



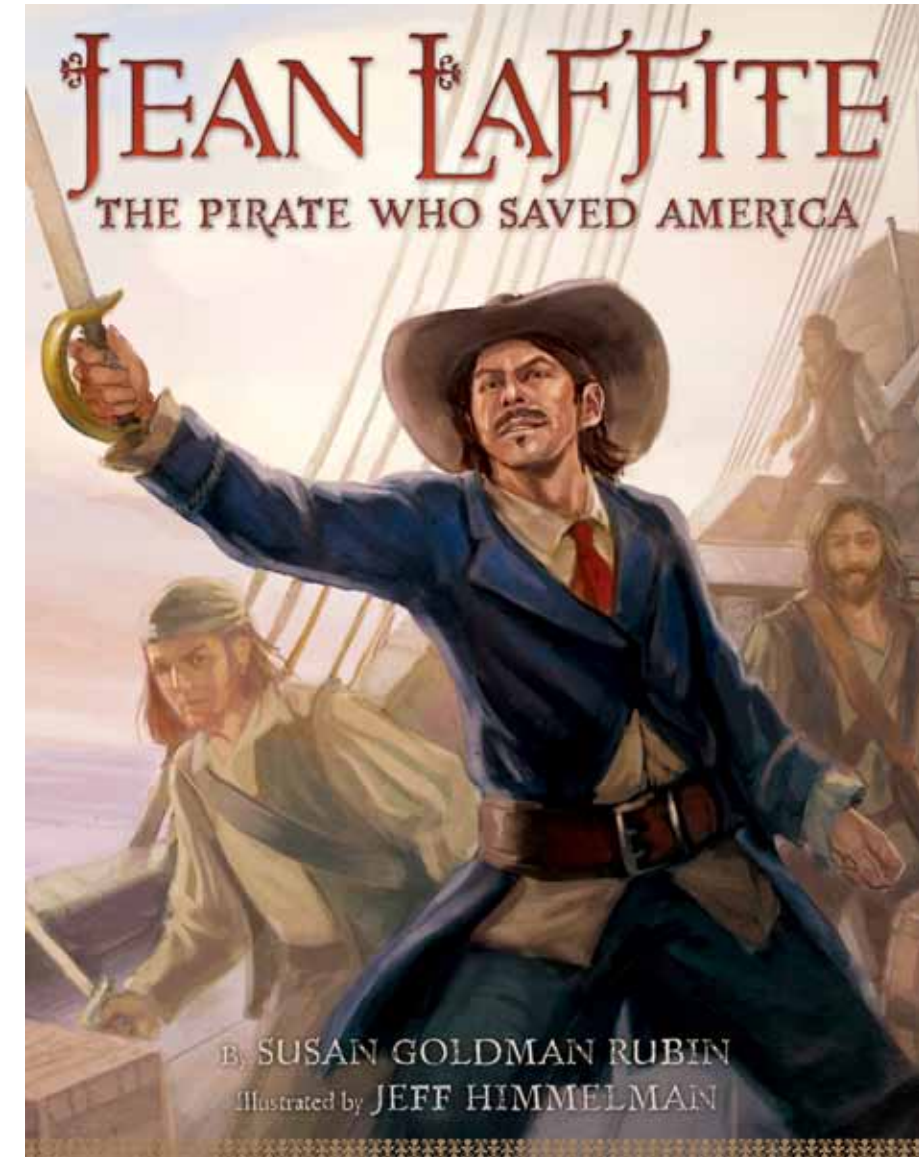
A Teaching and Discussion Guide for...

Contributors:

Susan Goldman Rubin (author) has written many acclaimed biographies for young readers, including *Whaam! The Art & Life of Roy Lichtenstein*, *Andy Warhol: Pop Art Painter*, and *Degas and the Dance*, an ALA Notable Book. She lives in Malibu, California.

Jeff Himmelman (illustrator) is a graduate of the School of Visual Arts in New York City and works as an art director in the games industry. This is his first picture book. He lives in Mountain View, California.

