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# Activity Guide

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## George Washington's Cows

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### ABOUT THE STORY

In this funny rhyming book, George Washington's cows are dressed in fine clothes and sleep in soft beds. His hogs do chores and have good manners. His sheep are all scholars. In fact, George Washington's animals are so strange and different that their owner decides that the only way he can find a sight to equal them is to go into politics.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR / ILLUSTRATOR

David Small received his Master of Fine Arts from Yale University and lives in Mendon, Michigan, with his wife. He is author and illustrator of many books for children. Among them are *Paper John* and *Imogene's Antlers*, which was a "Reading Rainbow" feature selection.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the children what they know about George Washington. Then tell them that they will hear a funny story about George Washington before he became president.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### **Comprehension/Thinking Skills**

- "What did George Washington's cows eat?"
- "When did George Washington's hogs serve dinner?"
- "Could George Washington sheep really add well?"
- "What did the sheep decide about the ocean?"
- "What do you think George Washington will find when he goes into politics?"

### Vocabulary

Review these words and their meanings with the group.

scones	croup
obsequious	impeccably
genteel	impressive
amiable	triumph

### Who's the Silliest?

Have the children decide which of George Washington's animals is the silliest. Encourage them to defend their opinions with reasons.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### **Social Studies: The Real George Washington**

Have the students find out facts about George Washington's real life. Provide them with materials that tell about Washington. They can work together to create a biography of the first president.

#### **Math: Smarter Than a Sheep**

George Washington's sheep decide that  $3 + 3 + 3 = 20$ . Have the children determine what numbers can actually be added to the same numbers to equal 20 (for example:  $5+5+5+5$  or  $10+10$ ).

#### **Language Arts: Present to Past**

Many verbs in the story are past tense. Remind children that to form the past tense of many verbs that end in *y*, they change the *y* to an *i* and add *-ed*. Other verbs have the last letter doubled before *-ed* is added. Write these present tense verbs on the chalkboard and have children change them to past tense form.

cry	bed
ferry	beg

#### **Art: Strange Animals**

Have the children think of another farm animal George Washington might have raised. They can work in groups to write and illustrate another section of the story telling what strange, silly action the farm animal performed.