

Grades
2-5

American Girl®

DISCUSSION GUIDE

True Stories & Biographies

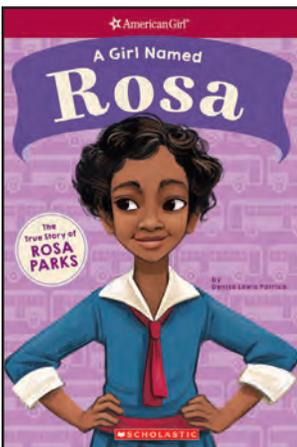


 SCHOLASTIC

A Girl Named

These biographies have a special focus on the childhood of the person, helping young readers connect and identify with these influential women in US history—and be inspired by them! The back matter of each book also features a modern girl who embodies the same courage and spirit as the biography subject to further empower and inspire young readers.

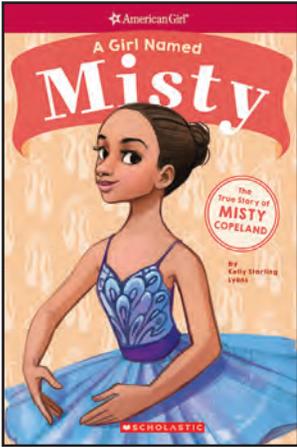
A Girl Named Rosa: The True Story of Rosa Parks



1. What were the important lessons that Rosa learned from her grandparents when she lived with them? How did she act on those lessons later in her life?
2. Describe the different ways that white people and black people were treated in the segregated South before the civil rights movement.
3. Why did Rosa's mother decide to send Rosa to high school, even though she had to live away from her family? How was this school different from the other schools Rosa had attended?
4. What was the connection that Rosa and her husband had to the civil rights movement? What organizations were they involved with and how did Rosa continue to participate in civil rights activism throughout her life?
5. What was the impact of Rosa refusing to give up her seat on the bus in 1955? How did that one act create an advantage for the new civil rights movement? What is the importance of nonviolence in that movement?

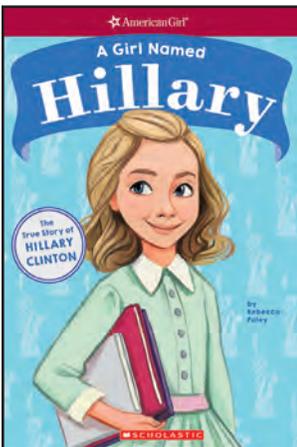


A Girl Named Misty: The True Story of Misty Copeland



1. Who were the famous people who influenced Misty when she was a child? What did she learn by watching and admiring each of them? Who were the people in her life at home that inspired and helped her?
2. Why did teachers and coaches want to help Misty to learn ballet? What did they see in her that she didn't know she had? What is the meaning of the word "prodigy"?
3. Describe how Misty felt "torn apart" between her family and her ballet studies. When she moved to New York, what did she notice about the dancers at the American Ballet Theater (ABT)? How did her commitment to the ballet change after her back injury?
4. Why did Misty continue practicing hard even when her leg was hurting? What did her success in *The Firebird* mean to her and to all the girls who would see her in that performance?
5. What was the importance of Misty's promotion to principal dancer for the ABT? Discuss why her career is so inspiring to others.

A Girl Named Hillary: The True Story of Hillary Clinton



1. What are the important lessons that Hillary learned from her parents as she was growing up? How did both her mother and her father help her to believe in herself?
2. What was unusual about the speech that Hillary made at her college graduation? How did that speech foreshadow the life that she would later lead in politics?
3. Describe the issues that were important to Hillary at various times in her life—when she was the wife of the governor of Arkansas, as the First Lady of the United States, and later as secretary of state. How did these issues reflect the values she had learned as a child?
4. Discuss the quote from Hillary on the first page of the book, when she won the Democratic nomination for president: "I'm so happy this day has come . . . because when any barrier falls in America, for anyone, it clears the way for everyone."
5. What is the importance of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, even though she did not win? What lesson does she hope that children, and particularly girls, will learn from the election of 2016?



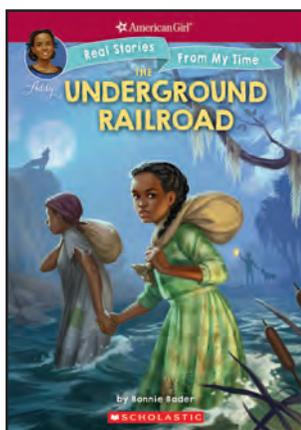
Real Stories

From My Time

The beloved fictional American Girl characters have introduced many readers to significant periods in the history of our country. Real Stories from My Time centers around historical events in US history that occurred during the lifetime of the featured American Girl character. The books in this new series include detailed historical accounts that are interspersed with complementary fictional narratives from the life of that American Girl character.

