



# Understanding the Past



reading a letter



Memorial Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day



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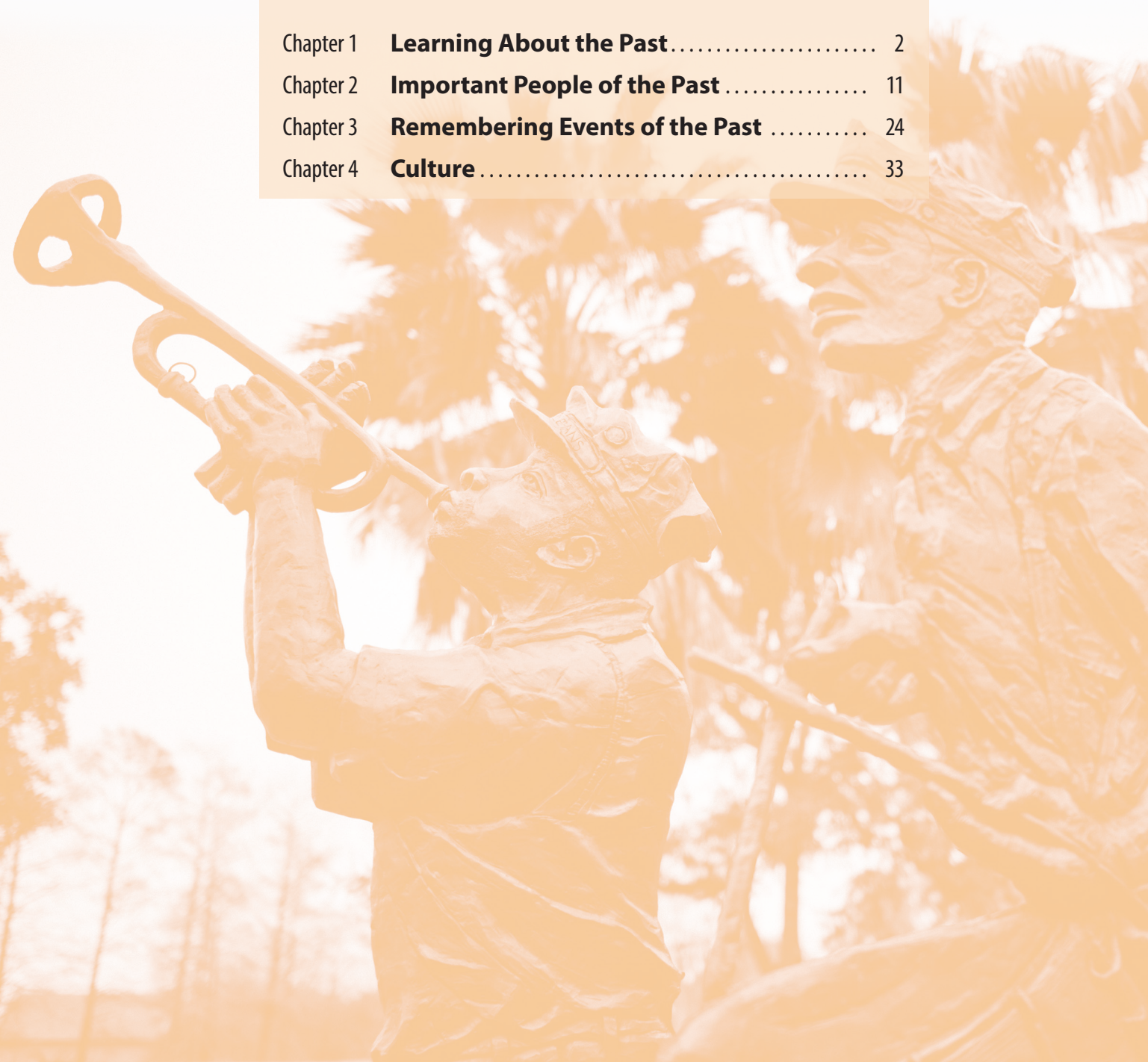
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# Understanding the Past

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# Learning About the Past

What is today's date? What is the day of the week? Is it morning or afternoon? These questions help us know where we are in time. Right now, you are living in the present.



Tomorrow, next week, and next year are in the future. Yesterday is in the past. All the days before yesterday are also in the past. When we learn about the past, we are learning about history!

We use different tools that help us see how time passes. Classroom schedules tell us what activities we are doing in a day.

Classroom Schedule		
Reading and Writing		8:30–9:15
Science		9:15–10:00
Snack Time		10:00–10:15
Social Studies		10:15–11:00
Math		11:00–11:45

What activities are on your classroom schedule today?  
What activity happens first?



Calendars tell us about each month of the year. Calendars are a place to mark important days like the first day of the school year! Calendars can show us when special events, like Christmas Day and New Year's Day, will happen.

## AUGUST

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14  First Day of School!	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Are there any special events on the calendar in your classroom? We know that time has passed when we move the calendar to the next month.



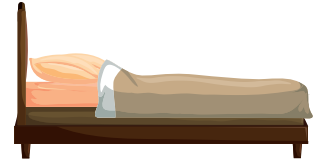




Get Dressed

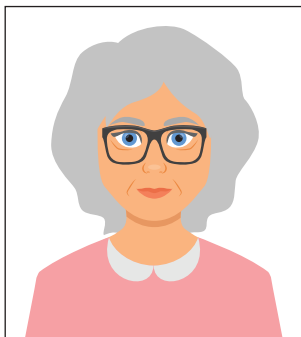


School

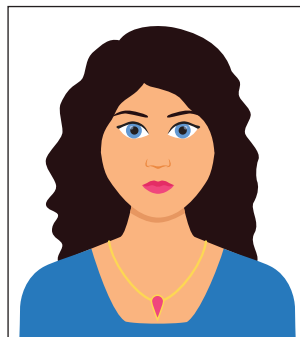


Bed

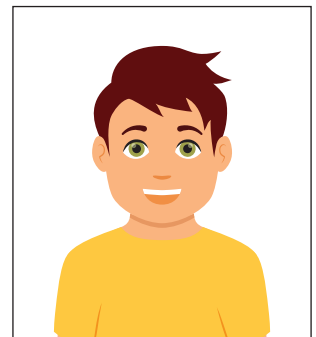
A timeline is another helpful tool that tells us about time passing. A timeline shows when events happened in the past. They tell us the order that events happened. Look at the images on the top of the page. What are they showing?



