

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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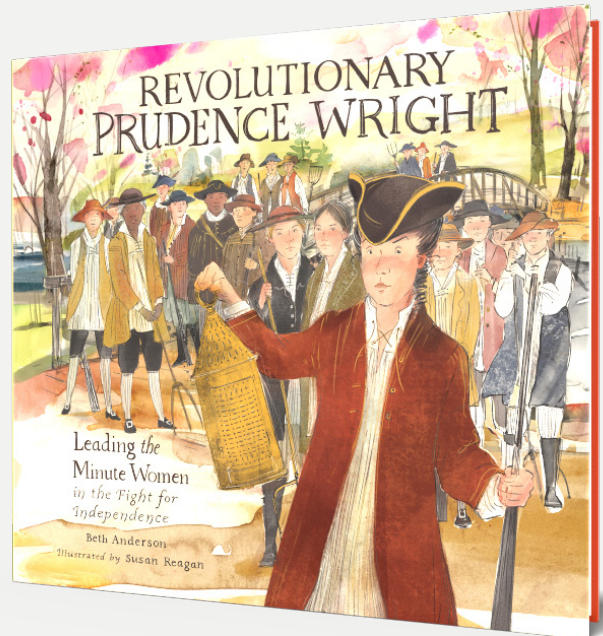
REVOLUTIONARY PRUDENCE WRIGHT:

Leading the Minute Women in the Fight for Independence

Written by Beth Anderson
Illustrated by Susan Reagan

\$18.99 US / \$24.99 CAN
ISBN: 978-1-64472-057-8

Grades: 2-5
Ages: 7-10



ABOUT THE BOOK

It is the middle of the 1700s and trouble is brewing. The citizens of Pepperell, Massachusetts, have had enough of British control, enough of the King's unfair taxes and laws. Joining other headstrong patriots, they resolve to fight back. The men of Pepperell form a militia—minutemen ready to take up arms at a moment's notice. And the women rebel by boycotting British goods.

When an alarm rider warns of a British attack, the minutemen march off to battle for independence, leaving the women to tend to businesses and farms. But then danger threatens the town. The enemy is near. Prudence Wright rallies the women. Will they be able to defend their homes?

PRAISE FOR REVOLUTIONARY PRUDENCE WRIGHT: **LEADING THE MINUTE WOMEN IN THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE**

★ "Reagan's accomplished illustrations, executed in watercolor with digital drawing, add historical veracity to Anderson's superbly documented, at times hair-raising narrative. The author explicitly situates Wright and her female comrades as pioneers who 'proved themselves as full citizens' in an era before female enfranchisement. Vivid, absorbing, and inspiring."

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

Beth Anderson has always been fascinated with words and language—from sound and meaning, to figurative language and point of view, to cultural and scientific aspects of language. After earning a BA in linguistics and a MEd. in reading, she taught English language learners for more than 20 years. That classroom community taught her valuable lessons as she advocated for students and encouraged them to share their voices. Surrounded by young people from all over the world, with literature as her favorite tool, Beth was fascinated by the power of books to teach, connect, and inspire. Beth enjoys discovering the humanity in history and sharing overlooked people and events. Digging into the past, she finds real people just like us, who faced challenges, saw possibility, and took action. Find out more about Beth at bethandersonwriter.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

Illustration and the love of drawing have dominated **Susan Regan's** life since she was a girl. Her illustration experience has covered a range of products and styles over the years but her focus now is on the storytelling illustration she loves. Her picture books include *You and Me*, *Simon Says Open the Book*, and *Lights Out*. Susan graduated with a BFA in illustration from the Columbus College of Art & Design. She teaches illustration techniques as adjunct faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Susan lives with her husband Frank and their furry family in Tremont, a historic neighborhood of her hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. Learn more about Susan at susanreaganart.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

PRE-READING:

- Look at the cover and read the title of the book.
- What interesting details do you notice?
- What do you know about the American Revolution?
- What can you understand about Prudence Wright from the cover?
- What do you think it means to call someone “revolutionary”?
- Read the subtitle: *Leading the Minute Women in the Fight for Independence*. What do you think “minute women” means?
- What do you think the story is about? Make some predictions.
- What questions do you have?



- Return to your predictions. Were you correct?
- Have your questions been answered by the story?
- What would you like to know more about?
- What does “independent” mean? What does it mean for a country? What does it mean for a person? In what ways do you show independence?
- What kind of behavior do you think people expected from girls and women in colonial times? What do you think about that? If Prudence lived today, what might she be doing?
- What decisions did women make that fought back against British rule?
- You may have heard the story of Paul Revere. He wasn’t the only alarm rider. Why do you think the patriots created a network of riders? How was their system different than our warning systems today?
- What do you think about Prudence’s decision to guard the bridge? What were her options? What would you have done?
- What do you think the women were thinking about as they waited in the darkness by the bridge?
- What is the most important idea or theme you found in the story? Support your choice with textual evidence.

WORDS AND PICTURES

- Resistance to British rule took many forms. What examples of resistance can you find in words and pictures? How did the colony of Massachusetts resist? The community of Pepperell? Individuals?
- How do words and illustrations work together to help you understand Prudence as a character? Which scene is your favorite? Why?



