

Curriculum Activities for **ABIGAIL & JOHN**

Written by David Bruce Smith

Illustrated by Clarice Smith

“Learning is not attained by chance,
it must be sought for with ardor and
attended to with diligence.”

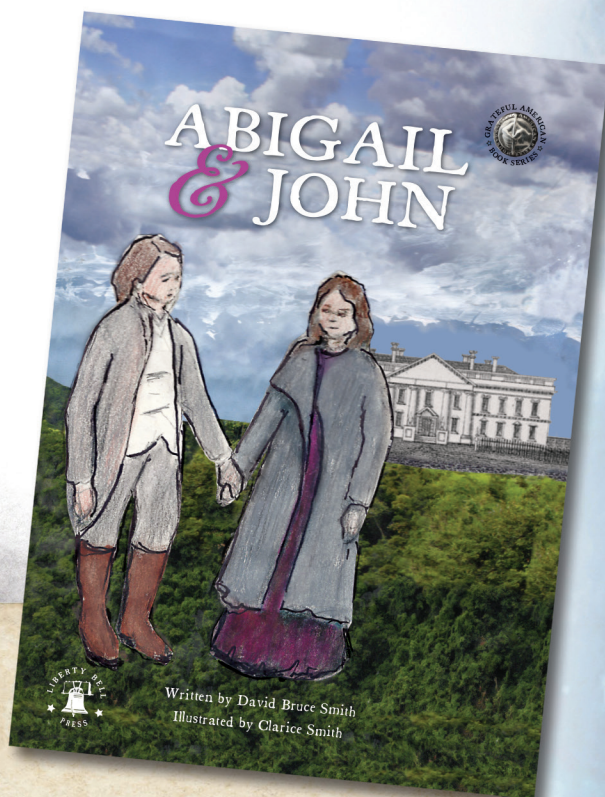
— Abigail Adams, 1780

Dear Educators and Parents,

Congratulations on taking an active role in your student’s education. We are pleased to help you on this journey by providing you with this supplemental curriculum packet, to be used in conjunction with the book *Abigail & John* by David Bruce Smith and illustrated by Clarice Smith.

In this packet you will find a variety of activities and assessments designed to strengthen critical-thinking skills, deepen content knowledge, and spark a love and appreciation for our nation’s history.

The information on the following page provides you with a brief overview of what is included in this packet. For in-depth pedagogical strategies and approaches using these activities in a classroom or at home, please view the free instructional video available at gratefulamericanbookseries.com.



Curriculum Activities for Use with *Abigail & John*

Reading Activities (pages 3–4)

- **Venn Diagram:** Students will compare and contrast topics and people related to Abigail and John Adams, using a Venn diagram.
- **Close Reading:** In this literacy-based activity, students will perform close reading of the text by using sticky notes to annotate it. They will then answer questions and complete a challenge.

Social Studies Activities (pages 5–8)

- **The Letters of Abigail & John:** In this primary source-driven activity, students will locate and read an actual letter written by Abigail and/or John and answer questions about the letter.
- **Historical Timeline:** Students will use the major events in the lives of Abigail and John to create an in-depth historical timeline.
- **Modern-Day Comparison:** Students complete a graphic organizer in which they compare and contrast a modern-day influential couple with Abigail and John.
- **Let's Talk!:** Students will write and perform a talk-show skit featuring Abigail and John Adams.

STEM Activities (pages 9–11)

- **With WiFi:** What if WiFi were available in the past? In this imaginative activity, students are asked to create social media profiles for Abigail or John Adams.
- **Spy Games:** In this engineering-inspired activity, students are challenged to design a device that will transmit top-secret information during the Revolutionary War.
- **The Cost of War:** Wartime often results in an increase in prices for everyday necessities. In this activity, students are faced with the challenge of cutting their modern-day expenses in half.

Art Activities (pages 12–15)

- **All About the Art:** What makes the book *Abigail & John* so unique is its beautiful and inspirational art created by world-renowned artist Clarice Smith. This activity directs students to study the art and answer questions about it.
- **Commemorative Stamp:** For today's students, stamps may seem like relics of the past. In this activity, students will use their creative skills to design a commemorative stamp for Abigail and John.
- **Museum Display:** In this hands-on activity, students will use clay to create a bust of either Abigail or John. They will then write a detailed description of their bust to accompany the piece in a museum.
- **Historical Monument:** What better way to honor two of history's most celebrated figures than with a historical monument? In this activity, students are faced with the challenge of creating a historical monument for Abigail and John worthy of the ages.

