

Family Literacy Event Guide

First Ladies Make History

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Image credit: The White House Historical Association

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BARBARA BUSH
FOUNDATION *for*
FAMILY LITERACY

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Introduction

About the Book

From the publisher: “Who are the first ladies of the United States and what do they do? With this special book, authors Anita McBride and Giovanna McBride explain that these are big questions with many answers. There is no rule book defining the role of the first lady, yet the first ladies have worked hard to make the world a better place for more than two hundred years. *First Ladies Make History* is a unique book, taking young readers on a journey with first ladies to discover the important contributions they have made throughout American history.”

Why We Chose *First Ladies Make History* to Help Celebrate Reading

- For the anniversary of former first lady Barbara Bush’s 100th birthday, we are sharing Literacy Explorer Kit materials with libraries and community organizations nationwide. *First Ladies Make History* has been selected as an informational text that celebrates first ladies and Mrs. Bush! We love this informational text for its engaging layout with colorful illustrations, easy-to-read text, and captions that provide snippets of important information about the first ladies of the United States. It’s the perfect addition to a biographical reading collection and can be shared with readers throughout the year.
- An informational story share is unique and offers an opportunity for children and families to practice skills and strategies they will use when reading

informational texts. In addition, you may be interested in other educational resources found on The White House Historical Association website.

Information on Engagement Activities

- *First Ladies Make History* is not a traditional read aloud. It offers an opportunity to explore an informational text with families along with the importance of reading different types of texts. Think about how you will promote this unique story share by reviewing the activities below.
- The activities in this guide are designed to offer options during a family literacy event, so you can decide how you'd like to share *First Ladies Make History*. We have provided ideas for activities when the families arrive (*Welcome Activities*), a transition activity to move to the story share (*Opening Activity*), a suggested roadmap for reading the story (*Sharing an Informational Text*), and activities to extend the fun and learning (*Exploring More*). In this guide, the term *story share* is used to indicate a read aloud or story time for families.
- We encourage you to modify as needed for families based on their needs, interests, space, time, and supplies. You might use all the activities, or you might use only a few. You might rearrange the suggested order of the event and, for example, share an *Exploring More* activity as a *Welcome Activity*. We can't wait to learn how you use these activities and what new ideas they may spark!
- This guide is designed for grades 2-4. Make modifications based on the age of your readers – simplify the activities or expand for older readers.
- In addition to this guide, we have drafted a letter (in English and Spanish) you can give to parents/caregivers to support them in continuing to read and learn together through informational texts.

Welcome Activities

- Begin your event with collaborative activities to build excitement and background knowledge to support exploring *First Ladies Make History* and learning about how to read an informational text.

- The following list includes a variety of activities to have available for families as they arrive for the event. Activities can be set up as exploring stations. Choose the ones that best fit your shared space and readers.
- Variations of some of these activities are offered in the parent/caregiver letter – think about which ones you might model and share with families to welcome them.
- These activities easily promote conversations and allow families and children to get to know each other. Join in the fun and look for opportunities to talk with families and model learning engagement. You might help add questions to the KWL chart or sort and match captions with them.
- We have created optional *station sheets* for you to place at the different *Welcome Activity* stations. This will help families explore when they first arrive. Look for the station sheets in your Literacy Explorer Kit with this event guide.

➤ **KWL Chart**

- Supplies needed: a sheet of large paper (like bulletin board paper) or single sheets of paper to tape or tack together, writing utensils
- Create a large *KWL Chart* for families to add information to throughout the event. This type of chart helps readers think about what they already know about a topic, organize information they learn, and then reflect upon it. To learn more about this evidence-based reading strategy, search online *KWL Chart*.
- Place the large piece of bulletin board paper or taped-together pieces of paper on a wall – low enough for children to write on. If your shared space does not provide wall space, children can take notes on their own paper OR complete this verbally when you come together for the story share.
- Create three columns – one for each letter in **KWL**. Write these statements at the top of the columns:
 - **K** = What do you **know**? (above column 1)
 - **W** = What do you **want to learn**? (above column 2)
 - **L** = What did you **learn**? (above column 3)
- Then, across the top of the three columns (and above the KWL statements), write a statement or topic for the children to explore. For example, you might write *First Ladies of the United States*. (Provide a hint with the statement, “*In the United States, the President’s wife is called “the First Lady.”*”)

- Ask the children to add information to the first two columns (Know and Want to learn) with their grown-up if needed. Together, you'll complete the last column *What did you learn?* after you read from *First Ladies Make History*.
- Children should be encouraged to write any questions or statements in the first two columns. They might wonder where first ladies live in the White House, if first ladies have any pets, or what they do in their jobs. While the book you are sharing may not have answers to all their questions, encourage them to list any questions or curiosities. Some children may require additional prompting to come up with questions or statements. Think about how you can encourage children who may not know what to ask.

