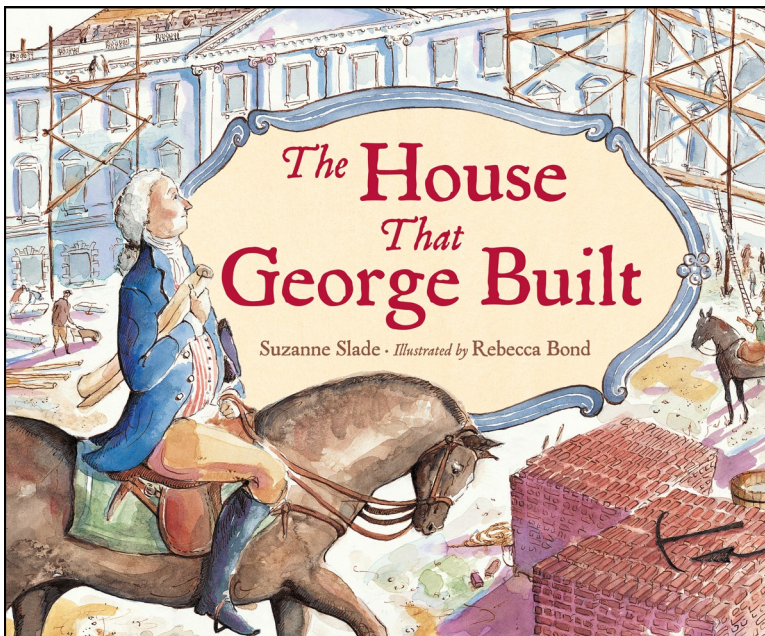


Reader's Theater

The House That George Built



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Ages 6–11 • 8 1/2 x 11 • 32 pages

The Reader's Theater of THE HOUSE THAT GEORGE BUILT is a creative presentation which works for various grade levels due to the repetitive lines in the "building verses." These verses allow students to interact with the actual building materials used in the construction of the President's House. For younger grades, the narrator part may be read by one adult/teacher, or for older grades it may be divided among nine narrators. The eight "builders" may use a 3 x 5 card which contains their first line, and subsequent repeating line, so they don't have to hold a script.

Roles (and suggested props):

Narrator

George Washington (namecard around neck, large picture of White House)

Lot Builder (leafy branch from bush/tree)

Design Builder (scroll)

Foundation Builder (shovel)

Brick Builder (brick)

Stone Builder (large stone or stone cut from cardboard)

Wood Builder (piece of wood)

Roof Builder (cardboard folded in v-shape to look like a roof)

John Adams (regal hat and/or jacket)

Scene 1

Narrator: George Washington, our first president, was one busy guy. He had laws to pass, important people to meet, and an entire country to run! But he also wanted to build a special house where future presidents would live.

George: This is the story of the President's House that George built.

...

Scene 2

Narrator: First George looked for the perfect place to put this fine house. He searched the land and discovered a beautiful wooded hill in Maryland. On that hill George found a lovely spot overlooking the sparkling Potomac River.

Lot Builder: This is the lot, that grand, scenic spot,

George: for the President's House that George built!

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Scene 3

Narrator: Next George needed a plan for the President’s House. He held a contest and offered \$500 or a gold medal to the person with the best design. When the entries started to arrive, George got worried. Some drawings were too small and simple f. Others were too fussy and frilly. Then George spied a magnificent drawing with majestic columns, grand staircases, and a stately oval room. James Hoban’s design won the contest.

Design Builder: This is the design, that would stand for all time,

Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,

George: for the President’s House that George built!

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Scene 4

Narrator: Even though George held the most important job in America, he wasn’t too important to lend a hand to the building project. George strapped on his boots and helped survey and measure the construction site. Then he pounded in wood stakes to mark where the President’s House would be built. A large hole was dug between the stakes and filled with stone, wood, and sand, creating a firm foundation for the President’s House.

George: This is the foundation, that was dug for our nation,

Design Builder: that held the design, that would stand for all time,

Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,

George: for the President’s House that George built!

...

Scene 5

Narrator: Now George needed bricks—lots of them. But how could he get thousands of heavy bricks up the steep hill? Fortunately the mud beneath George’s feet contained clay and sand—the perfect ingredients for making bricks! Soon two kilns were baking up red-hot bricks around the clock. Bricklayers used the fresh bricks to lay straight, sturdy walls.

Brick Builder: This is the brick, that was baked strong and thick,

Foundation Builder: that was laid on the foundation, that was dug for our nation,

Design Builder: that held the design, that would stand for all time,

Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,

George: for the President’s House that George built!

...

Scene 6

Narrator: Then George faced another problem. The nearby quarries didn't have enough stone to cover the outside of the President's House. He knew there was plenty of beautiful stone in England, but he would never crawl back to the king! So George changed the house plan from three stories to two, so it would need less stone. Stoneworkers carved flowers, leaves, and ribbons in the soft sandstone, then painted it with a thick sealer made of ground-up rice which turned the house white.

Stone Builder: This is the stone, that was chiseled and honed,

Brick Builder: that went over the brick, that was baked strong and thick,

Foundation Builder: that was laid on the foundation, that was dug for our nation,

Design Builder: that held the design, that would stand for all time,

Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,

George: for the President's House that George built!

...

Scene 7

Narrator: Progress on the President's House was slow, but George didn't get discouraged. Carpenters built a wooden frame for the roof. They hammered sturdy timbers to support the inside walls.

Wood Builder: This is the wood, that was sturdy and good,

Stone Builder: that was nailed near the stone, that was chiseled and honed,

Brick Builder: that went over the brick, that was baked strong and thick,

Foundation Builder: that was laid on the foundation, that was dug for our nation,

Design Builder: that held the design, that would stand for all time,

Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,

George: for the President's House that George built!

...

Scene 8

Narrator: Before George knew it, eight years had gone by. The President's House was nearly finished, and so was George's time in office. During his last year as president, building officials asked George to use slate instead of lead for the roof because the house was getting too expensive. George approved their request, but unfortunately this heavy roof leaked when it rained!

Roof Builder: This is the roof, that was almost waterproof,
Wood Builder: that went over the wood, that was sturdy and good,
Stone Builder: that was nailed near the stone, that was chiseled and honed,
Brick Builder: that went over the brick, that was baked strong and thick,
Foundation Builder: that was laid on the foundation, that was dug for our nation,
Design Builder: that held the design, that would stand for all time,
Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,
George: for the President's House that George built!

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Scene 9

Narrator: George's term as president ended in 1797. He moved back home to Virginia, where he spent time with his family until his death in 1799. Sadly, George didn't live to see the second president, John Adams, move into the President's House on November 1, 1800.

John Adams: This is the day, that John came to stay,
Roof Builder: under the roof, that was almost waterproof,
Wood Builder: that went over the wood, that was sturdy and good,
Stone Builder: that was nailed near the stone, that was chiseled and honed,
Brick Builder: that went over the brick, that was baked strong and thick,
Foundation Builder: that was laid on the foundation, that was dug for our nation,
Design Builder: that held the design, that would stand for all time,
Lot Builder: that was drawn for the lot, that grand, scenic spot,
ALL: FOR THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE THAT GEORGE BUILT!