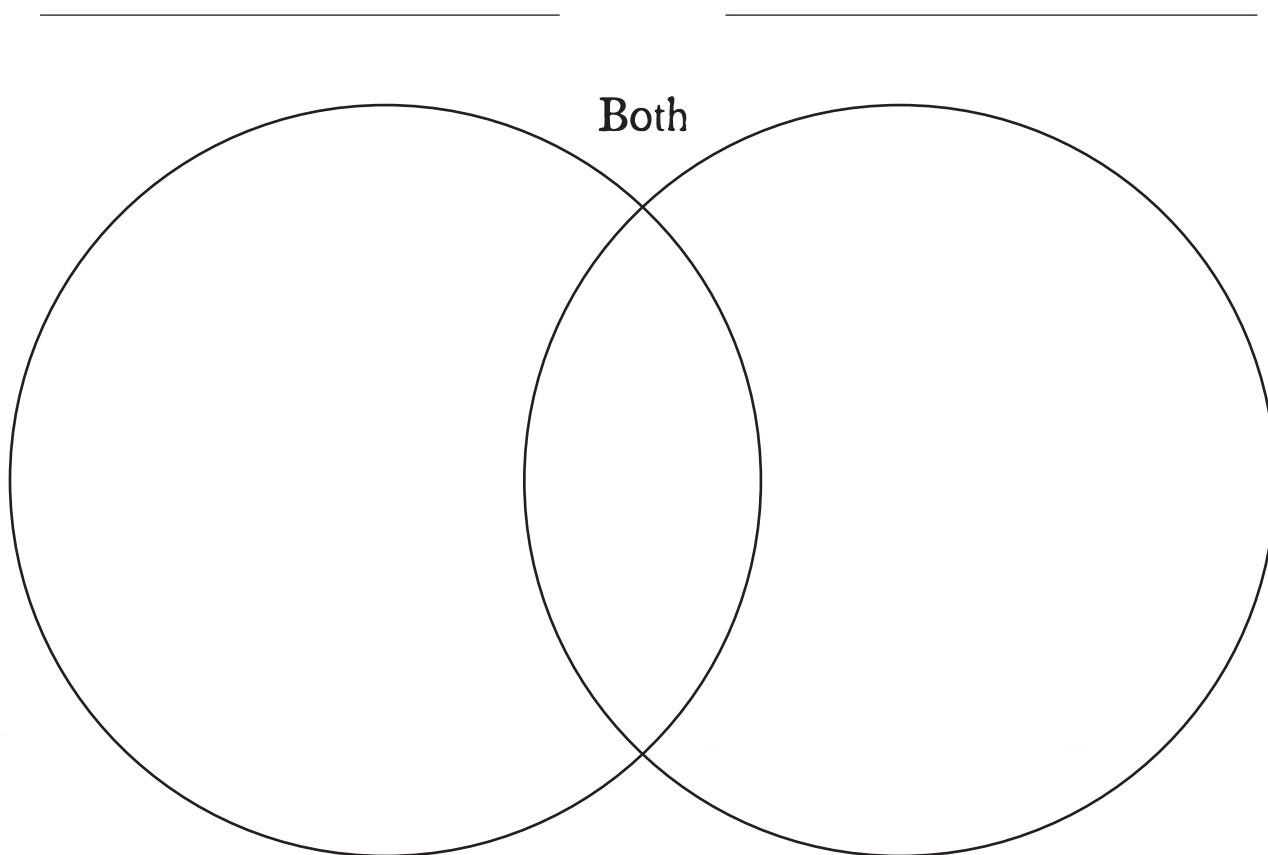
Assessments (pages 16–19)

- **Multiple-Choice Quiz:** Assess student knowledge with this multiple-choice quiz.
- **Short-Answer Assessment:** Allow students to use the book with this assessment. This way, students can cite specific evidence from the text when providing answers to the questions.
- **Crossword Puzzle:** Looking for a fun and creative way to assess student comprehension? Look no further than this crossword puzzle based on information from the text.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Venn Diagram

Directions: Compare and contrast people or topics relating to the *Abigail & John* text. Some suggestions include comparing and contrasting Abigail with John, Abigail or John with yourself, or perhaps Abigail and John with a modern-day couple. The possibilities are endless! Be as detailed as possible when completing the diagram.