- The quote in the opening is from Thomas Paine, a writer who encouraged the colonists to push for independence from British rule. What do you think he meant by, *“These are the times that try men’s souls.”*? What examples can you find in the art and text?

Why do you think the author added *“and women’s”*? What do you see in the art and text that supports your idea?

- What can you understand about the value of paper from the following sentences?

“One precious piece of paper became her “love box” and still exists today.”
She *“earned rewards from her parents such as playtime or a sheet of paper.”*

Paper was very expensive in colonial times. Each sheet was handmade. People erased a page over and over, reusing it, until they wore holes in it. In school, children used slates because of the expense of paper. How would your habits change if you had to make your own paper or pay a high price? Compare Prudence’s childhood with your own.

- The town of Pepperell votes to join the “network of resistance.” What do you think this phrase means?

“With signatures inked on paper, Pepperell, Massachusetts, officially joined the network of resistance. A network that stretched from Boston to meeting houses across the colony and into homes.”

AUTHOR’S WORD CHOICE

In this story, the author uses several types of figurative language.



- Alliteration** is the repetition of initial sounds. Look at the opening of the story. What initial sounds are repeated?

“Prudence Cummings painted, snipped, and folded her precious piece of paper, crafting a “love box” like any colonial girl.”

[The title, with *R* and *WR*, is a good example of how alliteration is about the first sound, not necessarily the first letter.]

Find more examples in the story. How do the different sounds of letters affect the story when you read it aloud?

2. Similes and metaphors help create visual images by comparing two unlike ideas or objects.

Metaphors present a direct comparison, and do not use “like” or “as.” When the women are quilting, the author creates a metaphor using the quilt.

“...she studied the quilt—small pieces, repeating patterns. She scanned the circle of women. Small actions, too, might form a pattern—a pattern of rebellion.”

How do the women’s actions over the next pages form a “pattern of rebellion”?

Similes use “like” or “as” to make a comparison. When the women gather to march to the bridge, the author writes *“...they were bound together, like blocks of a quilt.”*

How are the women like design blocks of a quilt?

How does the quilt image contribute to the story?

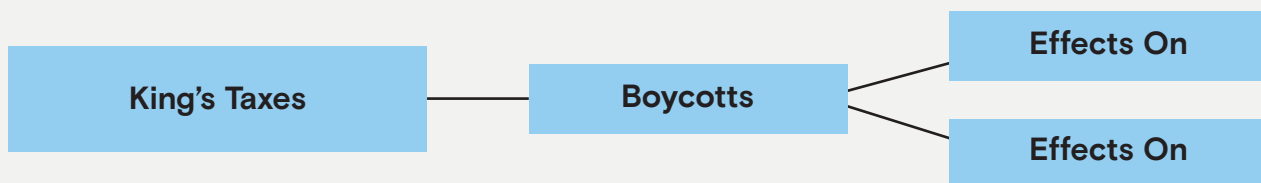
Why do you think the author chose to use the image of a quilt?

Art Extension: How is your class like a quilt? What one idea “sews” you all together? Create a class quilt with paper shapes in a pattern to display your ideas.

3. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- **Art and Setting:** Authors and illustrators do research when they create historical stories. What details do you notice in the art that help you understand the time and place? How do the visual images of primary source documents contribute to the story?
- **Revolutionary War:** How does the story connect to what you already knew about the fight for independence? After reading the story, what have you learned about how the struggle affected the daily lives of real people?

Most people think of war as a military battle, but boycotting British goods was an important part of the revolution, too. The King’s taxes caused the colonists to stop buying British goods. The boycotts then had effects on the colonists and the British. Create a diagram to show multiple **cause and effect** relationships for each side. Use ideas from the story and what you know.



- **Back Matter:** How does the author's note help you understand more about Prudence Wright and the time she lived?

Did anything surprise you? What connections can you make to the story from your own life?

- **Connect to Self:** Prudence made choices to resist British rule. These decisions made her life harder, but ultimately helped the new country gain independence. What is something you'd like to change to create a better future? What choices could you make that would help your cause? How would your choices affect your life? How might your choices affect others?

WRITE IN RESPONSE TO READING

These activities may take different forms for different learners. Consider art, role play, short videos, and more ways for kids to express their ideas.

1. **Write to persuade:** Return to the "Connect to Self" ideas you shared. Choose one idea you feel strongly about. Who do you need to convince? What points are important for them to understand? How can you inspire others to join you in taking action? Organize your argument and write to persuade someone to accept your idea.



2. **Extension—Treasures and Bridges:** The last page of the story says. . .

"Prudence passed down many treasures to the generations that followed: her paper 'love box,' her quilts, the lantern she carried that night. But the greatest of all is her story—a bridge connecting us to the past and the dawn of a revolution."

What does this mean? How does her story connect us to history? Think about your own life. Is there something that connects you to the past or another person? Something in your family? Or of your own? Something you've seen or held? Or a story you've heard? Write or draw to share how this is a "bridge" and how it holds special meaning for you.