Grandma was born.



Mom was born.



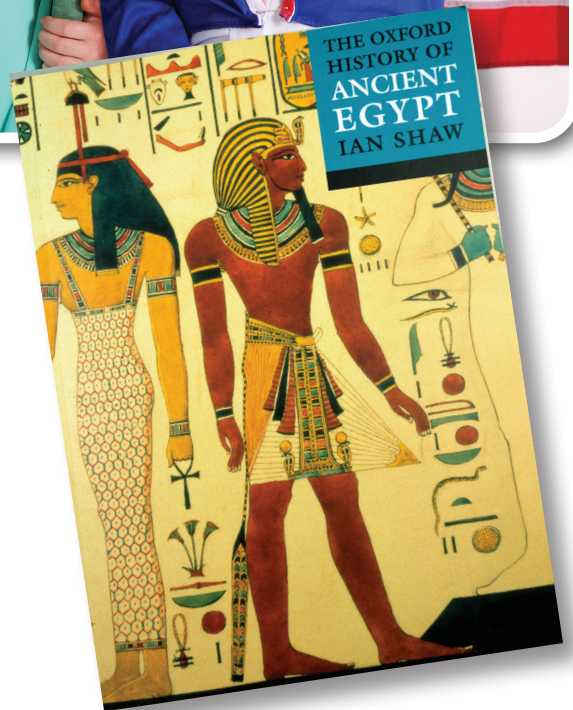
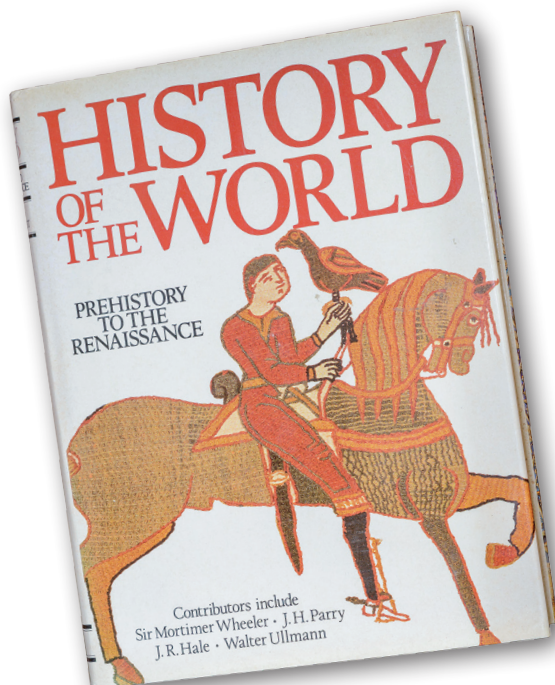
I was born.

The first event on a timeline is the furthest in the past. The last event on a timeline is closest to the present. Can you create a timeline of things that happened last week, yesterday, and today?

Understanding time is not the only way we learn about history. We can read words from people in the past. For example, some people tell about their lives in letters. Have you ever gotten a letter in the mail? What did it say? What did it tell you about the person who sent it?