The most interesting thing I learned by completing this graphic organizer is

Name: _____ Date: _____

Close Reading

Directions: Use the table below to help you perform a close reading of the *Abigail & John* text.

?	Place a sticky note with a question mark on it next to any part of the text you are having trouble understanding or have a question about.
!	Place a sticky note with an exclamation point on it next to any part of the text you find interesting and want to learn more about.
*	Place a sticky note with a star on it next any facts that you feel are important and want to remember.
W	Place a sticky note with <i>W</i> on it for words that are unfamiliar to you. Look up the words up in an online dictionary, and use them in a sentence to help you remember them.

Directions: Now that you have finished your close reading, complete the activities below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Look at the places in the text that you marked with question marks. What strategy will you use to help you better understand the text? Write about it below.
2. Look at the places in the text that you marked with exclamation points. Choose your favorite exclamation-point moment, and write an email to a friend describing the moment and why you found it so fascinating.
3. Look at the places in the text that you marked with stars. Choose your favorite fact that you learned, and write it below.
4. Look at the places in the text that you marked with a *W*. Choose your favorite new word, and write it and its definition below.

Challenge Activity

Imagine a movie is being made about Abigail and John Adams. Use a poster board or chart paper to create a poster to advertise the movie. Be sure to include a title for the movie and the names of the actors who will portray the famous historical couple.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Letters of Abigail & John

Primary sources are clues we can use to help us better understand the past. Physical objects, photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, journal entries, and tweets are just a few examples of primary sources. All these items provide us a glimpse of what everyday life was like in the past. Personal letters are also powerful primary sources. Lucky for us, we have over 1,000 of the letters Abigail and John wrote to each other during their lifetimes. These letters can be found at the following sites: archives.gov, whitehouse.gov, masshist.org

Directions: Use one of the sites listed above to locate a letter Abigail wrote to John, or one that John wrote to Abigail. Read the letter closely. Use the letter to answer the questions below.

1. What is the date of the letter and who is writing it? _____
2. How is the language used in the letter, different from the way in which we write and speak today?

3. What is the letter about? Briefly summarize the letter.

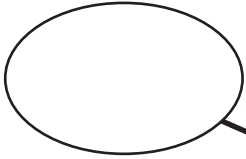
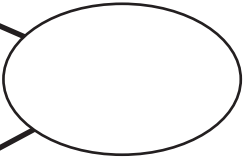
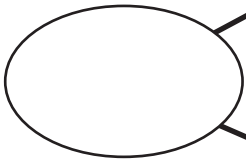
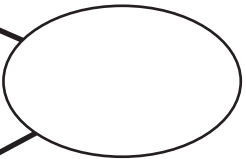
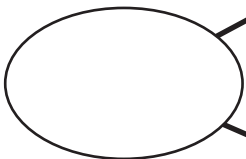
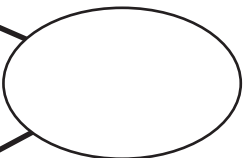
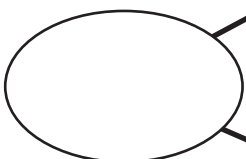
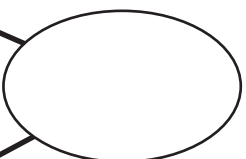
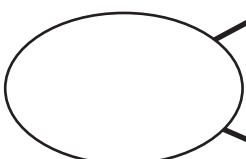
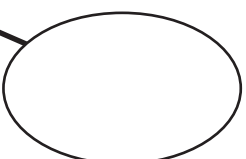
4. What is the tone of the letter? What do you think the writer was feeling when they wrote it?
How do you think the recipient felt reading the letter?

5. What clues does this letter include that can help us better understand Abigail and John and the time in which they lived?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Historical Timeline

Directions: Use major events in the lives of Abigail and John to create a historical timeline. Write the year of the event in the bubble, and then describe the event on the lines.