Real Stories from My Time: The Underground Railroad with Addy

1. After reading this book, what do you know about the meaning of its title? Why was it called the “Underground Railroad” if it was neither “underground” nor a “railroad”? Explain how the name evolved and how the name described its purpose.



2. How did the institution of slavery begin in America? Why did it continue for over two hundred years? Discuss the paradox of a country being founded on the ideal that all people should be free and also allowing some of its citizens to “own” other people.

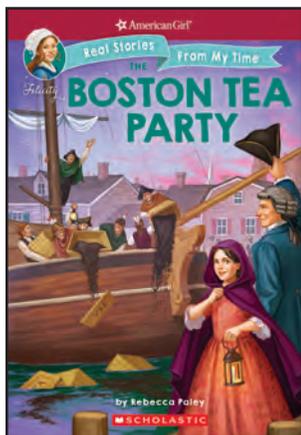
3. Why were enslaved families willing to risk the dangers of running away? Discuss the feelings and needs of people preparing to escape to freedom. What would compel them to run? What would they have to do to prepare for the journey?

4. What did the term “safe house” mean to those escaping from slavery? How could they identify a place that might be a refuge for them and people who would be sympathetic to their plight? What was one way information was shared about escape routes?

5. Find and read first-person accounts of enslaved people of the time, such as Josiah Henson, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Henry Brown, and Caroline Quarlls. Compare those narratives with the fictional story that Addy tells. How do their experiences differ and how are they the same? How is it different to read a first-person narration or a third-person narration?

Real Stories from My Time: The Boston Tea Party with Felicity

1. How did the events that became known as the Boston Tea Party lead to the founding of the United States of America? Why were the Patriots so angry about the tax on tea? Why was tea, in particular, important in the colonies?



2. Why were people willing to suffer the hardships of the long journey from England and the dangers of life in the wilderness to come to the New World? How did the colonists react to being called the “children” of the “mother country”? Name some examples of how the British treated the colonists like children.

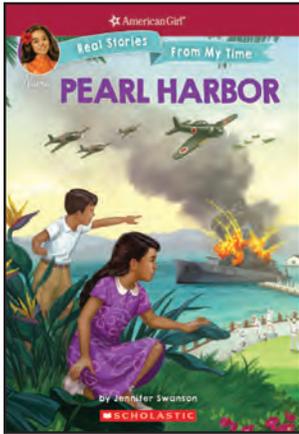
3. List the events that led up to the meeting of the First Continental Congress in 1774. How did the colonists decide to respond to the demands of the British rulers? Why did John Hancock start calling for men to prepare to be “minutemen”? Discuss the meaning of that word.

4. Discuss the meaning of the phrase, “the shot heard ’round the world.” What was the importance of the April 1775 morning on the Lexington Green? How did the minutemen win victory that day even though the British outnumbered them?

5. Discuss the ways in which Felicity’s diary entries help you to understand the events that took place in Boston in 1773. How did all the colonists, including children, contribute to the cause of winning freedom from the rule of Britain?

Real Stories from My Time: Pearl Harbor with Nanea

1. What made Hawaii such an appealing place geographically and physically? Define the terms “aloha” and “ohana.” How did those concepts contribute to Hawaiian culture?



2. What does the term *melting pot* refer to in the Hawaiian culture? Explain how many different ethnic groups coexisted with their variety of food, religion, and celebrations in Hawaii.

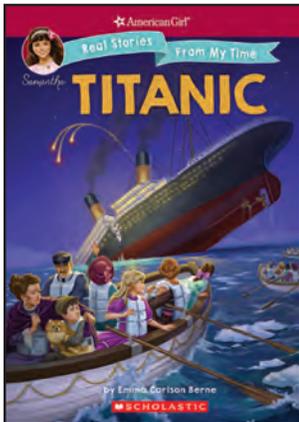
3. What problems were developing during this time between the governments of Japan and the United States? Why did the Japanese government decide to attack Pearl Harbor? What did the prime minister hope to accomplish? Explain the roles of Prime Minister Tojo and Admiral Yamamoto in planning the attack. Why was the plan a risky one? What could the United States have done to be more prepared?

