

# FOUNDING KIDS

by Lavinia Roberts

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# FOUNDING KIDS

*A One Act Colonial Comedy*

**by Lavinia Roberts**

**SYNOPSIS:** Five students are given the task to research the American Revolutionary War. This isn't your average assignment as, they discover tales of the young founding fathers, the origins of the song "Yankee Doodle," and life from the view of young people living in colonial times. *Founding Kids* is a fun way to teach kids American History and celebrate the contributions and remarkable bravery and talents of young people in the creation of The United States of America.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(3-9 females, 4-6 males, 8-15 either, 2-30 extras; gender flexible, doubling possible)*

MORGAN (m/f).....	Sensitive and empathetic. Bohemian, artist type. Draws a lot. <i>(36 lines)</i>
ROWAN (m/f).....	Super geek and history buff; perfectionist, addicted to straight A's. <i>(46 lines)</i>
SIDNEY (m/f).....	Athlete; likes swashbuckling adventures. <i>(45 lines)</i>
LIBRARIAN (m/f).....	Curmudgeonly, old-school; protector of the books. <i>(11 lines)</i>
ADULT GEORGE (m).....	George as a president. <i>(16 lines)</i>
LITTLE GEORGE (m).....	Young George Washington, very honest. <i>(9 lines)</i>
FATHER (m).....	George's dad. <i>(5 lines)</i>
POCAHONTAS (f).....	12; Strong and brave. <i>(2 lines)</i>
AVERY (m/f).....	Class clown. A chill kid. <i>(38 lines)</i>
JULES (m/f).....	Very fashion forward. Addicted to phone. <i>(16 lines)</i>

BEN (m).....	16; An inventive and spunky teen. (5 lines)
COLONIST 1 (m/f).....	Just your average colonist. (2 lines)
COLONIST 2 (m/f).....	Another colonist. (2 lines)
COLONIST 3 (m/f).....	Yet another colonist. (2 lines)
SILENCE DOGOOD (f).....	Ben Franklin's pseudonym. A wise widow. (4 lines)
YANKEE DOODLE (m/f).....	A cheerful, fashionable patriot. (8 lines)
SYBIL (f).....	16; a brave young girl. (6 lines)
MESSENGER (m/f).....	Exhausted; delivering news to the Ludington family. (2 lines)
MRS. LUDINGTON (f).....	Sybil's mother. (3 lines)
MR. LUDINGTON (m).....	Sybil's father. (2 lines)
DICEY (f).....	Tenacious spy. (2 lines)
PHILLIS (f).....	Poet, enslaved person, African-American. (9 lines)
MR. WHEATLEY (m).....	Slave Owner. (2 lines)
MRS. WHEATLEY (f).....	Slave Owner. (3 lines)
COUNTESS (f).....	Wealthy English noble woman. (1 line)
EMILY (f).....	Teenage spy. (5 lines)
BRITISH SOLDIER 1 (m/f).....	A redcoat. (3 lines)
BRITISH SOLDIER 2 (m/f).....	Another redcoat. (3 lines)
BRITISH SOLDIER 3 (m/f).....	Yet another redcoat. Full of historical knowledge. (2 lines)
KID 1 (m/f).....	A playful and hard-working child. (1 line)
<b><u>EXTRAS</u></b>	
MAN (m).....	A colonial fashion model. (Non-Speaking)
WOMAN (f).....	A colonial fashion model. (Non-Speaking)
JAMES (m).....	Ben's bossy brother. (Non-Speaking)
KID 2 (m/f).....	Another playful and hard-working child. (Non-Speaking)

KID 3 (m/f) .....	Yet another playful and hard-working child. ( <i>Non-Speaking</i> )
COLONISTS (m/f) .....	Optional, any Number. ( <i>Non-Speaking</i> )
KIDS (m/f) .....	Optional, any Number. ( <i>Non-Speaking</i> )
BRITISH SOLDIERS (m/f) .....	Optional, any Number. ( <i>Non-Speaking</i> )
SYBIL'S SIBLINGS (m/f) .....	Optional, up to 12. ( <i>Non-Speaking</i> )