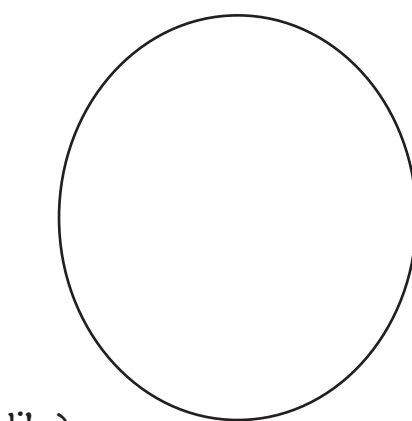
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Name: _____ Date: _____

Modern-Day Comparison

Directions: Compare and contrast Abigail and John to a modern-day influential, powerful couple. Draw or paste a photograph of the couple in the empty circle. Write their names on the line. Then, complete the graphic organizer.

Abigail & John



How are they alike?

How are they different?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Let's Talk

Directions: Create a historical talk show in which a host interviews Abigail and John Adams. Use the text *Abigail & John* to help you prepare your script. Complete the form below to help you plan your talk show.

1. What year will your talk show take place? _____
2. What will be the name of your talk show? _____
3. What will your set look like? _____

4. Who will be conducting the interview (real name and stage name) _____
5. Who will be playing the roles of Abigail and John? _____
6. Will there be more guests in addition to Abigail and John? If so, list them here.

7. What will you and your guests be wearing? _____
8. List at least five questions you will ask the guests on your talk show.

9. Provide rough drafts of the answers to the questions you asked above on the back of this sheet.

Name: _____ Date: _____

With WiFi

It may be hard to imagine a world without WiFi; however, that is exactly the world in which Abigail and John lived. But imagine for a moment that the couple did have WiFi, smartphones, and social media! How would their lives have been different?

Picture yourself as Abigail or John. You are living during the Revolutionary War era, but WiFi, smartphones, and social media exist! What would you tweet throughout the day? What pictures would you put on your Instagram page? Remember, the British may be watching your feed, so choose your words and photos carefully!

Directions: Start formulating ideas to help you build a social-media profile as either Abigail or John Adams. Draw a few sketches of pictures you may include on Instagram. Then, write rough drafts of a couple of tweets you would post on Twitter. Present your final social-medial posts in a slideshow presentation such as *PowerPoint* or *Prezi*.

Instagram

Twitter

Name: _____ Date: _____

Spy Games

Invisible ink, ciphers, and hidden letters were just a few of the ways Revolutionary War spies transferred top-secret information during the war. Imagine you are a revolutionary spy, and engineer a device that will allow you to transfer top-secret information without alerting British forces. Remember, you may only use materials available during the American Revolution.

Directions: Conduct research and answer the questions below to help get you started.

1. What are some different ways people transmitted information during the Revolutionary War?

2. What are some different materials that were available during the Revolutionary War that you may be able to use to engineer your device?

3. Think about how your device will work, what it will be made of, and how it might look. Draw some rough sketches of your idea below.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Cost of War

Abigail wrote letters in which she discussed the rise in prices of food and other items during the war. "In short one hundred pounds two year ago would purchase more than two will now," wrote Abigail in 1777. Work with a parent or guardian to estimate approximately how much money you or your family spend in one month on basic provisions. Then, challenge yourself to develop a budget in which you spend exactly half that amount. How will you save money?

Directions: Complete the table below. Then, develop a plan to demonstrate how you would survive if the prices on each item in the table doubled! Write about your plan on the lines. Lastly, create a digital spreadsheet to present your budget.

Monthly Expenses	Dollar Amount
Food	\$
Shelter	\$
Utilities	\$
Medical	\$
Transportation	\$
TOTAL	\$

Name: _____ Date: _____

All About the Art

Directions: Look closely at the art pieces by Clarice Smith included in the book. Choose your favorite piece of art from the book, and answer the questions below.

1. What is happening in the work of art? Be specific and detailed in your description.

2. What emotions do you feel when you look at the piece of art?

3. Is there anything in this art piece that reminds you of something in your own life (a feeling, a person, a place, etc.)?

