

ETHAN ALLEN



BIOGRAPHY

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Ethan Allen was born on January 21, 1738, in Connecticut. He was the eldest son in the family, and was due to be educated at Yale, but the death of his father meant Allen had to take over his work on the family farm instead.

In 1757, Allen joined a militia in time for the French and Indian War, but he saw little action first-hand. After that, Allen acquired a large area of land in Vermont through the New Hampshire Grants, but settlers in New York thought the land belonged to them. When arguments turned violent, Allen formed a group of fighting men called the Green Mountain Boys so he could defend his land.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, Allen's Green Mountain Boys were already experienced at fighting. And so, in 1775, Allen, along with Benedict Arnold, led their soldiers to capture the British at Fort Ticonderoga. But Allen's Green Mountain Boys later turned against their leader, and merged with the main American Continental Army.

Meanwhile Allen traveled north to try to invade Canada, but the British captured him in Montreal. Three years later Allen was released in exchange for the release of a British officer held captive by the Americans.

Allen spent some time under George Washington's command at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, but shortly afterwards returned to Vermont. By this time Vermont had declared itself an independent republic, and Allen appeared before the Continental Congress to try to have Vermont recognized as an independent state. This was refused, so Allen tried to negotiate with the British to gain military protection from them. But these failed too, because such actions were thought to be treason.

After the war, Allen was less actively involved with politics, and he went back to working on his farmland in Vermont. He died on February 11, 1789.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'defend'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'defend' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'defend'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'defend'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'defend' means.

Try this for other words, too. 

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: merged with	joined with

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

During the Revolutionary War, the Green Mountain Boys captured the British Fort Ticonderoga.

Allen then tried to invade Canada, but he was captured and imprisoned by the British.

In 1757, Allen joined the militia, but saw little direct action.

So Allen gathered together his own fighting men, called the Green Mountain Boys, to defend his land.

After being released, Allen was involved in politics in Vermont for a time, before going back to work on his farmland.

Ethan Allen was born in Connecticut in 1738.

Then Allen acquired land in Vermont, but settlers in New York also claimed the land.

Get to the facts

1 When did Ethan Allen join the militia?

2 Where did Allen acquire land?

3 What were Allen's fighting men called?

4 Which fort did Allen capture?

5 Where did Allen try to invade?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Fort Ticonderoga captured

Write a newspaper story for either a British newspaper or an American newspaper about the capture of Fort Ticonderoga during the Revolutionary War... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'defend'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'defend' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'defend'.
- d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'defend'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – merged with

Synonym – joined with

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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- 1 When did Ethan Allen join the militia?
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- 3 What were Allen's fighting men called?
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Make a story...

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