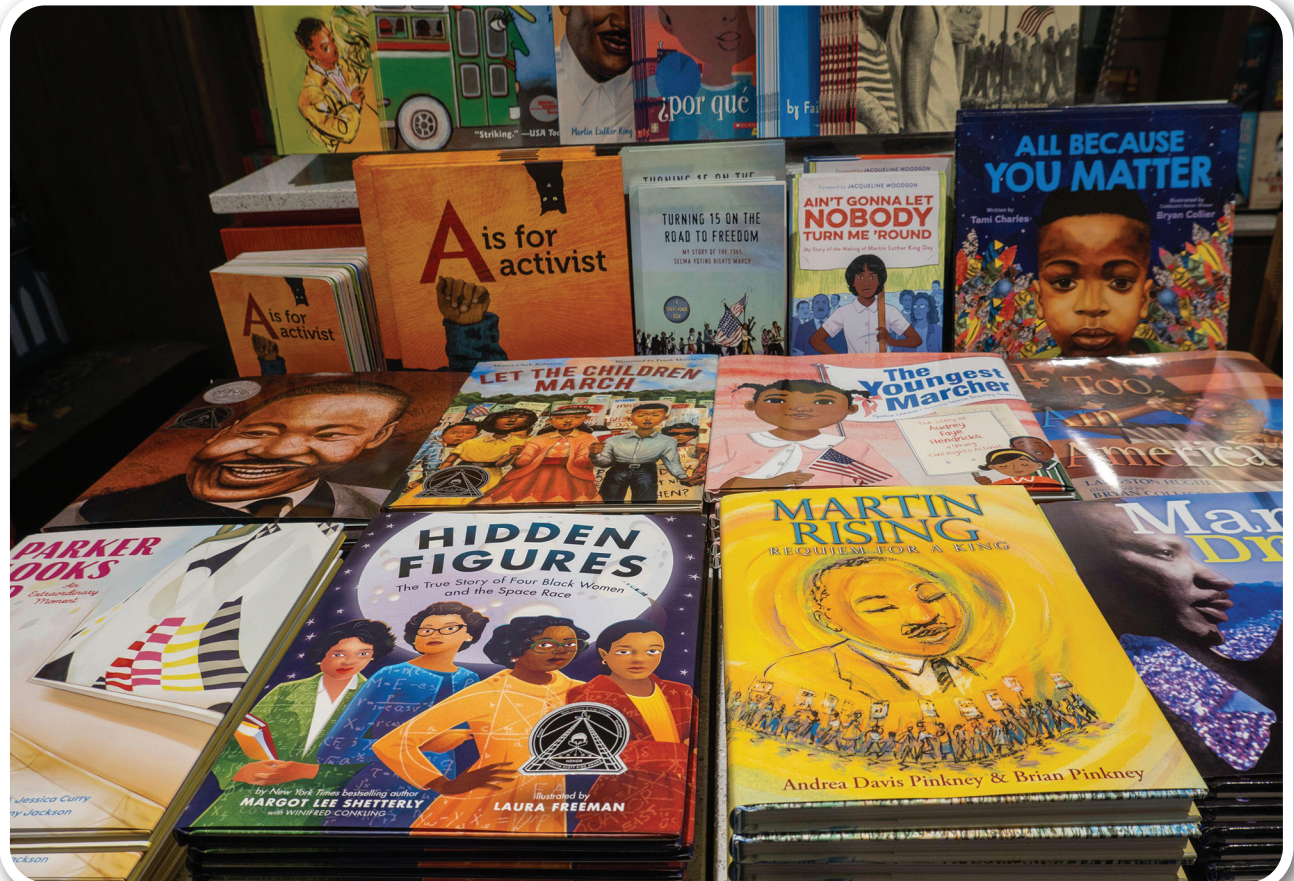


A person who studies the past is called a historian. Historians read a lot about the past. They also write about the people who lived in the past and the events that happened.



Historians help you learn about history.

In school, students like you often learn about history from textbooks. Textbooks tell about the past using words and pictures. Some books tell about the life of an important person.



These books are called biographies or autobiographies.

We can also listen to words from people in the past. The president is the leader of the United States. Sometimes the president talks to large groups of people. These talks are called speeches.



Other times the president answers questions that another person asks. This is called an interview.

Then



Now



# Important People of the Past

Many people from the past are important today. We remember them with holidays and celebrations. Let's learn about some important people from the past!

## JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Presidents' Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

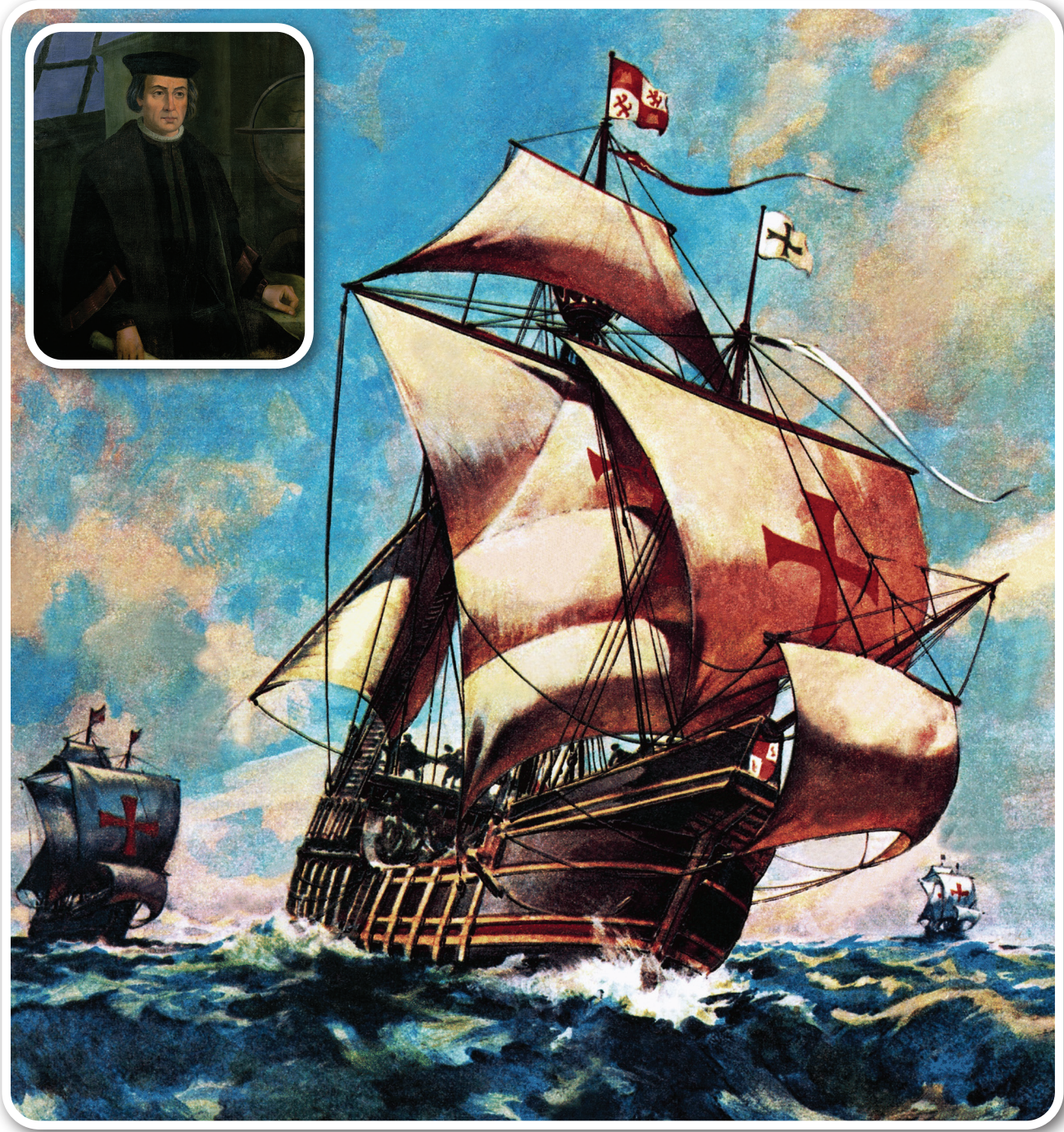
## JULY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Columbus Day	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Christopher Columbus was an explorer from Italy. In 1492, he sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. Christopher Columbus's journey encouraged others to explore too.



We remember Christopher Columbus on Columbus Day. This day is celebrated on the second Monday of October each year.