Directions: If you had to create a work of art to be included in the book, what would you draw? Include a sketch of a piece of art you would have created for the book.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Commemorative Stamp

Directions: Design a postage stamp commemorating Abigail and John Adams and the contributions they made to our nation. Sketch your stamp below, and answer the questions. Then, create a formal and final version of your stamp on a separate sheet of paper.



1. What is depicted on your stamp?

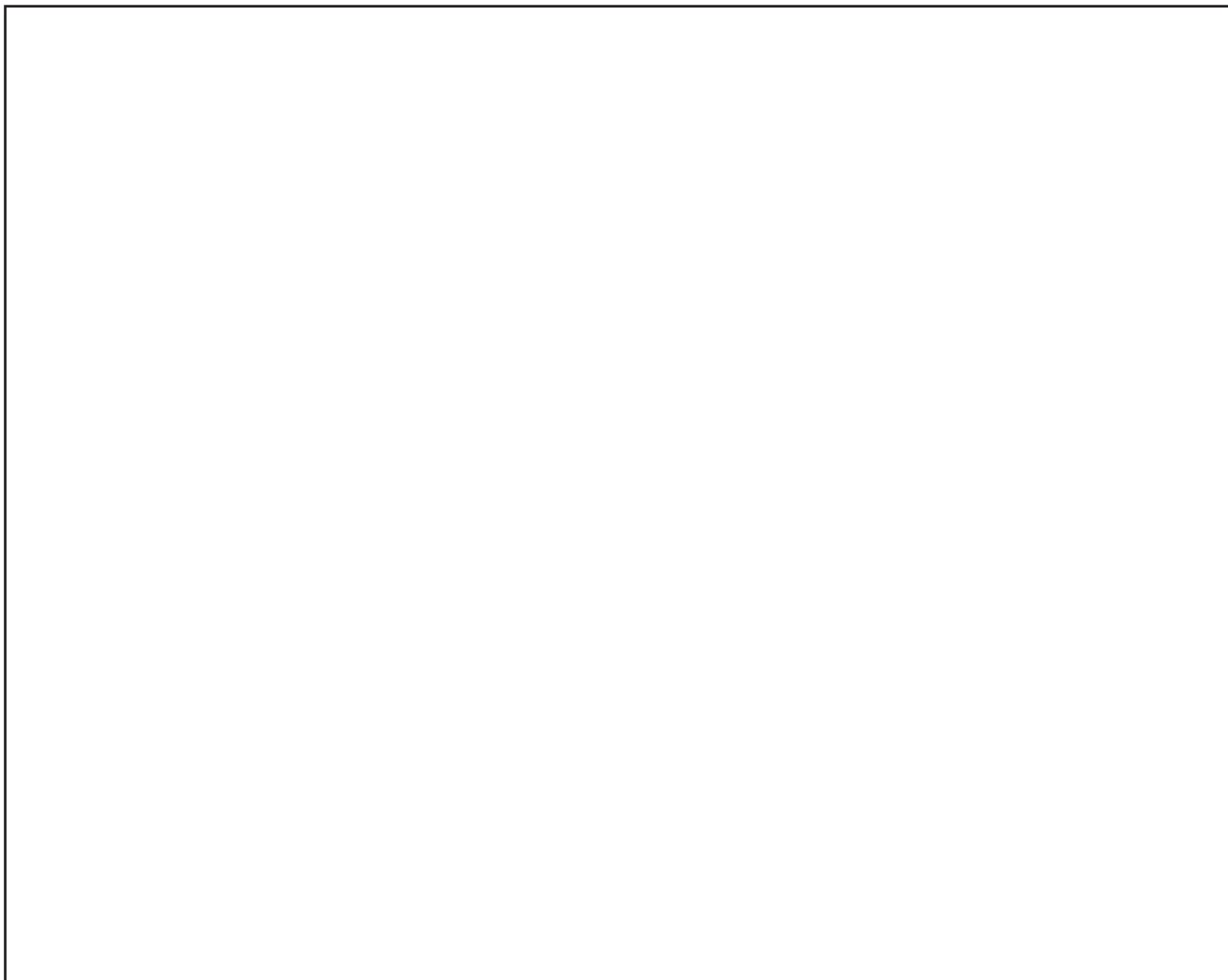
2. What do you want people to think and feel when they see your stamp?

