



LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

The General and the Corporal

You probably know about our first president, George Washington. Many people think of him as one of the greatest men in American history.

One winter day, while his army was building fences and cabins to make a camp in the winter, General Washington walked around to see how things were going. He walked past a man giving orders to the other men. The man giving the orders was a corporal, the lowest ranking officer in an army.

General Washington noticed that the men were struggling to lift a heavy log. The corporal shouted at the men to try harder to lift the log, but he never offered to help.

Finally, General Washington, who was very tall and strong, stepped in to help the men. Soon they lifted the log in place. He looked at the corporal and asked, "Why aren't you helping your men with this heavy lifting?"

"Why?" said the man. "I am a corporal! I am an important man."

"Oh, indeed," said Washington. "Well, I am the general, and the next time you have a log that is too heavy for your men to lift, send for me." Then he unbuttoned his coat and showed the uniform that he was wearing.

The little corporal felt terrible when he saw that it was the great General George Washington who had helped with the work. He realized something important then. Truly great men are never too great to help others.



Retold by Mary Rose

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American Book Company © 1897)

Dear Parents,

This story is written in the past tense, because it describes events that took place many years ago. But there are three places in the story that are written in the present tense: the first paragraph, which is addressed directly to the reader in the present; the dialogue between the corporal and the general; and the final sentence, which states the story's lesson. Dialogue is always written in the present tense because it conveys the words of the speaker himself as he experiences events in a particular moment in time. The lesson, or moral of the story, is in the present tense because it not connected to a particular moment in time. Help your child to recognize the difference between past tense and present tense by choosing one of these examples and contrasting it with the rest of the story. It may help your child if he or she identifies and circles the -ed verbs first. Verbs ending in -ed always indicate past tense; thus, all the -ed words in this article occur within the historical story.

Skill

Differentiating Between Past- and Present-Tense Verbs

We completed this assignment together.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)

The Questions

Verbs that end in -ed are in the past tense. List eight past tense verbs here.

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Bonus: Can you find four verbs that are in the present tense? Write them here.

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