George Washington is another important person from the past. He was our first president. There is a story about him as a young boy. It is not true, but people tell it anyway.

When George was six years old, he cut down his father's favorite cherry tree. Even though his father was angry, George said, "I cannot tell a lie. I cut down the tree." George's father was happy that his son was honest.



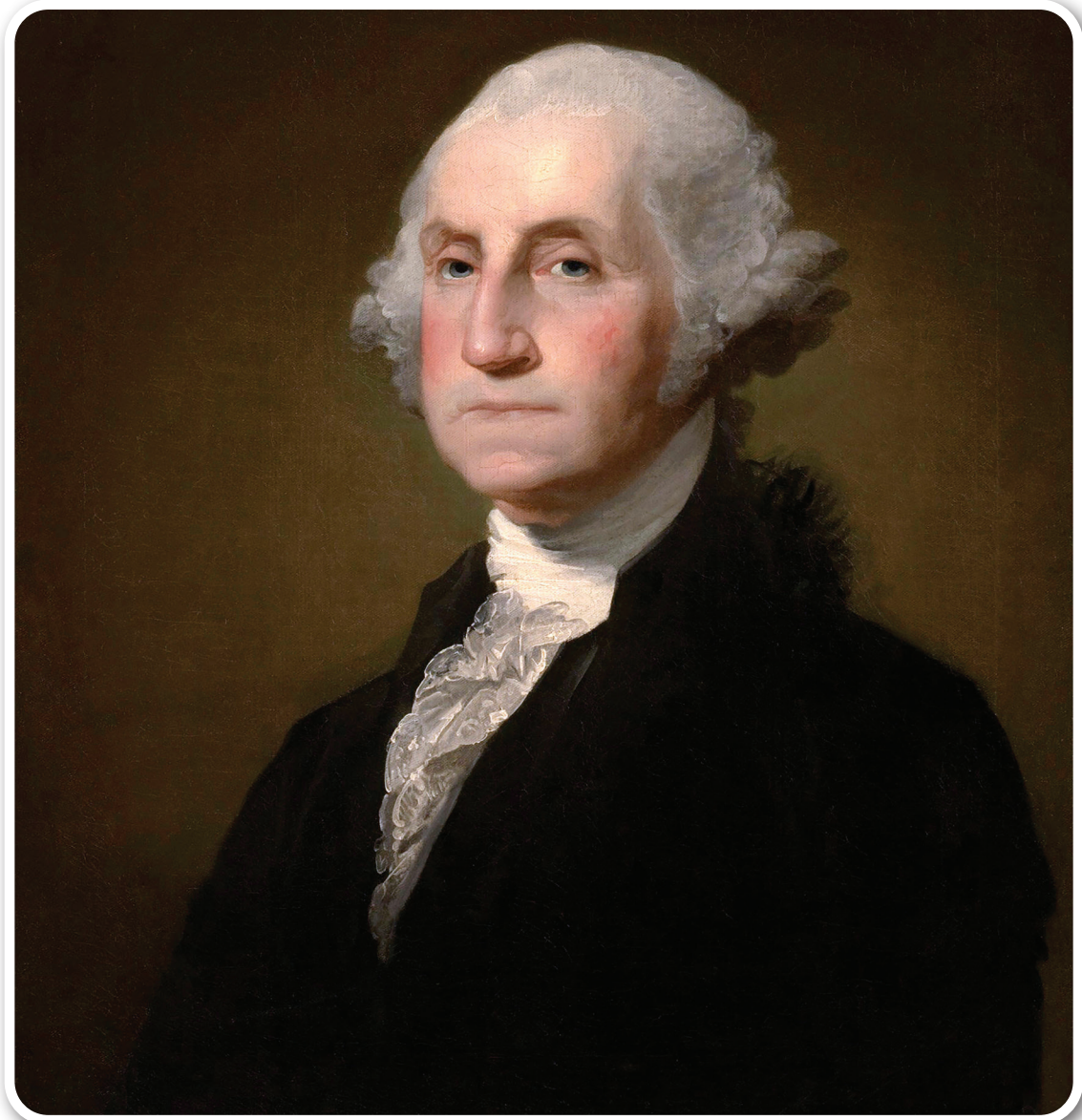
When he grew up, George was chosen to be the leader of the American army. The American army fought the British army.



