

# UNITED STATES CAPITOL BY REBECCA HINSON

(HISTORY/NONFICTION)

## Questions for *United States Capitol* by Rebecca Hinson

### LEVEL 1: What does it say?

#### General Understanding

- Quote accurately from the text to describe the exterior of the United States Capitol.

#### Key Details

- Identify the allegorical figures of the United States Capitol as described in the text.
- Interpret interactions between colonists and the indigenous populations as described and depicted in the text.
- Explain the actions of the Congress of the United States of America and the military of the United States of America based on the text and art.

### LEVEL 2: How does it work?

#### Vocabulary

- Determine the meaning of Congress, founders, bronze, crowns, laurel, wreath, helmet, pediment, justice, Constitution, Providence, kindled, society, expedition, maidens, mechanics, commerce, marine, patrons, encounters, expedition, claimed, halt, befriended, baptized, maintained identity, tribe, shade, treaty, resistance, blaze, settlements, proclaims, openly, campaign, Continental Congress, resigns, commander-in-chief, civilian, authority, supreme, pioneers, Continental Divide, Golden Gate, destined, seaboard, lunettes, vaulted corridors, allegorical, motifs, marble, Statuary, and vast.

#### Structure

- Compare and contrast the chronology of events in *Independence* and *United States Capitol*.

#### Author's Craft

- Analyze *United States Capitol* and the Architect of the Capitol website, noting important similarities and differences in the points of view they represent.  
<https://www.aoc.gov/us-capitol-building>

## LEVEL 3: What does it mean?

### Author's Purpose

- What particular evidence supports the author's assertion that the United States of America is a vast land of hope, liberty, justice, and freedom.

### Intertextual Connections

- Draw on information from the text, *The Real History of the American Revolution* (below), the Architect of the Capitol (below), and *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six* (below) to determine why George Washington refuses to accept the sword of Cornwallis during the British surrender at Yorktown.

#### *The Real History of the American Revolution:*

That was on October 19, 1781, the very day that the surrender was formalized with a ceremony. The Franco-American troops were arrayed in a double column one mile long, Americans on the right, Frenchmen on the left. At the head of the line, Washington sat astride his horse. At the foot of the line, Rochambeau was mounted on his. At an appointed time, Cornwallis's army began to march out of the fort, their colors cased-- tightly furled in token of surrender. Suddenly, each soldier threw down his weapon. To a man, the troops directed their gaze to the line of Frenchmen. They refused so much as to acknowledge the presence of the Americans.

Pleading illness, Cornwallis did not surrender personally to Washington, but conveyed to him his sword by the hand of General Charles O'Hara. Washington stepped aside, allowing Benjamin Lincoln, who had been forced to surrender Charleston, to accept the weapon in his stead.

#### *Architect of the Capitol:*

In the center of the scene, American General Benjamin Lincoln appears mounted on a white horse. He extends his right hand toward the sword carried by the surrendering British officer, who heads the long line of troops that extends into the background. To the left, French officers appear standing and mounted beneath the white banner of the royal Bourbon family. On the right are American officers beneath the Stars and Stripes; among them are the Marquis de Lafayette and Colonel Jonathan Trumbull, the brother of the painter. General George Washington, riding a brown horse, stayed in the background because Lord Cornwallis himself was not present for the surrender.

#### *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six:*

It was about two o'clock when the captive army advanced through the line formed for their reception. Every eye was prepared to gaze on Lord Cornwallis, the object of peculiar interest and solicitude; but he disappointed our anxious expectation; pretending indisposition, he made General O'Hara his substitute as the leader of his army. This officer was followed by the conquered troops in a slow and solemn step, with shouldered arms, colors cased and drums beating a British march. Having arrived at the head of the line, General O'Hara, elegantly mounted, advanced to his excellency the commander-in-chief, taking off his hat, and apologized for the non-appearance of Earl Cornwallis. With his usual dignity and politeness, his excellency pointed to Major-General Lincoln for directions, by who the British army was conducted into a spacious field, where it was intended they should ground their arms. . . . But there is no display of magnanimity when a great commander shrinks from the inevitable misfortunes of war; and when it is considered that Lord Cornwallis has frequently appeared in splendid triumph at the head of his army, by which his is almost adored, we conceive it incumbent on him cheerfully to participate in their misfortunes and degradations, however humiliating; but it is said he gives himself up entirely to vexation and despair.

## LEVEL 4: What does it inspire you to do?

### Opinion with Evidence or Argument

- Integrate information from *United States Capitol* and the links below in order to write or speak about the United States Capitol knowledgeably.

<https://www.aoc.gov/architecture>

<https://www.aoc.gov/art>

### Sources

Rebecca Hinson, *Independence*

Alan Axelrod, *The Real History of the American Revolution*

Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/architecture>

Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/art>

History.com, "Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown"

Henry Steele Commager & Richard B. Morris, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six*

<https://www.aoc.gov/art/historic-rotunda-paintings/surrender-lord-cornwallis>

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/cornwallis-surrenders-at-yorktown>