4. How did the attack on Pearl Harbor immediately change life on Oahu and all of Hawaii? What is “martial law”? Why was it imposed on Hawaii after the attack? How did life change for the Americans of Japanese Ancestry? Why were they deprived of their rights as citizens?

5. How does Nanea’s story help you understand how life changed for people in Hawaii after the attack? What was the effect on Nanea and her family, friends, and neighbors? What kinds of work could children do to help with the war effort?

Real Stories from My Time: Titanic with Samantha

1. How did technology change life in America at the beginning of the twentieth century? What were the major inventions that made life different than it had been before? How were *Titanic* and *Olympic* different from the ships that had been built previously? How did their names reflect their uniqueness?

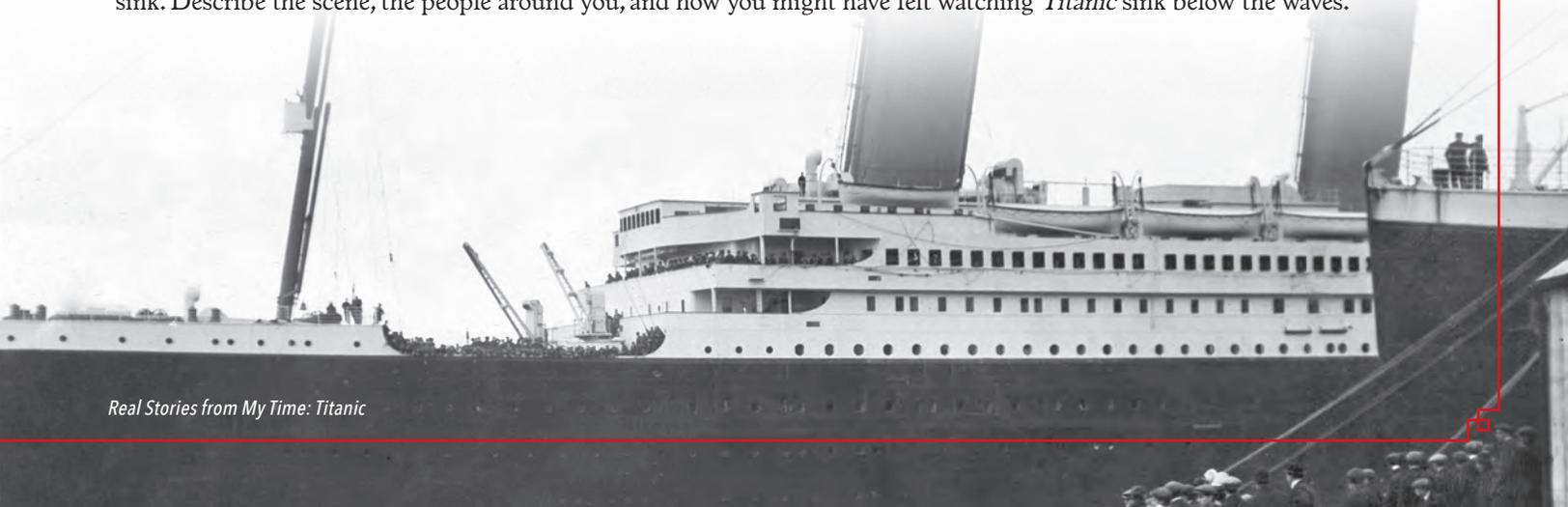


2. What were the differences in the experiences of people in first, second, and third class on *Titanic*? What was different for how each group ate their meals? What activities were available to them? And what were their accommodations like? What were some of their reasons for crossing the Atlantic, and how did those reasons differ for people in different classes?

3. How many lifeboats were on *Titanic*? What factors went into the decision to have that number of lifeboats on the ship? What were some of the reasons that people did not get on the lifeboats when the ship first started to sink?

4. Describe the various jobs for workers on board the ship. What jobs were the most important on the night of April 14? What might have prevented the sinking of the ship?

5. In the book, Samantha writes journal entries from the perspective of someone waiting to hear news about *Titanic*. Write a journal entry from the point of view of her friend Cornelia or one of the other children who was in a lifeboat watching the ship sink. Describe the scene, the people around you, and how you might have felt watching *Titanic* sink below the waves.



