

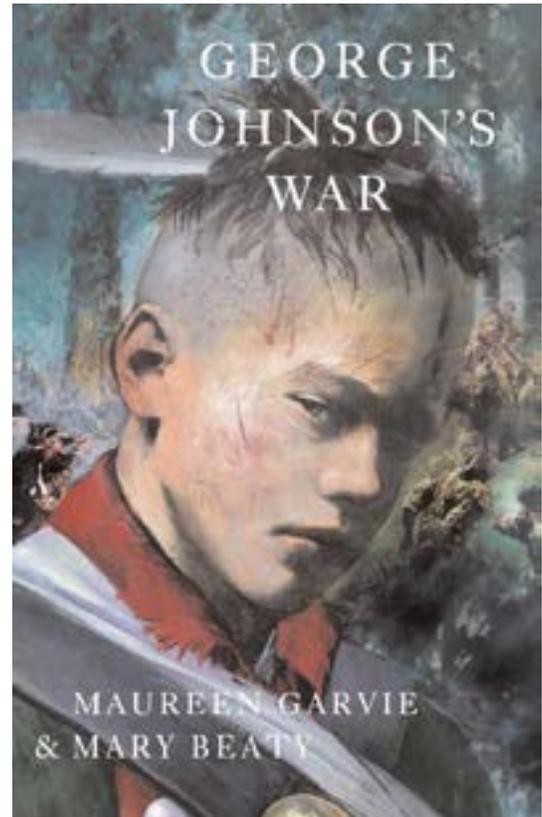
# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO GEORGE JOHNSON'S WAR

Written by Maureen Garvie and Mary Beaty

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Young George Johnson lives in an extraordinary family in extraordinary times. His father is Sir William Johnson, one of the richest and most powerful men in colonial New York. His mother is Molly Brant, stepdaughter of a Mohawk chief and sister of Iroquois leader Joseph Brant. George spends his early years in a grand mansion called Johnson Hall, but his happy, sheltered life changes as the War for American Independence looms. As the rebel forces gradually take over the valley, George and his family are forced to flee their home and seek refuge with Molly's friends and relatives.

George longs to follow his brother's footsteps into battle. Instead, Molly sends him to boarding school in Montreal, where he spends three miserable years waiting for Peter's return. Finally, at the age of thirteen, he persuades his mother to allow him to join the last raid on the valley where he grew up.



**George Johnson's War**  
Written by Maureen Garvie

and Mary Beaty

**JUVENILE FICTION**

Reading Ages 12+

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### **Maureen Garvie**

Maureen Garvie has been a teacher, librarian and journalist and is now an editor and writer. She grew up in Kingston, Ontario, and is the author of four books for young readers, including *George Johnson's War* (co-written with Mary Beaty), *Lake Rules*, *Amy by Any Other Name* and *Almost Invisible*.

### **Mary Beaty**

Mary Beaty was for many years Head of Children's Services at the Kingston-Frontenac Public Library in Kingston. She now divides her time between Toronto and Stratford, Ontario, where she is a wedding officiant.

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## BEFORE READING

### Map Exploration

With students, explore maps of the areas in question: Upper and Lower Canada and the Eastern United States during the American War of Independence (1775-1783).

Have students note the comparisons to modern-day cities, provinces and states. Locate the full territory of the Indigenous peoples and tribes of these regions (Six Nations Confederacy, Iroquois, Shawnee, Ojibwa, Mohawk, Lenape, Winnebago, Miami, Delaware, Potawatomi, Mississauga, Haudenosaunee and Wyandot).

### Research

Have students research and explore the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War). Ask them: How did it impact the coming war and hostilities between Upper Canada, Lower Canada and the United States? How did it shape the relationship between the Six Nations people and the British Crown? The Six Nations' relationship with the American people?

Ask students to research the Thirteen Colonies at the time of the war. Have them note: Which colonies were considered loyalist? Which were considered in rebellion?

Have students explore and research the Wampum belt. Ask them: What is its significance? How does it demonstrate the Indigenous peoples' understanding of treaties? How is that different from how the colonists viewed treaties? Why is this important?

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## DURING READING

### **Exploring the Seven Years' War and the American War of Independence**

Have students explore the reasons why the Indigenous peoples allied themselves with the British at the time. Ask students: What were the reasons for supporting the British? How did the events of the Seven Years' War affect the alliances formed during the American War of Independence?

**Curriculum Connections: History (American, Canadian, World), Civics and Careers, Indigenous Studies**

The British Army and the Native alliances were both strong forces that played significant roles in the American War of Independence. Have students research the following: What were the main differences between the British/American military structures and the Indigenous alliance structures? How did this affect the tide of the war and the gains or losses of each?

**Curriculum Connections: History (American, Canadian, World), Civics and Careers, Indigenous Studies**

Ask students to explore the political, economic and sociocultural factors that led to the American War of Independence. Have them write an essay detailing each factor and how they contributed to the progress and outcome.

**Curriculum Connections: History (American, Canadian, World)**

### **Newspaper Activity**

Ask students to create a newspaper from the time of the American War of Independence. Have them choose a specific year or date, and have them include appropriate news stories of battles, political events and decision making, biographies of prominent figures and an editorial section.

**Cross-curricular Connection: Media Literacy**

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## DURING READING

### Visual Mapping

Have students prepare a visual mind map or Geographic Information System (GIS) map of the strategic battles discussed in the book. Ask them to include information on each site about the combatants, leaders, outcome and strategic value to the American War of Independence. Have students create a presentation for the class that details why the positions and/or battles were important to the progress and outcome of the war.

