



## America's Founding Myths Discussion Guide

Note: These sample discussion questions focus on the myth of the “New World” explored in pages 6-7 of *America's Founding Myths... And What REALLY Happened!*; however, these questions can be applied to any of the myths presented in the book.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Understanding the Myth

- What is the myth of the “New World” discussed in the beginning of the book?
- Where have you heard this story before (in school, books, movies, songs, etc.)?
- What parts of the myth stood out to you or made it memorable?

#### Investigating the Evidence

- What evidence does the book give that challenges or complicates this myth?
- What sources does the book use to explain what really happened? (Hint: you might have to check the back of the book!)
- What new facts did you learn that surprised you?

#### Comparing the Myth and the Reality

- In what ways does the real historical event differ from the popular version?
- Why do you think people retold the myth instead of the true version of events?
- How does knowing the real story change the way you think about this moment in history?

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#### America's Founding Myths ...And What REALLY Happened!

Written by Christy Mihaly  
Illustrated by Marta Sevilla

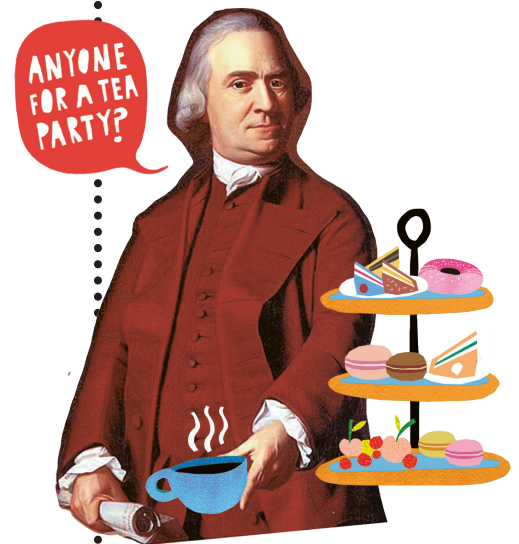


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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, *continued*

### Media + Information Literacy

- What techniques (artwork, stories, speeches, movies, textbooks) helped keep the myth alive?
- Why is it important to question stories that have been passed down for many years?
- What clues can you use to tell if a story is based on fact, opinion, or tradition?

### Critical Thinking & Civic Literacy

- How does understanding the true story help us understand American history more clearly?
- What values or lessons might people have hoped to pass on with this myth? Are those lessons still useful today?
- How can knowing the real history help you be a more informed citizen?
- What questions would you still like to ask about this event?
- How might you research this topic further on your own?

### Reflection

- If you were retelling this historical event, what would you include to make it accurate?
- How does the truth compare to the “fun” or “heroic” version of the myth?
- Why might different groups of people remember this event differently?
- What did this chapter make you curious about?
- What other history stories do you think might be myths worth investigating?



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## “Myth or Fact” Challenge and Activity

Determine whether the statement about America’s founding is a myth or a fact. If it’s a myth, rewrite the statement so that it’s true.

- 1) When the Europeans arrived on the North American continent, it was mostly an empty and unpopulated wilderness.
- 2) When Columbus landed in the Caribbean, the Indigenous people he met were the Taíno.
- 3) Pocahontas fell in love with English settler John Smith and saved his life as he was about to be killed by her father’s men.
- 4) The Mayflower carried over 100 passengers and crew who called themselves “The Pilgrims” as they sought a new life in the United States.
- 5) The Pilgrims prepared a feast of turkey, stuffing and pie to celebrate The First Thanksgiving with the Wampanoag.
- 6) On March 5, 1770 a mob of colonists harassed British soldiers gathered at the Custom House on King Street in Boston prior to British soldiers shooting into the crowd.
- 7) When the U.S. Constitution was adopted, many Americans were enslaved and many more lacked equal rights, despite the assertion in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal”.



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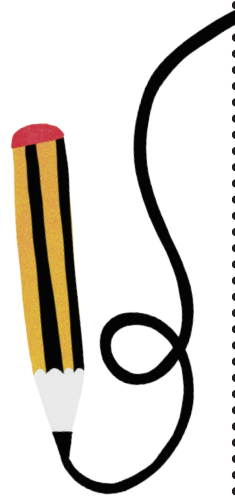


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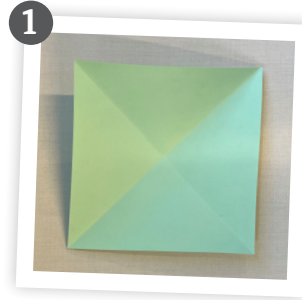
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## Activity: “True or False?” Chatterbox

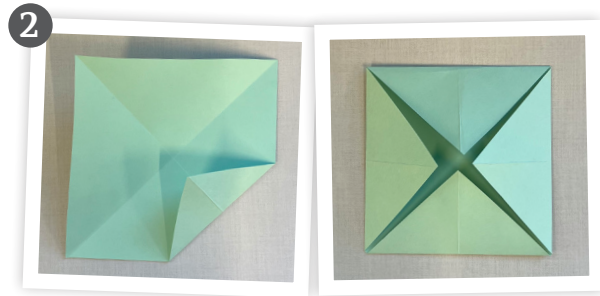
### MATERIALS:

- 8.5 x 11-inch piece of construction paper cut into a square
- Markers

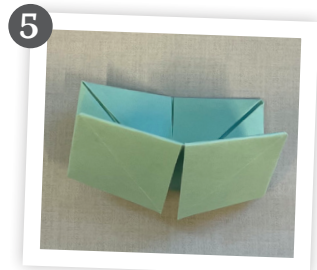


### DIRECTIONS:

- 1) **Fold corner to corner.** Fold the paper diagonally in half, then unfold. Repeat with the opposite corners to make an “X” crease.
- 2) **Fold corners to the center.** Fold each corner into the middle point where the creases cross. Press the folds flat.