Discussion Questions and Prompts Across Both Series

1. Refer to the glossary at the back of each book for words and terms that are unfamiliar to you. Pick one term or idea to explore further and write a paragraph that explains more about what that term or idea means and why it is important in this time period or in this person's life.
2. How do the additional sections in these nonfiction titles (such as the illustrations, images, maps, the timeline, the glossary, and more) help you to understand better the time period you are reading about?
3. The books in both series feature a timeline in the back of the book. Note where the chapters or sections of the book fall on that timeline—what other things were happening around those same times? What portions of the timeline aren't represented in the book you read?
4. For each of the time periods in *Real Stories from My Time*, identify the main events (at least five) that happen over the course of the book. Describe the relationship between these events—how the actions or results of each event changed people's reactions or feelings or helped to create conditions that contributed to later events. For the *A Girl Named* biographies, discuss how the time period in which that person lived helped to shape her life, career, options, and choices. Identify if there were any events during that woman's lifetime that changed what was possible for her—or if that woman contributed to change in society that allowed different possibilities for other women as well.
5. Compare events and historical figures from one time period with another. Write about one of those people and discuss how that person's life would have been changed if he or she had lived at a different time in history.

The Common Core State Standards alignments for these questions are the Anchor Standards RI.3–5.1, 3, 4, 6; W.3–5.1, 3.



In December 1956, the city of Montgomery ended bus segregation and the boycott ended.

The Parks family moved to Detroit, Michigan, where they continued to be active in the civil rights movement.

Rosa's firm belief in fighting nonviolently for civil rights never ended. That brave girl became a strong, courageous woman who spent the rest of her life traveling, speaking, and standing up for equality.

Nonfiction American Girl Titles 2018

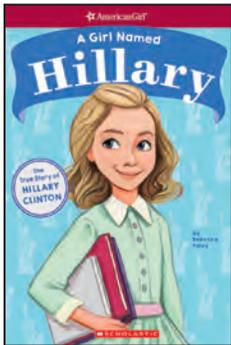
A Girl Named

Paperback • \$4.99
Ages 7 to 10, Grades 2 to 5
48 pages • 6" x 9"

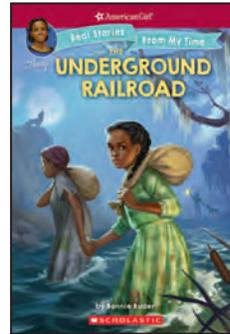
Real Stories

From My Time

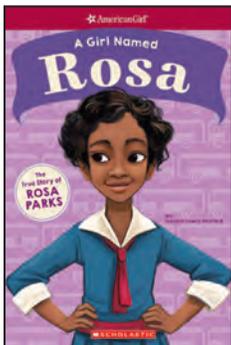
Paperback • \$5.99
Ages 7 to 10, Grades 2 to 5
112 pages • 5.3" x 7.6"



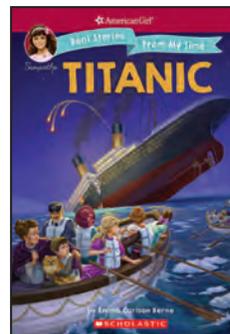
A Girl Named Hillary: The True Story of Hillary Clinton
By Rebecca Paley,
Illustrated by Melissa Manwill
ISBN: 9781338193022
February 2018



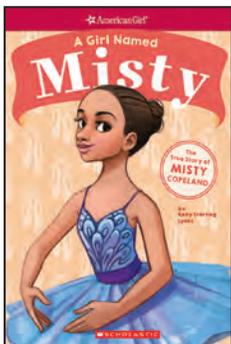
Real Stories from My Time: The Underground Railroad
By Bonnie Bader,
Illustrated by Kelley McMorris
ISBN: 9781338148923
January 2018



A Girl Named Rosa: The True Story of Rosa Parks
By Denise Lewis Patrick,
Illustrated by Melissa Manwill
ISBN: 9781338193077
February 2018



Real Stories from My Time: Titanic
By Emma Carlson Berne,
Illustrated by Kelley McMorris
ISBN: 9781338193060
January 2018



A Girl Named Misty: The True Story of Misty Copeland
By Kelly Starling Lyons,
Illustrated by Melissa Manwill
ISBN: 9781338193053
June 2018



Real Stories from My Time: The Boston Tea Party
By Rebecca Paley, Illustrated by Kelley McMorris
ISBN: 9781338148930
April 2018