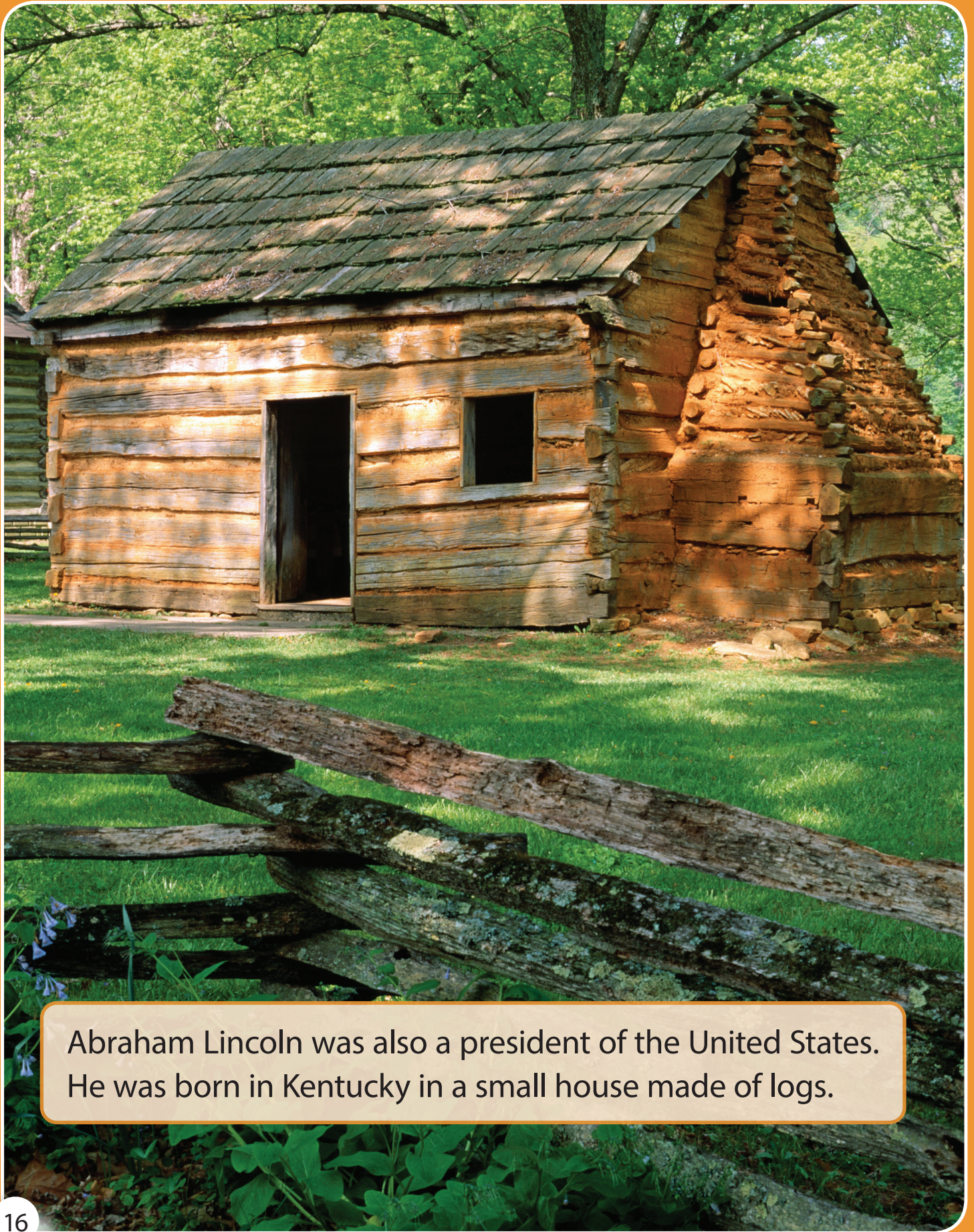
George was a great leader. The American army won the war, and the United States became a free nation.



When the United States needed its first president, the people chose George. They knew that he was an honest man and a hard worker. Because George Washington was our first president, he is sometimes called the “Father of Our Country.”



George Washington’s birthday is on February 22. People celebrate his birthday in February to remember how he helped the United States become a country.



Abraham Lincoln was also a president of the United States. He was born in Kentucky in a small house made of logs.

As a young man, Abraham Lincoln lived in Illinois. He had many different jobs. He worked in a store. Once, he walked a long way to give back a few pennies to someone who had paid too much. He became known as Honest Abe.



Abe really wanted to be a lawyer. He studied hard to become one. He worked for the Illinois government and helped write state laws.



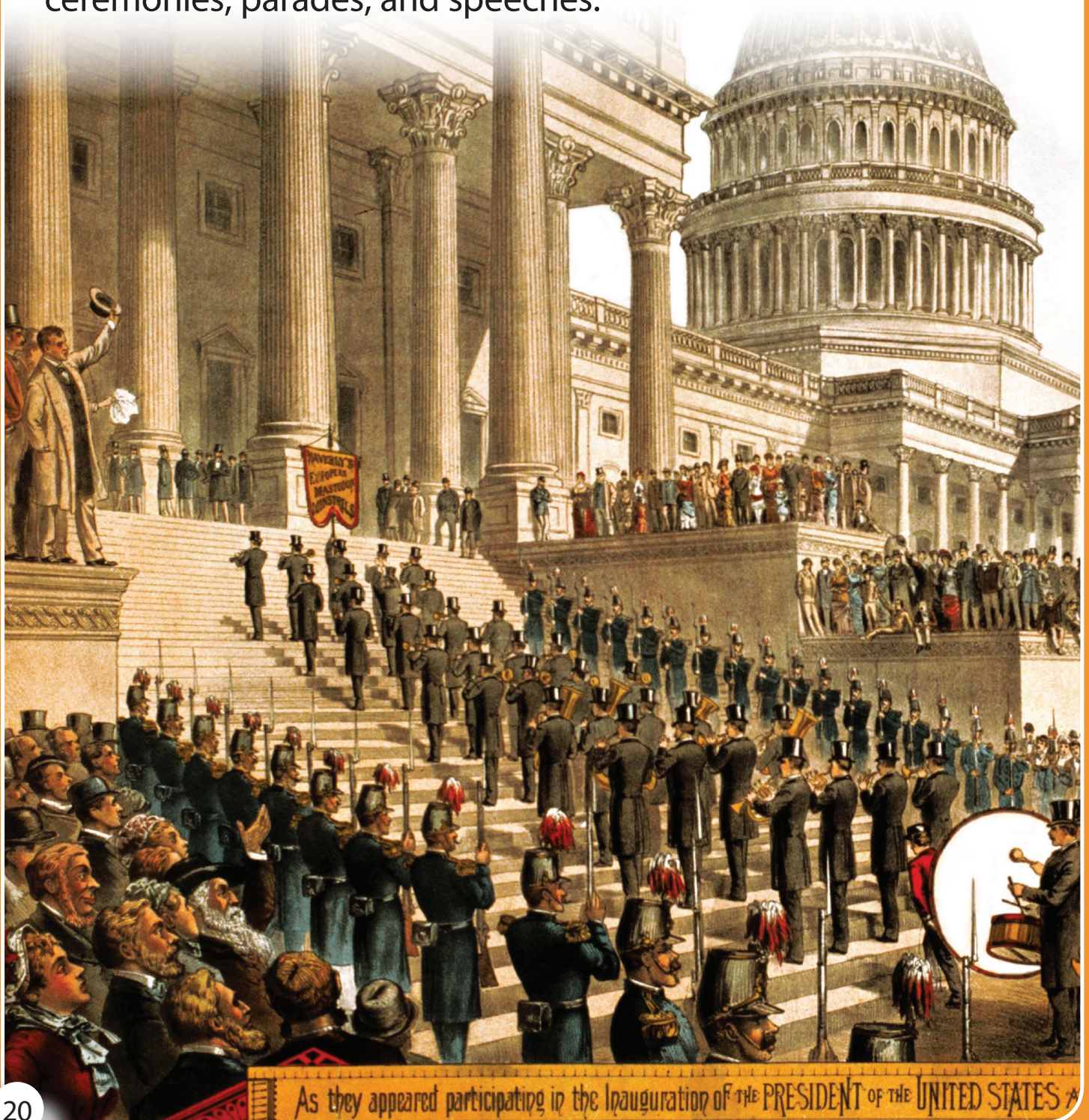
Abe did so well in the government of Illinois that his friends told him to run for president. Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth president of the United States.