- 3) **Flip the paper over.** Turn the paper over so the folded corners are facing down.
- 4) **Fold corners to the center again.** Fold each corner into the center once more, creating smaller squares.



- 5) **Fold in half.** Fold the square in half horizontally, then unfold. Fold it in half vertically and unfold again.

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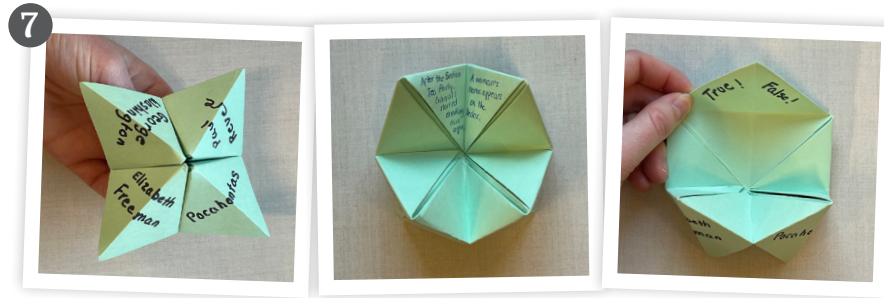
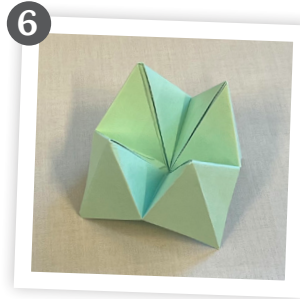
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## DIRECTIONS, *continued*

- 6) **Form the chatterbox.** Gently slide your thumbs and index fingers under the flaps. Pinch the corners together to shape the fortune teller so it opens and closes.
- 7) **Add content!** On each of the outermost flaps, draw or write the name of a historical figure featured in the book (for example, George Washington or Elizabeth Freeman). On the middle flaps, write statements about America's founding – some can be true and some can be false. On the innermost flaps, reveal whether each statement is a "Myth!" or a "Fact!"



- 8) **Play!** Have a partner choose a historical figure or a number on the chatterbox. Open and close it as you spell out the figure's name, then pick a flap – and discover whether it's a "Myth!" or a "Fact!"



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# Activity: Interview with an Adult

Ask an adult your trust about a myth they may have believed as a child. Here are some questions you can pose using the example of “The First Thanksgiving”:

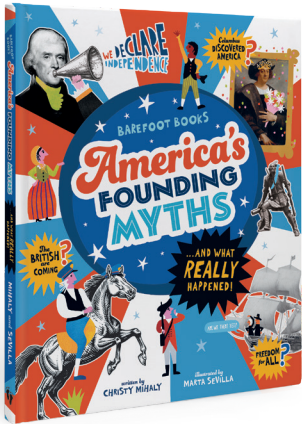
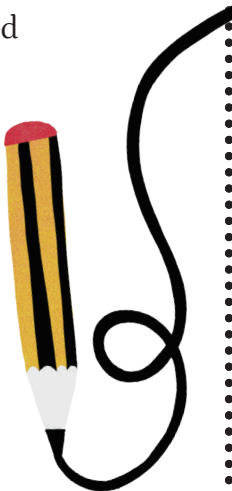
- 1) Have you heard about the First Thanksgiving?
- 2) What have you heard?
- 3) Did you know that what really happened is:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Fill in the gap here with what you know!)
- 4) Why do you think the myth is so widespread?



# Group Activity: Rewrite the Story

Rewrite these myths to reflect what *REALLY* happened.

- 1) “All the Patriots were in favor of dumping tea into the Boston Harbor during the Boston Tea Party.”
- 2) “As Paul Revere rode from Boston to Lexington, he shouted “The British are coming!” to warn his fellow Patriots of the coming troops.”
- 3) “The first confrontations between the Patriots and the British armed forces took place at Lexington and Concord.”
- 4) “During the American revolution, women stuck to sewing and similar ladylike activities.”
- 5) “Slavery only happened in the South, not in the North.”
- 6) “Native Nations didn’t participate in the American Revolutionary War.”



America’s Founding Myths  
...And What **REALLY** Happened!  
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# CERTIFICATE of Completion

This certifies that

is officially a **Junior MYTH BUSTER!**



Through the America's Founding Myths program of study, this scholar has built essential skills in inquiry and media literacy – preparing them to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and continue myth-busting beyond these pages.

America's Founding Myths  
... And What REALLY Happened!  
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What myths will **YOU** investigate next?