**DURATION:** 40 minutes.

**TIME:** Present day.

**SETTING:** A school library.

**SET:** 5 chairs, 1 table, and 1 small wastepaper basket.

### OPTIONAL DOUBLING

FATHER can double as MR. LUDINGTON, MR. WHEATLEY and MAN

LITTLE GEORGE can double as KID 1

POCAHONTAS can double as SYBIL and EMILY

BEN can double as LIBRARIAN

JAMES can double as COLONIST 1 and BRITISH SOLDIER 1

COLONIST 2 can double as BRITISH SOLDIER 2

COLONIST 3 can double as BRITISH SOLDIER 3

WOMAN can double as PHILLIS and KID 2

YANKEE DOODLE can double as MESSENGER

COUNTESS can double as DICEY and KID 3

MRS. LUDINGTON can double as SILENCE DOGOOD and MRS.

WHEATLEY

### DIRECTORS NOTES

**STAGING:** Consider having half the stage set up like the library with a table and chairs. Behind the table and chairs is a bookcase covered in books and a waste basket. This is where the five students who research colonial times will be. The other half of the stage is where the action that happens in colonial times takes place. Perhaps there is a Colonial flag hung in the background.

**ACTING NOTES:** Remind actors that women's clothing was more restrictive, especially upper class ladies' garments, like the clothing worn by the Countess or Mrs. Wheatley. Overall, these upper class ladies movements would be more prim and proper.

The colonial characters are acting out the story from the storyteller's perspective, so in some circumstances, like the story of Little George when Sidney is telling the story, they might be acting very contemporary.

### PROPS

- Various books about the Revolutionary War and colonial times
- Backpacks (Students)
- Notebook with paper (Sidney)
- A toy chainsaw (Father)
- A toy hatchet (Little George)
- Flowers, valentines, or boxes of chocolate (Suitors to Silence Dogood)
- A stick hobby horse (Colonist 3, Yankee Doodle)
- A bolt of fabric (Colonist 2)
- White wig and purse (Colonist 1)
- Paper and quill (Ben)
- Letter (Emily)
- Jump rope, hoop and stick, whirligig, broom, basket, basket with laundry, a bucket, and bundle of wood (Kids)
- Flag or drum (Yankee Doodle)

### SOUND EFFECTS

- Colonial music for pre-show
- Wood being cut
- A tree falling, followed by a loud crash
- Cannons
- Horse hooves galloping
- Period British aristocratic music when the Countess enters
- Drumming
- Chickens squawking

## COSTUMES

MALE COLONIAL CHARACTERS – dress in knee length pants, or capris with stockings, solid colored button down shirts, vests, black belts, dark dress shoes or boots, and suit jackets. Instead of stockings, you also can have them wear tights, long johns, or stretchy pants.

BRITISH SOLDIERS: Try to make them all the match. So perhaps black pants or capris, tall socks, a white button down shirt, dark dress shoes or boots, and a red jacket or red vest or red jerkin with a black sash or belt around the waist. Perhaps one is carrying a drum or a small British flag. British soldiers hats can be made from two pieces of black paper, cut the same size and stapled together to fit the head of the actor.

FEMALE COLONIAL CHARACTERS – Dressed in solid colored button up blouses and floor length skirts. Add aprons, straw hats, bonnets, shawls around the shoulders, or mop caps as accessories. Bonnets can also be made out of folded white paper, with ribbons attached to tie around the chin.

HATS – Actors can wear straw hats, or make tricorn hats by cutting out the three sides from cardstock paper, decorating, then stapling them together. Add in ring inside the hat to fit to each individual person's head.

WIGS – Wigs can also be made out of white paper. Start by making a ring of white paper. Add the ringlets by twirling strips of paper around a pencil. The crown of the wig can be created by putting strips of paper across the center of the paper ring, stapled on each side, careful to leave enough space for the head to fit. The higher and goofier the wig, the better.

MORGAN—Bohemian, artsy contemporary clothes.