IN THIS TEMPLE  
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE  
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION  
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER



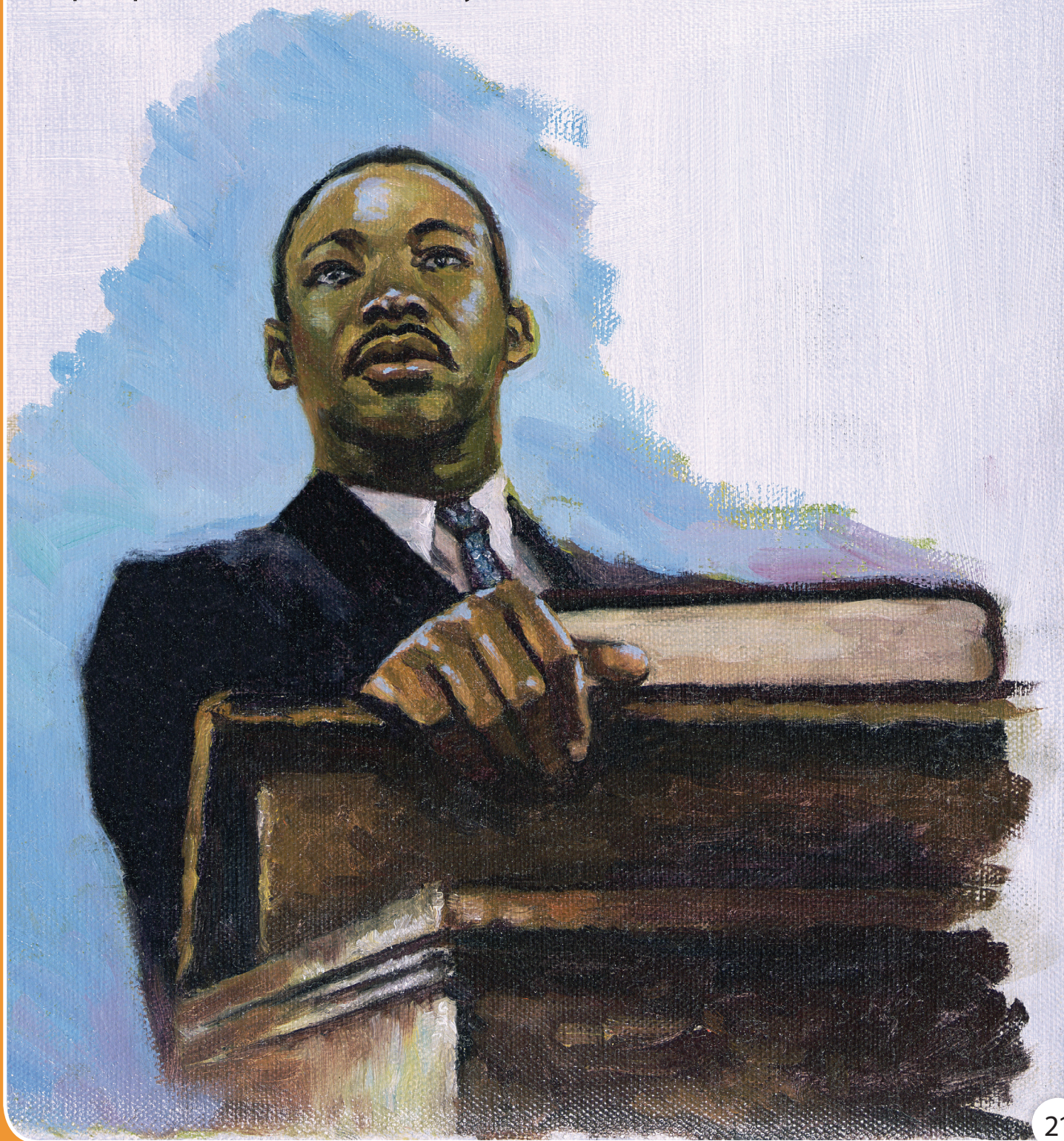
Abraham Lincoln and George Washington were both born in February. We celebrate their birthdays with a holiday called Presidents' Day on the third Monday of February.

Inauguration Day is another way we celebrate the president. Every four years, citizens choose the president of the United States. After the election, the president promises to support the laws of the country. Inauguration Day is celebrated with ceremonies, parades, and speeches.





Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is another important person from the past. Dr. King grew up during a difficult time in American history. There were many unfair laws that allowed African American people to be treated badly.



Dr. King knew that these laws were wrong. He believed that all Americans should be treated equally. Dr. King became an important leader in the United States.



He and others fought to change the unfair laws. It was very hard work, but thanks to their determination, today it is against the law to treat someone unfairly based on the color of their skin.

We celebrate Dr. King each year on the third Monday in January. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a special holiday. Instead of relaxing, people help their communities.



In this way, we keep up the hard work that Dr. King started.

# Remembering Events of the Past

When we learn about events that happened in the past, we can understand why certain things are still important today. Let's learn about a few important events!

