

Shedding Grace

Summer Reading Assignment

Name _____

Shedding Grace is a novel that will help you to understand the reasons for the American Declaration of Independence. The characters and the story are completely fictional, but it is set accurately into the pre-revolutionary period, so that the events mirror the kinds of things that actually happened at the time. It takes place in Boston in the summer of 1769.

When you begin your American History class next year you will review and discuss this novel. To prepare for that, you will complete this workbook and bring it with you on the first day of class.

There are two types of questions you must answer for each of the first twenty chapters in the book.

1. Short identifications of important people or significant events mentioned in that chapter. *Explain the significance of each in one original sentence.* This guide includes the URLs for short Internet sources to make it easier for you to look up things you don't already know.

2. Short explanations of your views on values issues that emerge from the story and the historic period. *Answer these with a short statement.*

Chapter 1

Currency Act <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/currencyact.htm>

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Each side in this impending conflict has a different perspective on what's happening. We call this their *Frame of Reference*. *How does this differing frame of reference, or point of view, make resolving the conflict more difficult? Do you see this problem existing today? Write a short statement in which you give a real contemporary example.*

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Chapter 2

Sons of Liberty <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/sons.htm>

In preparing their case against the British, the Americans are trying to influence public opinion by spreading their side of the story through the newspapers. This is called *propaganda*. It is common for both sides in any dispute to “spin” the facts their way. *How does this hinder the search for solutions? Write a short statement in which you give a real contemporary example.*

Chapter 3

Sugar Act <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/sugaract.htm>

Family loyalty plays a large role in this story where it sometimes conflicts with the laws and rules of society. *Tell what loyalty means to you and give an example of how it has or can cause similar conflicts today.*

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Chapter 4

Castle William <http://www.nine3.com/MDC/history.html>

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Finding arguments that seem reasonable to support a conclusion is called a rationalizing. *How does Jonathan Hamrick reconcile slavery with his concept of human freedom? Is he thinking critically or rationalizing?*

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Chapter 5

Quartering Act (Billeting Act) of 1765 <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h641.html>

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In urging resistance to the Navigation Acts an American says: "If we give in to this, then what constrains them from ordering us in some other instance?" *What is a precedent? Relate it to an event in your own life.*

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Chapter 6

General Thomas Gage <http://www.americanrevwar.homestead.com/files/GAGE.HTM>

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Colonel Beresford and Lieutenant Governor Barthurst are secretly scheming against Governor Wederborn. *What is betrayal and why is it so universally condemned? Is it always wrong to betray a friend or a confidence?*

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Chapter 7

Board of Customs Commissioners
<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/brittwo/brittwo.html>

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Considerable bias in favor of the Americans can be seen in the court proceedings which were not fair in some respects. *Why do people faced with difficult ethical decisions have difficulty being objective?*

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Chapter 8

Virtual Representation <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h640.html>

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It is clear in the discussion between Hamrick and Wederborn that the two sides have reached an impasse. *Why doesn't this type of ethical disagreement respond to reason?*

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Chapter 9

Samuel Adams http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/signers/adams_s.htm

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Jonathan Hamrick is facing an ethical dilemma because his sense of loyalty and duty is beginning to clash with his conscience. *What is duty and what happens when duties conflict with one's innate sense of right and wrong? Have you ever faced this problem yourself?*

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Chapter 10

Bight of Benin http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bight_of_Benin

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In what ways is Rachel correct when she says the following to her father about the Americans? “Perhaps you don’t really understand them. They only want what we all want... liberty and happiness.”

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Chapter 11

Bance Island <http://www.yale.edu/glc/gullah/03.htm>

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Do you think Jonathan was correct when in reference to slavery, he wrote in his journal: “I am becoming increasingly convinced that it is simply the color and strangeness of these people that prevents their eventual emancipation?” How strong is the urge to conformity in your life?

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Chapter 12

Elmina Castle <http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/Elmina.htm>

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Writing in his journal Jonathan speculates: “Perhaps it is being free that inspires the accomplishment and the stultifying state of slavery that dulls the Negro’s ambition.” *Do you think this could be true? Relate any personal experience where expectation influenced your actions?*

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Chapter 13

Townshend Revenue Act of 1767
<http://www.americanrevwar.homestead.com/files/TOWN.HTM>

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Governor Wederborn believes that human nature will cause the get tough policy advocated by his Lieutenant Governor to backfire, while Barthurst believes that it is because of human nature that only getting tough will succeed. *What do you think? Can you offer any contemporary examples?*

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Chapter 14

Horse Latitudes http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_latitudes

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Hamrick says of slavery that an evil, "...even one as grotesque as this, finally goes on unquestioned, because it has always gone on and because it is the way it is..." *What do you think he means by this? Can you give other examples?*

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Chapter 15

Middle Passage http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Passage

While there is a considerable amount of self-serving corruption in the slave trade there is also a sense of group cooperation and responsibility. *What do you believe is the balance between individual freedom and group responsibility?*

Chapter 16

Impressment <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impressment>

Rachel and Abigail's friendship and trust is tested by events in the story. *How important is friendship and trust in determining the right thing to do?*

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Chapter 17

Triangular Trade http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangular_Trade

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Interpret the significance of Levesque's remark to Jonathan Hamrick who has told him slavery is wrong. "I think in the future it would be best for you to stay home in the counting house, as your colleagues do, and not look..." How much unethical behavior exists because people look the other way?

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Chapter 18

Writs of Assistance http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writ_of_Assistance

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How would you answer Hamrick when he asks himself the following question? "But do I have a moral obligation to people outside my group? Can I disregard them...?"

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Chapter 19

Benefit of Clergy <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/society/A0806992.html>

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There are always conflicting considerations that weigh in on a person's ethical decision-making. *How do you judge the actions of Governor Wederborn in the case of Colonel Beresford?*

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Chapter 20

Inns of Court <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/society/A0825265.html>

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When Hamrick is challenged to stand by his friends and against his conscience, he refuses. *Why was this so difficult for him to do? In your judgment did he do the right thing?*

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Chapters 21-23

Shedding Grace is about a young American's search for justice. *Finish the novel and think about what justice means to you. Write a short essay about this and be prepared to discuss it when you return to school.*

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