ROWAN—A geek. Suspenders, glasses, a pocket protector.

SIDNEY—Athletic gear, tennis shoes. Baseball cap backward.

LIBRARIAN—Glasses. Frumpy cardigan or a plaid suit.

ADULT GEORGE—A blue jacket, white blouse, tricorn hat.

LITTLE GEORGE— A blue jacket, white blouse, tricorn hat.

FATHER—Colonial costumes.

POCAHONTAS—Dressed in a fake deerskin, beaded dress.

AVERY—Bright colors. Contemporary clothes.

JULES—Very fashionable, trendy clothes.

COLONIST 1—Colonial costume.

COLONIST 2—Colonial costume

COLONIST 3—Colonial costume

MAN—Colonial costume

WOMAN—Colonial costume

BEN—Colonial costume. A pair of his iconic bifocals.

JAMES—Colonial costume

SILENCE DOGOOD—Colonial costume

YANKEE DOODLE—Fashionable colonial costume. A feather to stick in hat.

SYBIL—Colonial costume

MESSENGER—Colonial costume

MRS. LUDINGTON—Colonial costume

MR. LUDINGTON—Colonial costume

DICEY—Colonial costume

PHILLIS—Colonial costume

MR. WHEATLEY—Colonial clothes, wealthy

MRS. WHEATLEY—colonial clothes, also wealthy

COUNTESS—Very well dressed. Pearl necklace and other jewels. A lace shawl. A fancy hat, wig, or feather in her hair. A fancy fan.

EMILY—Colonial clothing

BRITISH SOLDIER 1—A redcoat. A British soldier uniform

BRITISH SOLDIER 2—A redcoat. A British soldier uniform

BRITISH SOLDIER 3—A redcoat. A British soldier uniform

KID 1—Colonial costume

KID 2—Colonial costume

KID 3—Colonial costume

NOTE – For actresses or actors who are double or even triple cast, consider just changing one or two costume pieces to show a new character, like a new apron, hat, or a new shawl.

**AT RISE:** *There is a table with five chairs around it. Nearby is a small waste paper basket. The table is covered with various books about Colonial America and the American Revolutionary War. MORGAN is seated drawing in a sketchbook, her backpack on the ground near her. ROWAN is engrossed in a book, her backpack is nearby. SIDNEY is seated, her legs on the table. SIDNEY wads up a piece of paper.*

**SIDNEY:** She dribbles. She's surrounded on all sides. She pauses. She aims. She shoots! Will she score? The crowd holds their breath. There is silence in the stadium.

*SYDNEY throws paper wad in direction of the trash can. If she makes the shot, SIDNEY is super excited. If she doesn't make the shot, SIDNEY acts really disappointed.*

**LIBRARIAN:** *(Enters.)* No throwing paper wads in the library.

*LIBRARIAN exits. ROWAN looks up, noticing SIDNEY.*

**ROWAN:** What are you doing Sidney?

*SIDNEY wads up another sheet of notebook paper.*

**SIDNEY:** I am... er... imagining I am a shooting cannons at the Battle of Bunker Hill. It is June 17, 1775. Bunker Hill, Charlestown, Massachusetts. Cannons were aimed on the incoming Redcoats. We'll show the Brits whose country this is! Ready... aim...

*SIDNEY holds up a wad of paper and prepares to throw it towards the trashcan. ROWAN takes the wad of paper and replaces it with a book.*

**ROWAN:** Why don't you throw a few less cannons, and open a few more American History books. We need to find a great topic for our research presentation on the American Revolutionary War. Here, you can look up the Boston Tea Party.

*ROWAN hands SIDNEY another book.*

**SIDNEY:** What does sitting around and having crumpets and tea have to do with the American Revolutionary War?

**ROWAN:** The Boston Tea Party. December 16, 1773. Basically the colonists were tired of taxation without representation. So, this Tea Act was passed by the British Parliament, which gave the East India Trading Company a monopoly on tea sales in the colonies. These seventy guys, in the dead of night, boarded British ships in the Boston Harbor and threw their tea cargo into the sea.