Jean Laffite (pirate) was a Louisiana privateer and smuggler who helped U.S. forces in the Battle of New Orleans at the end of the War of 1812. In about 1810 he and his men settled in an area near New Orleans and attacked Spanish ships in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1814 the British tried to bribe Laffite into helping their troops attack New Orleans. Instead, he passed their plans onto the American government in January 1815 and helped General Andrew Jackson defend New Orleans. *He and his elder brother, Pierre, spelled their last name Laffite, but English documents of the time used "Lafitte," and this is the commonly used spelling in the U.S., including for places named for him.*



ABRAMS

THE ART OF BOOKS SINCE 1949

www.abramsbooks.com



This biography of the infamous pirate Jean Laffite is a real-life, action-packed adventure. Since he was a young boy, Jean longed to be a pirate, and with the help of his brothers and uncle, he became one when he was just a teenager. Soon the only life he knew was on the high seas—a life full of glory, riches, disaster, and revenge. When he finally settled down in New Orleans, he managed to become a successful businessman and respected citizen, while still pirating. He even helped the United States win the War of 1812 when he alerted the government to a British plot to invade via New Orleans. With the help of Laffite and his pirates, General Andrew Jackson was able to beat back the British.

Opportunities for Teaching and Learning: Jean Laffite is the true story about a little boy who dreamed of becoming a pirate. In addition to motivating readers through action-packed adventure and the exploits of a real-life pirate, the book makes history exciting for students. There are many opportunities to align the book with your curriculum, including: American history, the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812 and the Battle of New Orleans, pirates and privateers, Judaism, and slavery.

Discussion Questions:

- Why did Jean Laffite want to become a pirate?
- What is the difference between a pirate and a privateer?
- What were Jean Laffite's goals?
- Why did he grow up disliking Spain?
- Discuss the time period in which Jean Laffite lived. Was privateering an acceptable business in those days?
- What did Grandma Zora teach Jean Laffite? How did she influence him?
- How did Laffite wind up in New Orleans? When did New Orleans become part of the United States?
- What did Jean Laffite do in New Orleans to gain popularity with his fellow citizens?
- Were Laffite's actions good or bad? Did he help people or break the law?

Projects and Activities:

Outside Research:

Ask students to pick a topic for further research such as pirating in general, privateering, pirates of the Caribbean, the War of 1812, General Andrew Jackson, President James Madison, and the Louisiana Purchase.

Art Project:

Draw maps showing Laffite's life journey from France to New Orleans, Louisiana.

Drama:

Reenact the first pirate convention; a scene when Laffite and his family were marooned on an island; Laffite capturing a Spanish ship; the Battle of New Orleans; the celebration in New Orleans at the end of the war on January 25, 1815.

Debate:

Have students prepare arguments for whether or not Laffite's actions in New Orleans were good or bad. Lead a class discussion on the ethics of piracy then and now. Have students question what they would have done in the same situation.

Historical Facebook Page:

Even if your students are too young to be on Facebook, creating a fake Facebook page for a historical figure can be a great learning activity. There is a free Facebook template for historical figures here: bit.ly/HQ8VZj. The template has a place for a picture, an About Me section, a friends column, and even a map for the travels of Laffite! (Using this template will not result in an actual Facebook page being created.)

Timeline:

Having your students create a timeline of Laffite's life and travels is a great way to encourage close reading! You can have students create a detailed timeline that includes dates and event descriptions, or you can have students draw simple timelines on colored paper. If you're interested in creating a more complex timeline with or for your students, there are free tools for making online timelines. One easy-to-use tool is called When In Time (www.whenintime.com). Another is Xtimeline (www.xtimeline.com) and Dipity (www.dipity.com).

More Modern and Historical Pirates:

You'll find that pirates are a huge hit with your students, so why not take your lesson even further? Use this list of The Best Websites for Learning About Modern & Historical Pirates to find limitless applications and activities: bit.ly/HL5CDM