3. What was the most difficult part of creating your stamp?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Museum Display

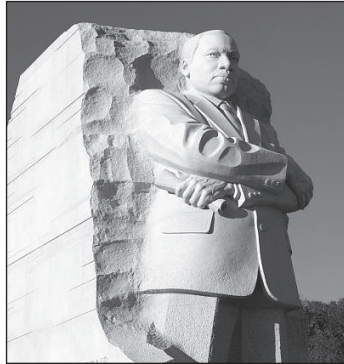
Directions: Use clay to create a bust of either Abigail or John Adams, or both! Draw a sketch of what you hope your bust will look like below. Then, write a description of your bust to be included with the display in an art museum.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Historical Monument

Directions: Design a historical monument to celebrate Abigail and John Adams. Research other famous historical monuments, such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial or the Lincoln Memorial. Answer the questions below, and draw a sketch of your monument.



1. Where will your monument be located? _____
2. Approximately what size will your monument be? _____
3. What materials will you use to construct your monument?

Draw a sketch of your monument in the box. Be as detailed as possible.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple-Choice Quiz

Directions: Circle the best answer for each question.

- Which word best describes John's personality as a child?
 - calm
 - rambunctious
 - sluggish
 - shy
- Which statement about Abigail's childhood is TRUE?
 - Abigail was an orphan.
 - Abigail attended boarding school.
 - Abigail loved to read.
 - Abigail wanted to grow up to be a farmer.
- Which statement best describes Abigail and John's relationship?
 - It was an equal partnership built on admiration and respect.
 - It was strained marriage full of arguments.
 - It was a perfect marriage in which the couple spent every day together.
 - It was a marriage arranged by Abigail's parents.
- Why did Abigail write to John to say, "Remember the Ladies"?
 - Because John was spending all his time with the men at the Continental Congress.
 - Because she wanted women to have rights when America became independent.
 - Because she was nervous about the war.
 - Because John had not written to their daughters in quite some time.
- Why did John decide to defend the British soldiers on trial for the Boston massacre?
 - He was secretly a spy for Britain and supported the king.
 - He did not have a choice, as no one else would defend them.
 - He was hoping it would bring him fame and fortune.
 - He believed that every person had the right to a fair trial.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple-Choice Quiz (cont.)

Directions: Circle the best answer for each question.

6. How did Abigail feel regarding the war?
 - a. She was in favor of the war and wanted to fight on the front lines.
 - b. She was against the war and wanted to remain loyal to the king.
 - c. She feared the war but felt it was necessary to gain independence.
 - d. She was against the war and believed declaring independence was a bad idea.
7. Why did John travel to France in 1778?
 - a. He wanted to speak with King George about ending the war.
 - b. He was to help Benjamin Franklin secure an alliance with France.
 - c. He needed a break from the war.
 - d. He wanted to do some sightseeing and attend lectures.
8. Which statement is TRUE regarding Abigail and John in their later years?
 - a. They enjoyed time with their grandchildren.
 - b. They stayed informed on political affairs.
 - c. They renewed their friendship with Thomas Jefferson.
 - d. All of the above.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Short-Answer Assessment Questions

Directions: Use the book *Abigail and John* to help you answer the questions below.