**SIDNEY:** Sounds like a waste of tea.

**ROWAN:** They were taking a stand against unfair treatment by the British government. Wait, where did my notes on The Boston Tea Party go? Where exactly were you getting that notebook paper from?

**SIDNEY:** Take a chill pill bookworm. I already know what topic we can do our American Civil War project on.

**ROWAN:** The American Civil War happened between 1861 and 1865 and was about the southern states seceding from the northern states over slavery. Whereas the American Revolutionary War was between 1775 and 1783, and was about the 13 colonies declaring independence from British rule.

**SIDNEY:** How do you know that? Do you just sit around and memorize encyclopedias?

**ROWAN:** No, I just open a book occasionally. You should try it sometime.

*ROWAN hands SIDNEY another book.*

**SIDNEY:** Just so you know, I have been doing some serious research, four-eyes.

**ROWAN:** What riveting topic have you been researching?

**SIDNEY:** Well... for starters... the story of George Washington.

*ADULT GEORGE enters.*

**ADULT GEORGE:** (*Gets into a presidential pose.*) You may know me as the first president of the United States of America. Or that handsome guy on the one dollar bill. (*Turns head to show audience his profile.*) Yeah, check out this profile. This is my quarter face. Who was the fearless leader who led the colonies to victory against the British? Yeah, that would be me. But you might not know, my other, less presidential side. Maybe, for instance, that I have hound dogs named Tartar, Truelove, and Sweet Lips. Or that my favorite food is cream of peanut soup! Or that....

**SIDNEY:** When he was a kid.

**ADULT GEORGE:** Yes, well, excuse me.

*ADULT GEORGE looks disappointed. LITTLE GEORGE enters. He shoos ADULT GEORGE offstage.*

**ADULT GEORGE:** I'm going! I'm going!

*ADULT GEORGE exits. LITTLE GEORGE stands in the exact same presidential pose.*

**SIDNEY:** So, when George Washington was six, his father gave him this chain saw.

*FATHER enters with a toy chainsaw.*

**ROWAN:** They did not have chain saws in Colonial America. Frankly, Ben Franklin was still experimenting with electricity in colonial times. You know, the whole flying a key in a lightning storm.

**BEN:** (*Enters.*) Did you say Ben Franklin?

**LITTLE GEORGE:** No, it's about young George Washington.

**ADULT GEORGE:** (*Enters.*) Future first president of the United States of America.

**LITTLE GEORGE:** This isn't about you. Go away future me.

*BEN and ADULT GEORGE exit.*

**ROWAN:** And seriously! Giving a chainsaw? To a six year old? That's totally dangerous!

**SIDNEY:** Oh. Yeah. Whatever.

*FATHER quickly exits and enters with a toy hatchet.*

**SIDNEY:** So his father said...

**FATHER:** Hey dude, here is your hatchet or whatever.

**ROWAN:** He would not speak that way. He would say...

**FATHER:** My beloved son, George. Behold! Tis' a hatchet for your most blessed of birthdays!

*FATHER hands LITTLE GEORGE a hatchet and pats him on the head. LITTLE GEORGE holds the hatchet up proudly. FATHER exits.*

**LITTLE GEORGE:** Huzzah! Yipee!

**ROWAN:** So he said...

*LITTLE GEORGE looks really excited.*

**LITTLE GEORGE:** What a marvelous little hatchet! Behold! My amazing hatchet! I want to chop something down!

**SIDNEY:** No, he said...

**LITTLE GEORGE:** This hatchet thing totally rocks my socks off!

**SIDNEY:** So he chopped down this apple tree.

**ROWAN:** It was a cherry tree.

**SIDNEY:** Whatever. It was his dad's favorite tree.

**LITTLE GEORGE:** But why would I do that?

**SIDNEY:** That's just what he did. He chopped down his dad's favorite apple tree.

**ROWAN:** Cherry tree.

*LITTLE GEORGE swings the hatchet, pantomiming cutting down a tree. There is the sound of wood being chopped, splintering, and a tree falling. FATHER enters.*

**SIDNEY:** His dad was super mad. He said...

**FATHER:** Seriously? Dude! Why did you cut down, like, my favorite apple tree or whatever?

**ROWAN:** Cherry tree.

**FATHER:** Whatever!

**ROWAN:** And then little George replied...

**LITTLE GEORGE:** I cannot tell a lie! It 'twas I who chopped down yonder cherry tree! I humbly implore your forgiveness beloved father and take full responsibility for my actions. Do what you will father. I am your most obedient servant and repentant son.