➤ Exploring Informational Texts

- Supplies needed: different types of informational texts that have different types of text features, information about what a caption is (see below for statement)
- Informational texts are set up in a variety of ways with different text features. Some have pages of paragraphs with a few pictures and/or graphs and charts – others, like *First Ladies Make History*, provide information sorted by topics with lots of illustrations, including some with captions.
- Have an assortment of informational texts available in one area of the shared space.
 - Choose books on different topics, with different formats and text features, large books and small books, serious books and silly books. The goal is to offer a variety, so children can see how information is presented in various ways.
 - Place a brief, child-friendly description of what a caption is at the exploring station: *A caption is a short sentence under a picture or image. It explains the picture or image and provides more information.*
- Encourage children to explore the books.
 - What do they notice? What is different? What is the same? Do all pictures have captions under them?
 - Can they sort the books using what they notice – books with pictures, books with captions, books with graphs, books with a lot of words and no pictures, etc.

- You will talk about captions and text features when you share *First Ladies Make History* with them at the story share.
- Depending on the age of your readers, you may choose to do this activity as a whole group.

➤ **Caption Sort and Match**

- Supplies needed: different photos and images, short captions that are easy to read on different strips of paper
- Remember that a caption is a short statement under a picture or image that describes what the reader is viewing. It supports the written text on the page by reinforcing its meaning and allowing the reader to see the information in a different way.
- Have a variety of photos or images printed and place them on a table along with the captions you created.
- Encourage families to look at the different pictures and images and choose a caption that best fits the picture. Why did they choose the caption for the picture? Be sure to allow for silly matches too! Show how they can match a picture and caption in a silly or funny way while still explaining the connection.
- Families will have an opportunity to explore more fun with captions in their take-home material.

Opening Activities

Consider using either of these activities to transition families to the story share.

- The children will be busy exploring the different activities. Determine how you will transition them from the activities to reading together. Here are two options to consider:
 - Supplies needed: informational texts from the *Exploring Informational Texts* station and/or prepared statements or questions for the movement games
 - If you have enough informational texts at the *Exploring Informational Texts* station, have each child choose one to bring to share with a partner. Provide a few minutes for children to share one-to-one with a new friend. Help them with the conversations. You might join in and ask: *Why did they choose this book?*

What do they like about it? Did they like the front cover? Is it a topic they are interested in? Is it a funny book? Collect all books when this activity concludes to avoid distractions while reading *First Ladies Make History*.

- Play a movement game that includes listening to statements and making choices. Prepare some statements and questions that will help everyone get to know each other while building background knowledge for your shared reading.
 - **Stand Up or Sit Down (or raise or lower arm/hand):** Read statements and if the answer is yes, stand up/raise your hand or if *no*, sit down/lower your hand. For example, you might say *stand up or raise your hand if you had cereal for breakfast* or *stand up or raise your hand if you have visited Washington, D.C.* or *if you know anything about first ladies of the United States*.
 - **This or That:** This is a variation of Stand Up or Sit Down with choice statements – raise your hands for this and lower them for that.
 - *I woke up on time today* (raise hands), or *I overslept* (hands down).
 - *I like to read books with true facts and information* (raise hands), or *I like to read fiction books – stories that are made up* (hands down).
 - *I have visited Washington, D.C.* (raise hands), or *I would like to visit Washington, D.C.* (hands down).
 - Children and families might agree with both statements. Encourage them to be creative – what move can they make if they agree with both statements?

Sharing an Informational Text

Read aloud sections of *First Ladies Make History* with families. You might use all these ideas and activities, choose a few, or create your own plan to share this book!

- *First Ladies Make History* is an informational text published by The White House Historical Association. We hope you'll add it to your informational text collection and find ways to promote it throughout the year.

- Children who develop and practice skills and strategies for reading informational texts build background knowledge, practice and build critical thinking skills, expand vocabulary skills, and more!

- ◆ Former first lady Barbara Bush is mentioned in this book in the *Literacy and Education* section. The caption says, “Barbara Bush supported the National Literacy Act and focused on family literacy as a first lady.”
- ◆ Mrs. Bush wanted everyone to have the chance to learn to read and write. She also believed that a parent or caregiver was a child’s first and best teacher. She founded the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy in 1989, and the foundation continues to support families reading and learning together today!