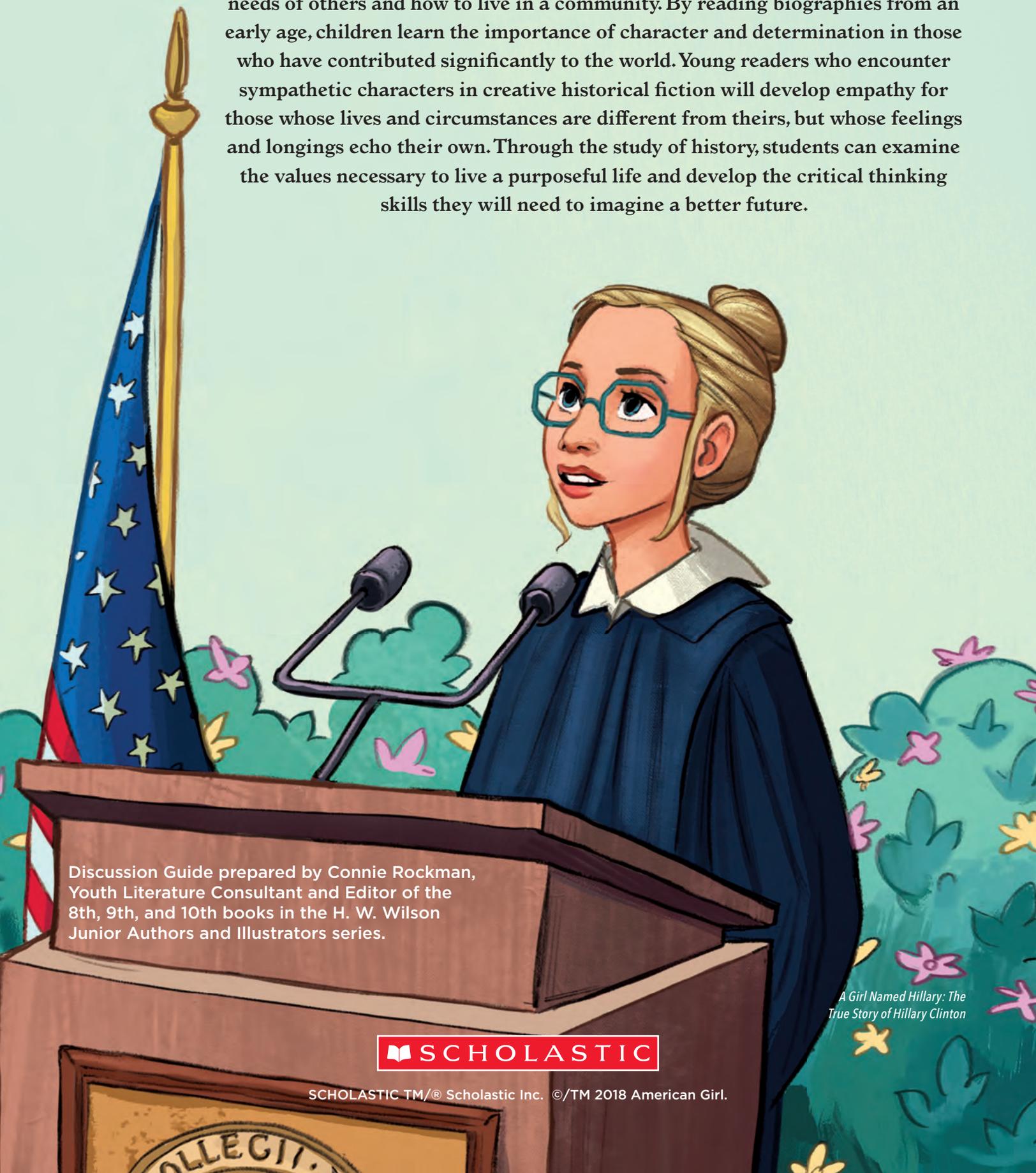
A Girl Named Helen: The True Story of Helen Keller
By Bonnie Bader, Illustrated by Melissa Manwill
ISBN: 9781338193039
October 2018



Real Stories from My Time: Pearl Harbor
By Jennifer Swanson,
Illustrated by Kelley McMorris
ISBN: 9781338148947
July 2018

History and Biography Through Literature

As their world expands beyond family and home, children become aware of the needs of others and how to live in a community. By reading biographies from an early age, children learn the importance of character and determination in those who have contributed significantly to the world. Young readers who encounter sympathetic characters in creative historical fiction will develop empathy for those whose lives and circumstances are different from theirs, but whose feelings and longings echo their own. Through the study of history, students can examine the values necessary to live a purposeful life and develop the critical thinking skills they will need to imagine a better future.



Discussion Guide prepared by Connie Rockman,
Youth Literature Consultant and Editor of the
8th, 9th, and 10th books in the H. W. Wilson
Junior Authors and Illustrators series.

*A Girl Named Hillary: The
True Story of Hillary Clinton*

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