigail!* Research shows that reading and discussing words within context is one of the most effective ways to learn vocabulary.

- clapboard
- blurted
- eavesdropped
- tamed
- banked [fires]
- prosperous
- insisted
- rebellion
- boycotted
- preserved
- militia
- refugees
- hauled
- bartered
- invested
- schooner
- galley
- ambassador
- impress
- mingled
- bustle
- gilt
- briefed
- foreign affairs
- advisor
- influential
- romped
- innovative
- revolutionary

About the Guide Creator

This guide was created by Kellee Moye. Kellee has a BA in English Literature and MA in Elementary Education from the University of Central Florida and is now a middle school teacher-librarian in Orlando, Florida. She is the author of various teaching guides for all levels; the co-author of the blog [Unleashing Readers](#); 2016-2018 ALAN Board of Directors and current ALAN PR Social Media chair; member then chair of the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee from 2012-2014; jury member of the 2020-2021 ALA Schneider Family Award Committee; and a member of NCTE, ALAN, ALA, and FAME. Kellee can be reached at Kellee.Moye@gmail.com or on Twitter [@kelleemoye](#).