

Did you go to school if your family supported the Patriots?

In colonial times in the northern colonies, some boys and girls (ages 6–8) were taught reading and writing in a “dame school.” The teacher was a woman who lived in the neighborhood.

Both boys and girls could have gone on to common school for another three to four years, but usually only boys continued. If boys wanted to attend college, they needed Latin school. (Some boys who had to help on the family farm did not go to school at all, and neither did most black children.) Both common school and Latin school were taught by a man called a schoolmaster.

If the schoolmaster in your area did not enlist in the army, the school probably remained open.

There weren't many books to read because books were considered too valuable for children to have.



You may have used the *New England Primer* to learn how to read. The book had a little rhyme for each letter of the alphabet. Before the war, many of the verses praised the kings and queens of England. The rhyme for the letter K was:

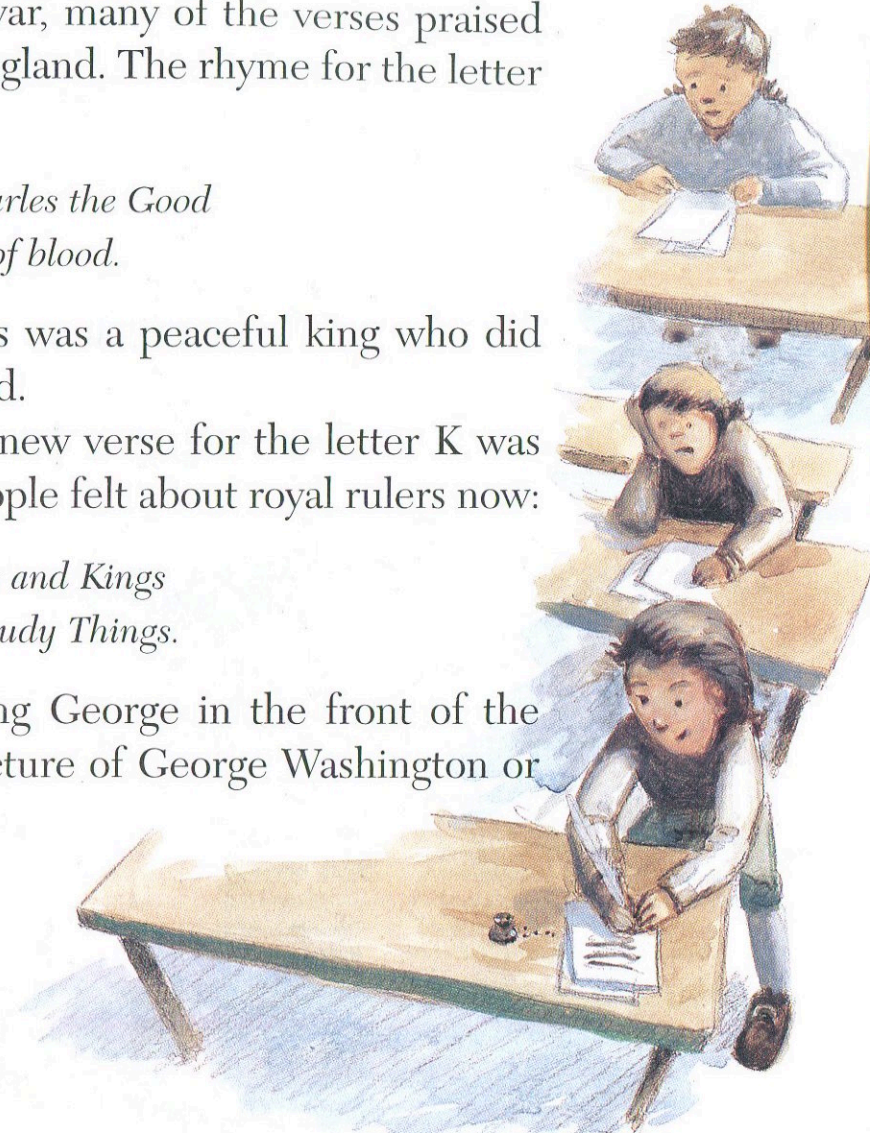
*King Charles the Good
No man of blood.*

That meant that Charles was a peaceful king who did not like wars and bloodshed.

When the war began, a new verse for the letter K was printed. It showed how people felt about royal rulers now:

*Queens and Kings
Are Gaudy Things.*

Even the picture of King George in the front of the book was replaced by a picture of George Washington or some other Patriot leader.



In the middle and southern colonies before the war, there weren't as many schools as in the North. Families with money may have had a tutor come to their house for the children. Sometimes, a minister would teach children in a one-room school for a fee. Many boys and girls had little chance for formal schooling. This continued during the war.

There were nine colleges in the colonies (eight in the North and one in the South) before the war, but all closed during the fighting. Some college buildings were used as hospitals, housing for soldiers, or horse stables.