**SIDNEY:** He would not talk that way.

**ROWAN:** Oh, so you think he would say...

**LITTLE GEORGE:** Whoa, my bad. I didn't mean to chop down your tree or whatever. Sorry pops.

**SIDNEY:** Yeah. Maybe. Anyways. So, you've heard this story before?

**ROWAN:** Yeah, when I was a little kid. Everyone knows that story. You haven't done any research at all, have you, Sidney?

**SIDNEY:** That's a historical event.

**ROWAN:** That whole "I cannot tell a lie story," is totally a myth. As in not real!

*LITTLE GEORGE and FATHER, look shocked.*

**LITTLE GEORGE:** Egads! This never happened!

**FATHER:** Zounds! How distressing!

*FATHER and LITTLE GEORGE storm offstage.*

**SIDNEY:** You can't prove that.

**ROWAN:** I can't prove the existence of fairies or the boogey man but that doesn't make them real. I'm a scientist. I need fortifiable evidence.

**SIDNEY:** Hey! Don't be so sure to write off the boogeyman.

**MORGAN:** So do you still have a nightlight in your room, Sidney? To ward away the boogeyman? *(Makes a spooky, moaning noise.)*

**SIDNEY:** That's classified information, Morgan.

**MORGAN:** Hey, didn't George Washington, you know, when he was older...

*ADULT GEORGE enters excitedly.*

**ADULT GEORGE:** Well, it's like I said in 1793, "There is no adage more true than an old Scotch one, that 'many mickles make a muckle.'" If you look to the small things in life the big things will get done too. Or perhaps it's better to offer no excuse than a bad one!

**BEN:** *(Enters.)* Well done is better than well said.

**ADULT GEORGE:** Hey! They were talking about me, George Washington, not you, Ben!

**BEN:** A penny saved is a penny earned.

**ADULT GEORGE:** Get thee gone! Egads!

**BEN:** One today is worth two tomorrows!

*ADULT GEORGE starts pushing BEN offstage.*

**BEN:** Half a truth is often a great lie! By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail!

*ADULT GEORGE pushes BEN completely offstage.*

**ADULT GEORGE:** So what were you saying about me?

**MORGAN:** So apparently George Washington had wooden teeth.

**ADULT GEORGE:** *(Touches teeth, looking irritated.)* No way! That's a lie.

**ROWAN:** That's not true, Morgan. I mean, yeah, Washington had really bad teeth. He ended up having them all pulled out by the time he was 57.

**ADULT GEORGE:** I had numerous dentures, that were constructed from various materials including: human, cow, and horse teeth, ivory, lead, tin, brass, and silver.

**SIDNEY:** Lead in your mouth? Gross! Enough with George Washington and his super gross livestock teeth! What about Betsy Ross and the first American flag? She was one savvy seamstress!

**ADULT GEORGE:** Why, in 1776, I, General George Washington, myself, visited Betsy with a flag design for our new nation. Myself and the Continental Congress had come up with the design, although Betsy added some final touches.

