

Picture Book Extender

Share these extender activities as a follow up to reading the book aloud.

Tricking the Tallyman: the Great Census Shenanigans of 1790

By Jacqueline Davies

2009

Gr. 2-3

Summary:

In 1790, when the Tallyman Phineas Bump comes to Turnbridge, Vermont to take a count of its citizens, they trick the tallyman twice but he tricks them in return until finally they understand that it is to their best advantage to provide an accurate count of their citizens.

Discussion Questions:

At first, why did the residents of Turnbridge think the government needed a count of citizens? What did Boston discover next about the count that made them want to have as many citizens as possible? What did Boston discover that finally convinced everyone to be accurately counted?

Study the illustrations closely. How did the citizens of Turnbridge swell their numbers to 1,726 on the second day of counting? List all of their tricks.

Read Jacqueline Davies' Author's Note. Discuss the six questions that each tallyman was required to ask. Why did some members of society count less than others? Why did some members, such as Native Americans, not count at all? Do you think that is the same or different from today's census?

Activities:

Referring to both the text of the book and the illustrations, ask students to create a list of facts about life in a small New England town in 1790. Prompt them to notice details of clothing, food, housing, and daily enterprise. Then, ask students to imagine themselves as a citizen of Turnbridge, Vermont in 1790 and write a brief biographical sketch of themselves, capturing some of the details of their daily lives. Invite them to provide an illustration to accompany the biography.

Propose to students that you will perform a census of the school. Form two teams. One team will be in charge of reporting to the classrooms at the beginning of the morning and counting the students as they are seated at their desks, tables, or on the rug. A second team will report to the playground for each of the recesses during the day and attempt to count students as they are engaged in play. The same rules will apply to both teams: Count every student once and no student more than once and all results should be tallied and reported. After each team is completed its work, gather for a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each type of census-taking.

Related Titles:

I Am America by Charles R. Smith

Mingo by Lenice Strohmeier

A New Nation: The United States, 1783-1815 by Betsy Maestro

Related Curriculum: Social Studies: History; **Social Studies:** Civics; **Math**

Author Information: Author web site: <http://www.jacquelinedavies.com/>

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Character Education: Honesty: Fiction and Nonfiction for Grades 3-5

Math: Fiction for Grades 3-5

Picture Books to Introduce the Revolutionary War, 1775 - 1799

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