## March

Women's History Month



## May

Memorial Day



## June

Juneteenth



## July

Independence Day



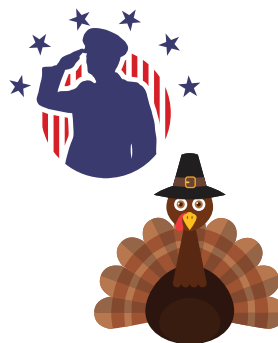
## September

Labor Day



## November

Veterans Day  
Thanksgiving Day



The whole month of March is Women's History Month. We celebrate American women who have made important contributions to our country, like these three scientists.



Katherine Johnson was an engineer at NASA who made space travel possible. Sally Ride was the first American woman to go to space, and Mae Jemison was the first female African American astronaut in space.

On the last Monday in May, we celebrate Memorial Day. Americans have fought in many wars in the past. People wanted to honor those who lost their lives serving our country.



We honor these people on Memorial Day.

We celebrate Juneteenth on June 19. Juneteenth celebrates a day, a long time ago, when 250,000 enslaved African American people in Texas learned that they were free.



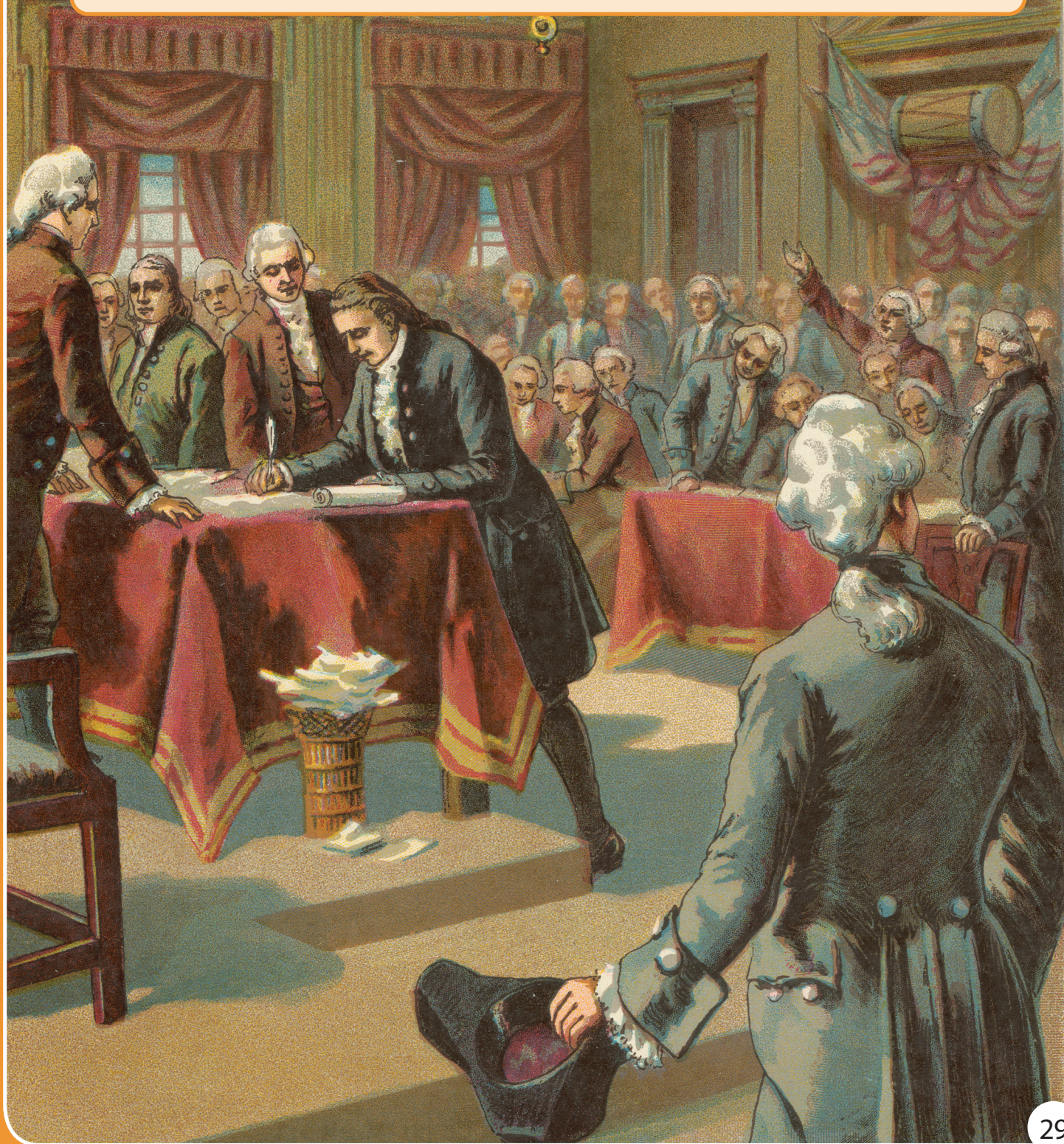
We celebrate the culture and traditions of African American people on this holiday. We celebrate freedom too!