1. How would you describe Abigail Adams? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

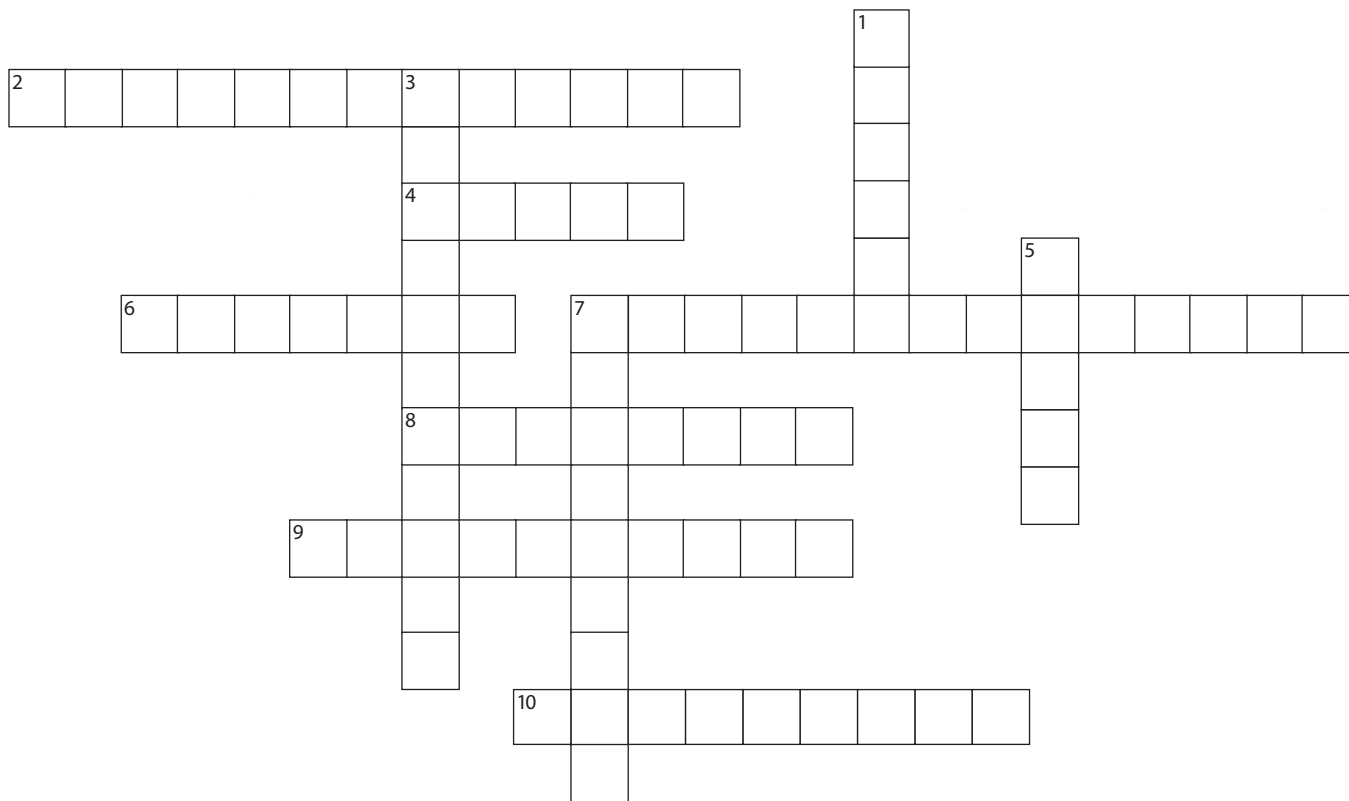
2. Why do you think it was a controversial decision for John Adams to defend the British soldiers on trial for the Boston Massacre? Do you think John made the correct decision to defend the British soldiers? Explain your answer.

3. How did Abigail and John support each other during their marriage? Include specific examples from text in your answer.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Crossword Puzzle

Directions: Use the book *Abigail and John* to help you complete the puzzle.



ACROSS

2. formally ended the war and established the United States as an independent nation
4. Abigail's mythological name used in her letters to John
6. the college John attended
7. Abigail described this historic event by saying that "the flame is kindled and like Lightning it catches from soul to soul"
8. the mythological name John used in his letters to Abigail
9. John served as Vice President to this man
10. the last words of John Adams were about this man

DOWN

1. the city Abigail would often travel to as a young lady
3. John's political party
5. the nickname of Abigail and John's first child
7. the location of Abigail and John's family farm

Answer Key

Multiple-Choice Quiz (page 17)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. b | 5. d |
| 2. c | 6. c |
| 3. a | 7. b |
| 4. b | 8. d |

Short-Answer Assessment Questions (page 18)

Student responses will vary for these questions but all answers should be strongly supported by specific evidence from the *Abigail & John* text.

Crossword Puzzle (page 19)

ACROSS

2. Treaty of Paris
4. Diana
6. Harvard
7. Boston Tea Party
8. Lysander
9. Washington
10. Jefferson

DOWN

1. Boston
3. Federalists
5. Nabby
7. Braintree