**Cross-curricular Connections: History, Geography, Visual Arts**

### Text Discussion

In chapter 2, a council is held. Ask students: Who attends? Why do they hold the council? Whose voice is the deciding factor?

In chapter 5, there is a discussion that two nations of the Six Nations Confederacy were fighting for the Americans. Ask students: Which nations chose to fight for the Americans? Why did they choose that side? What did Molly (George's mother) argue for?

### Territories

Discuss with students why Molly and her brother, Joseph, are so valuable to both sides. Have students research the territories held by the Mohawk and the other nations in the Six Nations Confederacy. Ask them to create a map of the territories held and present it to the class.

**Curriculum Connections: Geography, History (Canadian, American)**

A mind map is a visual tool used to organize important information from a text or concept and is linked by the relationships between the content.

A GIS map is a tool that uses geographic information to manage and analyze data.

<https://www.esri.com/en-us/what-is-gis/overview>

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### **Treaties**

In the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the British King George III makes no mention of his “allies,” the Indigenous peoples. Discuss with students how this led to the treaty system and the displacement of Indigenous peoples in the Northern United States and Canada. Ask students to research what effect this had on the security of the Mohawk and other Indigenous peoples.

### **Curriculum Connections: Civics and Careers, Indigenous Studies**

Lord Haldimand is mentioned throughout the book. Have students research the Haldimand Tract and treaty, then create a visual presentation for the class of the territories that are discussed in the book and their relationship to the Haldimand Tract.

### **Curriculum Connections: History (Canadian), Indigenous Studies, Civics and Careers**

### **Exploring Society**

In chapter 1, George discusses his “Indian” family and his “white” family. Ask students how this affects his status in society. With students, explore the concept of “Summer Wives.” Ask them: Why did many wealthy British men have two wives and families? How was this viewed in Indigenous societies? How was this viewed in settler societies?

### **Curriculum Connections: History, Indigenous Studies**

In chapter 1, George and his brother Peter are “eeling” and fishing. Have students research the fishing and hunting techniques of the time period, then build a fishing net like the one George and Peter made. Ask students to present the project to the class and discuss the materials they would have used at the time.

### **Curriculum connections: Construction Tech**

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## DURING READING

### **Exploring Society Continued**

Women play a strong role throughout the book. Have students research the political structure of the Mohawks and the role of women in Mohawk society. Ask students: How was it different from the role of women in British/American society at the time? As a class, create a chart to compare and contrast the roles of each and discuss why they were different.

### **Curriculum connections: Indigenous Studies, Gender Studies, History (Canadian)**

Throughout chapters 5 to 12, George and his family are forced to move or flee several times. Friends turn into foes and many turn against them. Discuss with students: How does George's position as half Mohawk and half white change throughout these chapters? What leads to this change in status and how is it reflected today?

Throughout the book, the daily activities of both boys and girls during the late 1700s are discussed. Have students create a journal of either a boy or a girl from this time period, writing several entries that detail what a day, month and year would look like in the life of a child from this time period.

### **Curriculum Connection: History**

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## AFTER READING

Ask students to research and examine the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, current treaty disputes in the courts and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Ask them: In what ways did the American War of Independence foreshadow what was to happen to the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States?

Have students identify treaties that were made with the Six Nations and find out if those promises were kept. Ask them to investigate unceded territories and what it means when the terms unceded and not surrendered are used.

### **Curriculum Connections: Civics and Careers, Government, History, Indigenous Studies**

The beliefs held about and approaches to Indigenous peoples by the British and American forces differed. Discuss with students: How were they different and how did this lead to the different treatment of and outcomes for Indigenous peoples in each country?

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Web Resources

#### **Seven Years' War:**

Eccles, William John. "Seven Years War." The Canadian Encyclopedia, published February 7, 2006; last edited March 4, 2015.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/seven-years-war>

#### **The American War of Independence timeline:**

"A timeline of the American Revolution from 1763–1787." British Library, June 17, 2016.

<https://www.bl.uk/the-american-revolution/articles/american-revolution-timeline>

#### **Important figures in the American War of Independence:**

Logan, Joseph T. "The American Revolution — Important People of the American Revolution." Accessed September 30, 2018. <http://theamericanrevolution.org/people.aspx>

Pettinger, Tejvan. "People of the American Revolution." Biography Online, February 18, 2017.

<https://www.biographyonline.net/people/people-american-revolution.html>

#### **History of the Six Nations Confederacy:**

"History of Six Nations." Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation, accessed September 30, 2018. <http://sndevcorp.ca/history-of-six-nations>

#### **Mohawk Valley history:**

"American Revolution in the Mohawk Valley Region." The Mohawk Valley Region Path Through History, accessed September 30, 2018.

<https://www.mohawkvalleyhistory.com/themes/revolutionary-war>

#### **The Treaty of Paris of 1783:**

Jaenen, Cornelius J. "Treaty of Paris 1783." The Canadian Encyclopedia, published February 7, 2006; last edited October 21, 2014.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaty-of-paris-1783>

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Web Resources

#### **Children's daily life during the American War of Independence:**

Nelson, Ken. "American Revolution for Kids: Daily Life During the Revolutionary War." Ducksters, accessed September 30, 2018.

[http://www.ducksters.com/history/american\\_revolution/daily\\_life\\_during\\_the\\_revolutionary\\_war.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/american_revolution/daily_life_during_the_revolutionary_war.php)

#### **UNDRIP:**

United Nations. "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." New York City: United Nations, March 2008. [https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)