

Readers' Theater Script: American Heroes

These readers' theater scripts focus on the life and times of American Heroes including:

Paul Revere (independence), Frederick Douglass (civil rights), Susan B. Anthony (women's rights), Mary McLeod Bethune (education), Franklin D. Roosevelt (New Deal and World War II), Eleanor Roosevelt (United Nations and human rights), Thurgood Marshall (civil rights), Lyndon B. Johnson (Great Society and voting rights), and César Chávez (workers' rights).

b. Explain social barriers, restrictions, and obstacles that these historical figures had to overcome and describe how they overcame them.

Script 1 - Cast:

Narrator

Paul Revere

Frederick Douglass

Susan B. Anthony

Narrator: Today, you will be introduced to three American Heroes. Their stories begin at different times in history and in different places, however, you are learning about them because they have made important contributions to our country. I will let them introduce themselves to you.

Paul Revere: Hi, my name is Paul Revere. It is a French name, because my parents were born in France. My father came to North America in 1715 when he was thirteen years old. He settled in Boston. He was a silversmith.

Frederick Douglass: Good day, my name is Frederick Douglass. I was born in Maryland in February of 1818. Unlike Paul Revere, I was born into slavery, but I managed to gain my freedom by boarding a train to New York.

Susan B. Anthony: Hello, my name is Susan B. Anthony, and I was born in Massachusetts on February 15, 1820, two years after Frederick Douglass. Douglass and I actually knew each other. We were both fighting for the same cause. We wanted freedom for all people. I grew up during a time when women had very few rights.

Narrator: Listen as these three American heroes tell how they impacted our history and expanded our rights and freedoms.

Paul Revere: Well, when I grew up, America was not the same as we know it today. There were only thirteen colonies, and we were ruled by the British. We did not have 50 states like we do now.

Frederick Douglas: And, when I was born, America was no longer ruled by the British, but things were still pretty bad. As I said before, I was born into slavery. It was illegal for slaves like me to learn how to read, but I didn't let that stop me. My first teacher was Sophia Auld. She was kind to me.

Susan B. Anthony: Well, although I was not a slave, I did not like the way some people were treated, especially women. They did not have the right to vote, to own property, or to get good jobs. So, I decided take a stand against the mistreatment of women.

Paul Revere: All of us had something we wanted to fight for. I decided that I was going to fight against the British for our independence. I learn a lot from the men and women who came to our silversmith shop. I heard stories about the complaints the colonists had against the British government, so, I joined a group called the Sons of Liberty.

Frederick Douglas: And I hated being enslaved, so I dressed up as a sailor and got aboard a train headed north. I was afraid I would be caught, but I got lucky, and was able to make it to New York.

Susan B. Anthony: Well, I became a Principal of an all girls' school, but I wanted to do more than that. I wanted to work for justice and fairness for all the people who were being treated badly.

Narrator: So, what were some of the things that made you guys famous?

Paul Revere: Ah, well, let me see. I know you have heard about the famous Boston Tea Party right? Anyway, this was when the colonists decided that they were going to protest the taxes that the British were making them pay. You know what they did? They dumped all the British tea into the Boston Harbor.

Frederick Douglas: Oh boy, I bet that made them angry! But, what I did was even more interesting. I gave hundreds of speeches on the evils of slavery. I also became part of the Underground Railroad that helped other slaves escape to freedom. I was a famous abolitionist. That just means, someone who wanted to get rid of slavery.

Susan B. Anthony: You were both very courageous! However, my good friend, Elizabeth Stanton and I formed the first political group for women called "The Women's National Loyal League." We also organized the National Woman Suffrage Association. Suffrage means the right to vote.

Narrator: That is all wonderful, but what else did you do?

Paul Revere: Well, I became famous for the midnight ride that I took from Boston to the towns of Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. I had to warn the Patriot Militia that the British soldiers were coming. I was riding with William Dawes and Samuel Prescott. The battle at Lexington was the first battle of the American Revolution. When the war ended in 1783, the thirteen colonies had gained independence. We became the United States of America.

Frederick Douglass: I started a newspaper called, The North Star, and I worked with Susan B. Anthony and many others to end slavery and get more rights for women. President Lincoln and I became friends, because he was against slavery as well.

Susan B. Anthony: Well, I am proud to say that I was arrested for voting. And, because of my diligence, by 1920, the law was changed to allow women in every state to vote. So, every time you cast a vote, think of me!

Frederick Douglass: Hey, hey, don't forget, I am the first African American to get my picture on a postage stamp!

Paul and Susan: Way to go Frederick!

Narrator: Well, you are all famous! Thank you so very much for the contributions you have made to our American history. Because of your diligence and courage, you have made us proud.