



## Noah Webster and His Words

By Jeri Chase Ferris

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Golden Kite Award for Nonfiction

*Webster's American Dictionary* is the second most popular book ever printed in English. But who was that Webster? Noah Webster (1758–1843) was a bookish Connecticut farm boy who became obsessed with uniting America through language. He spent twenty years writing two thousand pages to accomplish that, and the first 100 percent American dictionary was published in 1828 when he was seventy years old. This clever, hilariously illustrated account shines a light on early American history and the life of a man who could not rest until he'd achieved his dream. An illustrated chronology of Webster's life makes this a picture perfect bi-og-ra-phy [noun: a written history of a person's life].

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

K-Gr 3-Best known today for his dictionary, Webster was an important figure in early American education. As the new nation was forming, he championed the idea of standardized spellings and usage. He simplified British words, such as "plough" to "plow," and published the first American schoolbooks. This picture-book biography bursts with charm in telling Webster's story. The author puts some words into dictionary form as a reminder of Webster's claim to fame. For example, instead of a farmer, "Noah wanted to be SCHOL-AR [noun: one who goes to school; a person who knows a lot]." The watercolor-and-pencil cartoon illustrations are a perfect complement to the text. A page describing Webster's high self-confidence depicts him with a huge head. An image of young Noah nose to nose with his irritated father is both funny and telling. Primary and secondary sources are listed, as are websites for more information and activities. This informative book would be a great addition to dictionary lessons or to studies of the formation of the United States.-Lucinda Snyder Whitehurst, St. Christopher's School, Richmond, VA(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Review

"This informative book would be a great addition to dictionary lessons or to studies of the formation of the United States."

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

"A good deal more fun than the subject might suggest."

—*Booklist*

"The volume is a wonderful success in introducing Webster in such a charming manner."

—*Kirkus*

"Ferris presents a unique and inspiring cradle-to-grave biography . . . [a] useful and entertaining volume."

—*Horn Book*

"The clever text, insertion of dictionary words, and hilarious illustrations make this a perfect book for everyone who loves words. This is a book to remember!"

—*California Kids*

"Engaging."

—*Bulletin*

"It's just as timely as old-timey — a charming book about a boy who preferred to read rather than do as his forefathers did."

—*New York Times Book Review*

"Delightful, educational, and completely fascinating."

—*Huffington Post*

"What really singles out this picture book is its ability to incorporate definitions within the text without sounding contrived."

—EW.com

"A rousing success."

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

#### About the Author

Jeri Chase Ferris is the award-winning author of eleven biographies for children and young adults. She specializes in biographies of women and minorities - people who have done great and important deeds, but have been overlooked in history. "We all like to be treated fairly," Jeri says. "Many of the people I write about were not treated fairly. My books set the record straight." She lives in California. This is her first book with Houghton Mifflin. Visit her website at [www.jerichaseferris.com](http://www.jerichaseferris.com)!

Vincent X. Kirsch is the author and illustrator who has worked with publishers such as Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, and Bloomsbury USA, where artwork for his first book *Natalie and Naughtily* was accepted into the 2008 Original Art Show at the Society of Illustrators in New York. He now lives in Los Angeles, California. *Noah Webster and His Words* is his first book with Houghton Mifflin.

Visit his website at [vincentxkirsch.com](http://vincentxkirsch.com).

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