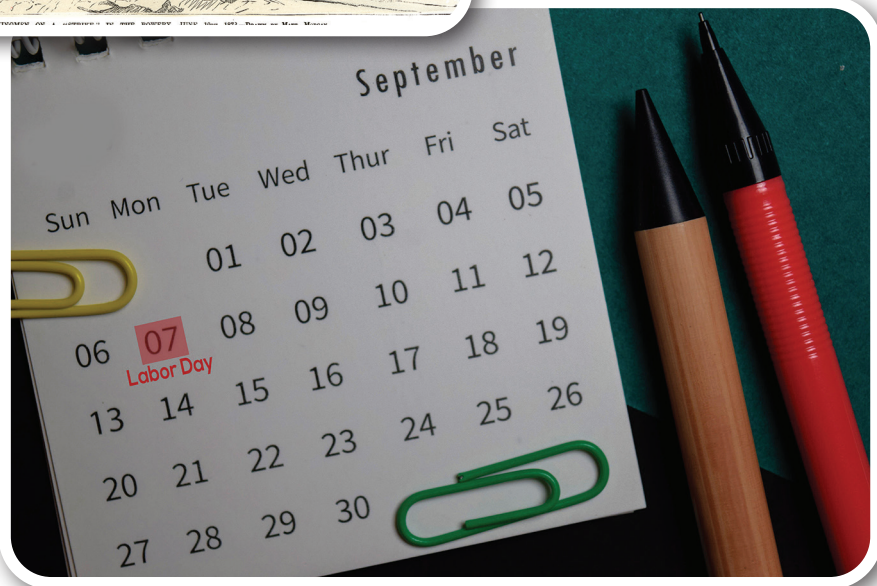
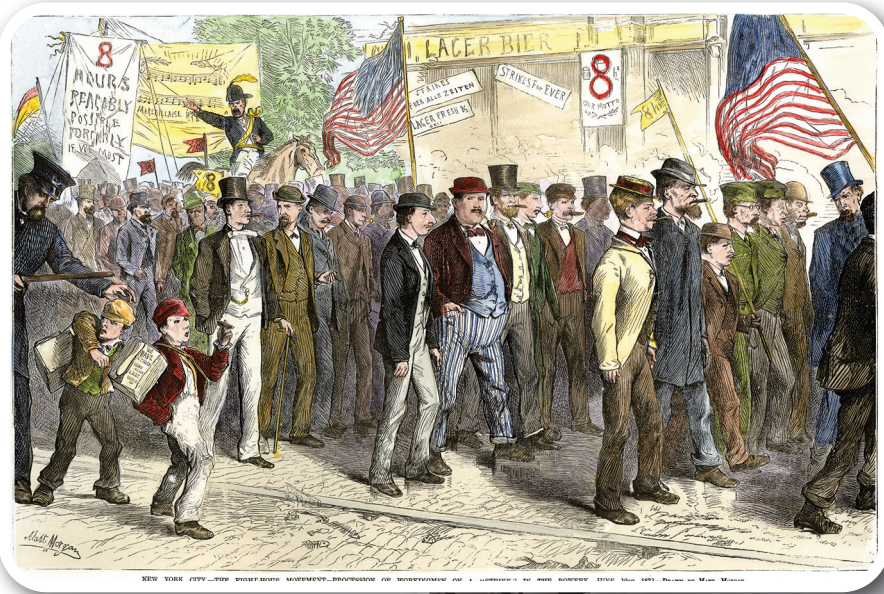
You have learned that the American army fought the British army. This was called the American Revolution. Before the war, the colonists in America were ruled by Great Britain. The American colonists felt that the British government treated them unfairly.



The colonists decided the United States should be its own country on July 4, in the year 1776. Because of this, we celebrate Independence Day on July 4 every year.



Many years after the American Revolution, some workers felt that their employers did not give them safe spaces to work or fair payment. To change things and make them better, they joined together. They won the right to be safer at work and to earn more money.



Labor Day is the day we remember their efforts. We recognize the importance of workers every year on the first Monday of September.

A large war called World War I ended on November 11, in the year 1918. This date is now called Veterans Day in the United States. In other countries it is called Remembrance Day. On Veterans Day, we remember all Americans who have fought in wars for the United States.



More than four hundred years ago, a group of people called Pilgrims came from Europe to North America. They settled in a town they called Plymouth. People of the Wampanoag tribe helped the Pilgrims grow food. In the fall, the Pilgrims and Wampanoag harvested their crops. They had a celebration of thanksgiving for their food and friendship.



At other times in our history, people have set aside days for thanksgiving. We celebrate Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday of November.



## Culture

People have lived in Louisiana for thousands of years. Native Americans lived in Louisiana first. Then, people came to Louisiana from lots of other places.



They brought their cultures with them to Louisiana.



Culture includes music, traditions, and food. It includes the languages that people speak. It also includes their beliefs. People from different backgrounds helped a new culture grow in Louisiana. Let's learn more about Louisiana's culture!



When people think of Louisiana culture, they often think of Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras, which means “Fat Tuesday,” is the last day before Lent, a time when many Christians pray and fast. It happens each year in the month of February or March. Mardi Gras was brought to Louisiana by people from France.



During Mardi Gras, people wear colorful costumes and go to parades. They sing and dance in the streets of New Orleans. They also eat many tasty foods!

People eat king cake on Mardi Gras. King cakes are decorated with the colors purple, yellow, and green. A small toy is placed in the cake. The person who finds the toy is the king or queen for a day!



The Mardi Gras king cake tradition started hundreds of years ago. Traditions are a part of culture. A tradition is something from the past that people still do today. What traditions do you have in your family?





In the past, a group of people called the Acadians came to Louisiana. Known as Cajun people, they spoke French. They kept their culture alive through music. Cajun music is played on accordions and fiddles.

Zydeco music has sounds and instruments like Cajun music. It includes music styles that come from the cultures of Creole people and African American people.





Jazz music is very special to Louisiana's culture. It was first played by African American people in New Orleans. Now, like Louisiana, jazz is a melting pot of different influences! There are many different kinds of jazz. Some jazz styles are meant for dancing. Others are meant for listening.

Just like music, food is an important part of Louisiana's culture. People from all over the world have made Louisiana their home. They brought recipes they liked to cook with them. They made new types of food using these recipes and the ingredients they found in Louisiana.





Today, people around the world know about Louisiana jambalaya and gumbo. These foods come from the Cajun and Creole cultures. They both use rice and vegetables.

Jambalaya and gumbo recipes also often have local seafood or meat.



Some Louisiana foods became traditions because of the way people lived. In the past, many Louisianans cleaned their clothing on Mondays. They heated water over fires and scrubbed the clothing by hand.



They started cooking red beans in the morning when they started cleaning their clothing. By the end of the day, they had a tasty meal waiting for them! Eating red beans and rice on Mondays is still a Louisiana tradition today.

Bread pudding, meat pies, and tamales are also foods that are important to Louisiana's culture. Bread pudding uses old bread to make a delicious dessert. Tamales originally came from Mexican culture that was brought to Louisiana. They are made from ground corn and other fillings.



What other foods from Louisiana's culture can you think of?  
Which do you like?

Which Louisiana traditions are your favorites?









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