**ROWAN:** Maybe.

**ADULT GEORGE:** Maybe? Maybe? Betsy Ross is an excellent topic for a research presentation on the American Revolutionary War. Can you believe these kids? (*Exits.*)

**ROWAN:** Morgan. What have you been researching?

**MORGAN:** I was drawing a picture of Pocahontas.

*POCAHONTAS enters.*

**MORGAN:** She was so cool.

**POCAHONTAS:** My name is Amonute. Pocahontas is the nickname my father gave me. It means “playful one.” My father is a powerful chief. He rules over thirty tribes. But even though I am the daughter of an important chief, my life is like most girls in my village. My home is built with a sapling frame covered by reed mats or bark. Our home is one room and spacious, with a rounded ceiling and a central fire. We keep the fire burning, always. It is bad luck to let the fire go out. There were platforms, on each side of our home, for sitting or sleeping. They are very cozy, covered with deerskin or furs. I like to learn how to cook and tend to the fire, search for berries and nuts in the woods surrounding our village, and play games with my friends. The men of my village hunt deer and fish, while the women farm and gather food. We farm corn, beans, and squash. In the morning, at dawn, I like to bath at the river’s edge, before I join my friends and the women of my village. The women of my village teach me to make clay pots for cooking or twine from plant fibers. Or clothing, from animal skins. When I am older, stronger, I will scrape and tan deer hide or go canoeing in the marsh to collect reeds to make mats that will be used in our homes.

**SIDNEY:** I think I’ve heard of Pocahontas.

**ROWAN:** She saved that Englishman, Captain John Smith, right? She begged her father to let him go. She was very brave, standing up to her dad like that.

**MORGAN:** Well, not exactly. See, when Pocahontas was 12, Captain John Smith was captured and brought before her father.

**POCAHONTAS:** Captain John Smith was strange. He was not dressed in deerskins. He wore no jewelry made from shells and freshwater pearls. He had been captured and was brought before my father, to my village. John Smith was given a generous feast.

But after he had eaten his fill, warriors laid John Smith's head on two stones, as though they were going to kill him. For a few horrifying seconds, John Smith felt the full terror of facing death. I then came forward and put his head in my arms, and laid my own head upon his head. I do not think my father planned to kill John Smith. This ritual was to teach him. By bringing John Smith close to death, my father hoped for him to learn that we should think carefully before we choose the path of war or take the life of another. That our people are generous, but we are also strong. We are a fierce, powerful force to be reckoned with. We desire life and prosperity, but we will take life, if necessary. We are formidable warriors, but we are also a merciful, loving people.

**ROWAN:** Well, at least someone has done some research. But our assignment is the American Revolutionary War which was in 1775-1783 whereas Pocahontas was age 12, in 1608. So, not the same time frame.

**MORGAN:** So, we can't do a research project on Pocahontas?

**SIDNEY:** Sorry, Morgan. Although, the experience of Native Americans during the American Revolutionary War is a history worth learning! That's a good topic.

**ROWAN:** That is a good topic. Look Morgan, Pocahontas was brave and awesome. But we can't include her, unless she lead the Battle of Lexington and Concord, or something else related to the American Revolutionary War.

*POCAHONTAS shrugs and exits.*

**MORGAN:** Did George Washington lead the battle of Lexington and Concord?

*ADULT GEORGE enters, ready to talk.*

**ROWAN:** No.

*ADULT GEORGE looks dejected and leaves, again. JULES enters with AVERY.*

**JULES:** What was up with those huge white wigs they wore? I so wouldn't be caught dead in one of those!

**ROWAN:** Those are called perukes. Where were you?

**AVERY:** Sorry we're late. Just, you know, doing our civic duty for our fellow students.

**JULES:** Student council meeting.

**AVERY:** "Don't let him pull the wool over your eyes!" (*Holds up the book, she is reading from.*) It's a book of popular sayings that come from colonial times. They are really cool. Apparently, street thugs would pull the wig aka wool down over the victim's eyes in order to confuse him. "Bigwigs" were worth robbing since they could afford that bigger wig.

*COLONIST 1 enters walking across stage. COLONIST 2 enters, pulling COLONIST'S 1 wig down, blinding them, and takes their purse, then exits offstage.*

**AVERY:** The whole nine yards is another saying that originates from the colonial times. Now, a whole suit of clothes took nine yards to make. A lesser suit may not have matching vest, pants, etc. So "the whole nine yards," means that you are rich enough to buy the whole suit.

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