



Teacher Read-Aloud Text for Assessing Student Listening Skills

**Note: This text is to be read aloud to assess students' listening skills. Students do NOT get a copy of this text.**

**A New York Merchant: Adam Johnson**

Written by Expeditionary Learning for Instructional Purposes

I was born in the spring of 1672 in the colony of New York. My father was a successful merchant and often took me with him to see how his business ran. Merchants are well-respected for they make the trade of goods possible across the colonies and across the sea.

The port of New York is a busy place. It is the central point for imports and exports being shipped to and from overseas and the other colonies. Wide ranges of materials come into the port, like fur, tobacco, and flour. These items are sent aboard the merchant ships and sailed back to Europe. Father's merchant ships would return to the colonies with many goods not easily found or made in the colony of New York, such as tea, sugar, silks, and spices. The colonists depend on merchants to get what they need, and merchants make a living from their trade.

Merchants buy and sell goods for a profit. First they have to purchase the goods from tradesmen and pay taxes to the Crown, and then they sell the goods at a higher price and keep the remaining money. Depending on the goods they sell, some merchants can grow quite rich. Good merchants have to know the costs of hundreds of items and complete sums quickly in their heads. I learned this skill at a young age.

All these years later, I have learned a lot from my father and others about being a good merchant. I have done quite well for myself. I now own a storefront near the port in which to sell my goods. Advertisements listing the imported goods stocked by my store appear regularly in the newspaper. These ads bring large numbers of people to town and into my store. It is a good living.

Flesch-Kincaid: 7.0, 990L

**Sources**

Colonial Williamsburg Web site, History of Trades section (silversmith):

[www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/tradesil.cfm](http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/tradesil.cfm) (last accessed 10/25/12)

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