



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

Blue Sky White Stars

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading
Trek Map

Ages: 4–8

Grades: PreK–3

Reading Level: 3rd Grade

Lexile Measure: NP

Guided Reading Level: N/A

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): N/A

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, and social studies (including individual development, identity, history, and geography).

Synopsis of Book

Savinder Naberhaus, who immigrated to America from India as a child, offers an inspiring tribute to the American flag, land, and people in *Blue Sky White Stars*. His simple text brings history and heritage to life through poetic homophones and juxtaposition with Kadir Nelson's illustrations. Together, they depict the diversity of Americans and America as a nation as reflected through the flag.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Diversity

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the class on an interactive whiteboard using the Reading Trek map, highlighting its various layers.
2. After identifying the national symbols and most important landmarks, create a Symbaloo ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to help students learn about these places and items. Adding virtual tours, games, or this [YouTube video](#) will make it more exciting.
3. Compare and contrast the relationships between the English settlers and the indigenous peoples in the Jamestown and Plymouth colonies.
4. Make a flag using various materials, either for the United States or a place the student imagines, along with a description of that place.
5. Discuss the reasons behind the March on Washington in 1963 (shown in the story), and the goals the leaders hoped to accomplish. Discuss how protest marches have changed over the years, including alternatives to physically being part of a march. Identify causes the students would like to support using Stickies ([TeachersFirst review](#)), then vote to pick a single cause. Create a plan to support that cause as a project-based learning activity.
6. Create a collage showing what living in the United States means, digitally or with assorted craft supplies. Either way, use the [Smithsonian Let's Make and Play USA Collage](#) from the Smithsonian Learning Lab ([TeachersFirst review](#)) as an example.

Extension Activities:

1. Read Chana Stiefel's [Let Liberty Rise!](#) Use this [curriculum guide's](#) talking points and activities to further the student's understanding of the Statue of Liberty's significance to the people of America.
2. Make a collage of national symbols by downloading images from Unsplash for Education ([TeachersFirst review](#)) and assembling them in Photo Joiner Collage Maker ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Download student collages and share them to an LMS or another platform.
3. Create a memory tile matching game of national symbols and landmarks and use Wordwall ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to play together on an interactive whiteboard. Set the names on the tiles to be read aloud in a female or male voice, if appropriate. You can also change the format to a word search. Share this activity through the district LMS or insert it into a learning path.
4. Create trading cards of national symbols and landmarks using Big Huge Labs' Trading Card Maker ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or by using a slide template such as [this one](#) from SlideAcademy ([TeacherFirst review](#)). Or, if preferred, make a copy of [this template](#). Find Images for the trading cards at Pixabay ([TeachersFirst review](#)), Unsplash ([TeachersFirst review](#)), Pexels ([TeachersFirst review](#)), or Bing Images ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Write the name of each trading card on a slip of paper, then have the students play "I Have..., Who Has...?": talk briefly about the image on their trading card, then draw a slip with the name of the next national symbol or landmark. You can also use the trading cards to play a game similar to Twenty Questions: students are divided into teams, the teacher gives one clue at a time, and the team with the correct answer earns a point. A reverse of that activity would be similar to Scattergories, where students try to name five significant facts about the image pictured on the trading card. Students can record themselves talking about the trading card they created using VMaker ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
5. For a deeper understanding of the War of 1812 and the writing of our national anthem, students can complete the Smithsonian's The Star-Spangled Banner ([TeachersFirst review](#)) activity, either as a teacher-led activity or in small groups. The Collect the Stars activity offers multiple choice questions about a reading selection, and Explore the Features of the Flag encourages students to look closely at the flag that flew over Fort McHenry during the British attack.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks](#)

Other Resources:

- [Sarvinder Naberhaus](#)
- [Kadir Nelson](#)
- [Kadir Nelson: 2017 National Book Festival](#)
- [Plimoth Patuxet Museums](#)
- [USA Facts](#)
- Betsy Ross House [History](#) and Betsy Ross House - [Her Stories](#)
- [NASA Kids Club](#)
- [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Quotations](#)
- [Ben's Guide to the U. S. Government](#)
- [United States of Culture](#)