

Reading *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*

Parent Guide

Read the Reading Helpers sheets for specific directions.

SUMMARY

During this activity, you and your child will actively read *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*, using the suggested reading questions.

WHY

Through this activity, your child will learn some details about **lighthouses** and learn the story of a young person who saved lives through heroic actions. In the process, your child will build reading skills, like being able to answer questions related to a written story and its pictures.

TIME

- 30 minutes

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten through 4th grade.

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **canal:** a human-made waterway dug across land
- **chart:** an outline map that shows geographic information, like water depth, and is especially useful to seafarers
- **emotion:** a state of feeling, such as happy, sad, or proud
- **illustration:** images or pictures intended to explain or decorate
- **lighthouse:** a structure, often a tower on land or in the water, with a powerful light that gives a signal to guide seafarers
- **map:** a representation of an area, usually on a flat surface
- **maritime:** of, relating to, or bordering a body of water
- **seafarer:** a person who operates or assists in operating a ship

YOU NEED

- Reading Helpers sheets (*attached*)
- Background sheet (*attached*)
- *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* book

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/water/>

Reading *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*

Background Information

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/water/>.

For hundreds of years, seacoasts, rivers, lakes, and **canals** have had a big impact on the ways America has changed as a country. Even Americans who have never seen an ocean are still very connected to water. Eating fish for dinner, playing at the beach, ordering goods made overseas, and other **maritime** activities continue to play an important role in our lives.

Life and work on the water—for **seafarers**, fishers, passengers, and many others—have included many big challenges and successes, and even some disasters. On shore, many other jobs are connected to **maritime** activities, like moving cargo carried by boats, making fishing nets, and running **lighthouses**.

In fog or deep night, a **lighthouse's** beam warns ships away from dangers such as shorelines, shallow waters, and underwater rocks. Because the exact locations of **lighthouses** are marked on charts, the lights help **seafarers** figure out where they are. In the past, **lighthouse** keepers lived in **lighthouses** to make sure the lights were shining every night. Today, many **lighthouses** are run by computers.

For more information, visit the *On the Water* online exhibition at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater>.



Image of Matinicus Rock Lighthouse in Maine.

Unknown date



Image of Matinicus Rock Lighthouse in Maine.

Unknown date

Have you ever seen a lighthouse? What do you think it would be like to be inside a lighthouse during a storm?

Use the Reading Helpers on the next pages to find out about the young hero from one lighthouse.

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For adults and kids to follow together.

Reading Helper One: Rewind and Review!

Double-check that your child understands what has happened in the story by pausing at important points. Here are some go

- Page 10, after Papa tells Abbie she'll be caring for the **lighthouse**
- Page 14, after Papa leaves
- Page 22, after Abbie starts taking care of the family
- Page 28, after Abbie's first night caring for the **lighthouse**
- Page 35, after Abbie saves the chickens
- Page 40, after Papa returns

Here are some ways to ask your child to show she understands:

- Ask her, "Hold on! Can you tell me what just happened?"
- Act it out.
- Point to what's happening in the picture.
- Puppet show of the action with stuffed animals or fingers

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Reading Helper Two: How does Abbie feel?

Abbie is the main character in this story. She has a number of adventures, and experiences many different **emotions**. Try to find those **emotions** through the words of the story or the pictures. If it doesn't say what Abbie is feeling, guess her feelings based on what's happening in the story. Here are some good places to try this:

- Page 10, as Papa tells Abbie she'll be caring for the **lighthouse**
- Page 14, as Papa leaves
- Page 21, as Abbie starts taking care of the family
- Page 25, as Abbie runs up the **lighthouse** to light the lamps
- Page 28, as Abbie checks the lights on the **lighthouse**
- Page 31, as Abbie realizes the chickens might wash away
- Page 37, after Abbie has been caring for the **lighthouse** for many days
- Page 40, as Papa hugs her

Reading Helper Three: Interesting Illustrations

Peter Hanson created the pictures for *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*. Here are some suggestions for ways that you can use the pictures, or **illustrations**, in the book.

- For very early readers, first go through the book and try to tell the story looking at the pictures. Then, read through the book together using the words of the book. Finally, compare your first guess to the second reading.



Tip This activity encourages young children to take the lead by telling you the story. It also helps to build interest in reading.

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- Compare the **illustrations** in the book to photographs of the **lighthouse** on the Background information sheet. How are they the same? How are they different?
- What hints about the setting of the story can you take from the picture? Does it look like this book happens in the past, present, or future?
- Pick an **illustration** and try to imagine yourself in the picture. What would you smell, hear, and see? Could you taste anything? How would it feel to touch something in the picture?

Reading Helper Four: Looking for More Facts

Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie tells the story of a young heroine who takes on an adult job while her father is away. If you're curious and want more details, take a look at the Author's Note on page 5. In it, Peter and Connie Roop (the authors) tell more of what historians know about Abbie and the lighthouse at Matinicus Rock. Here are some factual questions you could try to answer:

- What sources of information did the authors use to write this story?
- Where is Matinicus Rock, Maine? (For maps, visit <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/>.)

Tip

If you wanted to take a trip on the water by boat or ship, you would need to look up the **chart** for that body of water. **Charts** are maps that include information about water depth. **Charts** help seafarers find safe routes and avoid shallow water. The government's **charts** are online at (<http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/OnLineViewer.html>).

- When did this story happen?

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- How old was the **lighthouse**? Use the National Park Service **lighthouse** profile to find out when the **lighthouse** was built (<http://www.nps.gov/history/maritime/light/matnicu.htm>).
- How old was Abbie when this story happened? Find out what year Abbie was born from her U. S. Coast Guard profile. (http://www.uscg.mil/History/people/Abbie_Burgess.asp)
- What was life like for **lighthouse** keepers? The second-to-last paragraph in this article about New London, New York **lighthouse** describes what life was like for the keepers in the 1980s (<http://www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=800>).

Tip The keeper's logbook entry in the article includes some strong language.

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SUMMARY

Students will actively read *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*, using these suggested reading questions.

RATIONALE

Questions are an important part of learning, and your child can learn a lot by answering questions. Asking and answering questions involves understanding, assessing, and sharing information from different resources like images, written information, and other people. These critical thinking skills enable people to express their curiosity, gain specific knowledge, and build informed opinions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Read for understanding.
- Answer questions using written and image resources.

TIME

- 30 minutes

AGE GROUP: K-4

TARGET VOCABULARY:

- **canal:** a human-made waterway dug across land
- **chart:** an outline map that shows geographic information, like water depth, and is especially useful to seafarers
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MATERIALS

- Reading Helpers sheets (*attached*)
- Background sheet (*attached*)
- *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* book

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Discussion exhibits understanding of story and historical details.
- Discussion exhibits understanding of vocabulary in the context of the story.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

- 2H. Draw upon the visual data presented in photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings.
- 3C. Analyze historical fiction.
- 3D. Distinguish fact and fiction.
- 3F. Analyze illustrations in historical stories.
- 4B. Obtain historical data.
- 5A. Identify problems and dilemmas.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

- 4B. Demonstrate understanding of ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.
- 8B. The student understands changes in transportation and their effects.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

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7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Information Literacy