➤ Reading the Book

- Explain to the children that this book can be read from start to finish or they can pick a section to read. They can read about a topic, first lady, and look for a specific time in history.
- Flip through the book and ask the children what they notice about how the book is set up.
 - It’s important for readers to first explore how an informational text is formatted. What do they notice about the first few pages? Is there any supporting information at the end of the book (a glossary or word list)? Do the pages have page numbers? Are any words in bold or different colors? Are there graphs? Pictures with captions?
 - Generate a conversation based on the above questions.
 - Readers and families may not be familiar with text features, so be sure to use the term *text features* to identify graphs, images with captions, infographics, quotes, etc.
- Flip through the book again and show them the *section headings* and the different ways first ladies have supported the people in the United States. You might say: *The first ladies have helped Americans in many ways. They have helped members of our military, worked on saving our environment, strengthened our schools and more. Information texts sometimes have section headers, which can help you easily find the information you are looking for. Let’s look at one of the sections together.*

- Choose a few sections to read during your shared reading time including the section on *Education and Literacy*:
 - Guide them through a discussion about the topic: *What is education and literacy? What do they want to learn about literacy?*
 - You might be surprised what children think about reading and writing. Ask them a few questions such as: *What do you think literacy is? Why do you think it is important to be able to read and write?*
 - And then start a discussion around their own reading: *What do you like to read? Who taught you to read? When do you read? Why do you read? When do you notice people reading and writing? What do some of your family members read?* (Tailor this conversation based on your audience and what you have learned through the *Welcome Activities*)
 - Then, see if they can find former first lady Barbara Bush on the page. What was important to her as a first lady? Her caption says, “Barbara Bush supported the National Literacy Act and focused on family literacy as a first lady.”
 - Have a conversation with them about Mrs. Bush. You might want to share some of the information from the text box on page 8.
 - The National Literacy Act was signed in 1991. It is a law that supports adult learners in learning to read and write. Ask: *What do you think Barbara Bush wanted to do? Why do you think she wanted to focus on family literacy.*
 - Mrs. Bush thought that everyone should have the opportunity to learn to read and write. She thought it was a civic right. She knew learning to read was important to understand information in school, at the doctor’s office, the bank, for employment, and in every part of your life!
 - She wanted all families to have opportunities to read and learn together.
- Before you close reading time, turn their attention back to the KWL Chart.
 - What did we learn? Depending on your shared space, you might move to the KWL Chart and have children and families add notes to the chart OR you might have them add notes during the Exploring More time (outlined below). Be sure to at least have a discussion while you are all together, so everyone can hear what the others learned.

- Let them know you will leave the chart up for a few weeks, so visitors can learn more about the first ladies of the United States!

Exploring More

After you read the story, complete one or more of these activities with families. Choose the activities that work best for your shared space and available supplies.

➤ Create a Bookmark

- Supplies needed: sturdy paper like cardstock cut into oversized bookmark strips, craft supplies (crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, stickers – any art supplies you choose!)
- Mrs. Bush created reading tips to support families reading together. A selection of these tips can be found on the bookmarks provided in your Literacy Explorer Kit. One side has the Reading Tips, and the other side has information on how to access free family literacy resources.
 - Each family is receiving a Barbara Bush Reading Tips bookmark in their take-home bag. For this activity, give them their bookmark now or have some available at the craft station.
- Set up a craft station with the Reading Tips bookmarks along with pre-cut cardstock and craft materials for children to create their own bookmarks.
- There are options for this activity. Provide open art time for children to create bookmarks while their parents peruse Mrs. Bush’s Reading Tips and the free resources (easily accessed with the QR code on the bookmark) OR you can connect directly to the book and any topic the children feel passionate about!
 - Ask the children to select a topic they feel is important and something they want to teach someone about. It could be sports, cooking, books, horses, the environment, kindness, equality, etc.
 - Encourage them to create a bookmark in any style they like – with key words and images, tips and short statements, and maybe a picture with a caption.

Closing Activity

- It's time to say goodbye. Choose how you will end your time and send families home with their activity bags.
- Consider providing time for the children to share their bookmarks and allow for questions and conversations. This promotes multi-directional learning, where children learn from each other, and rapport building, which fosters and builds relationships.
- Encourage families to revisit the table with informational texts and check out some to take home. The parent/caregiver letter will allow them to explore more!

➤ What to Pack in the Family Bags

- **Parent/Caregiver Letter** for *First Ladies Make History*
- **Barbara Bush's Reading Tips Bookmark.** One side has Mrs. Bush's Reading Tips for family reading, and the other side has a QR code for easy access to *free* family literacy resources – including a digital text collection.
- **Which Book is Right for My Child Right Now?** (This resource is for children birth to age 3, so include it for families that have young children too!)
- **ReadLife Bookshelf Flyer**
- Optional: Any materials you have prepared for at-home activities. For example, if you used colored cellophane, add some pieces to the bags so families can continue to explore at home.