The Blacksmith

We learned about 3 tradespeople who specialized in constructing buildings, fences and walls in Colonial America. Who remembers the different tradespeople and the materials they used to build with.

We've learned how all the tradespeople in a town were important in their own ways--everyone had a special job to do. There was one person who made it possible for many of these people to do their jobs.

The Blacksmith

What kind of job could help everyone else do their well? What kinds of tools and materials do tradespeople need to do their jobs? What tradesperson could make these tools?

Listen to see if your predictions are correct.

The Blacksmith

What do you see in this picture?

The Blacksmith

Blacksmiths were some of the most important tradespeople in town because they made all the tools people needed to do their jobs. Listen to all the things blacksmiths made, and try to guess what they are made of.

The Blacksmith

They made chisels for masons, and hammers and nails for carpenters and cobblers. They made household items like kettles, cooking pots, candleholders, and other utensils. They also made horseshoes, or the curved pieces of metal nailed to the horses' feet to protect them.

The Blacksmith

They made hinges, knives and swords, locks and keys, and much more. Do you know what any of these things are made of? You'd be surprised at the number of things people used in everyday life that came out of the blacksmith's shop!

The Blacksmith

To do his work, a blacksmith needed five basic things. He needed some metal to work with, something to heat the metal in, something to move the hot metal from one place to another, something to put it on, and something to hit it with.

The Blacksmith

Metal is a hard, shiny material that can conduct, or carry, heat and be melted and reshaped. Blacksmiths in early America worked mostly with iron. Iron is a very strong metal, but when it is heated in a fire, it becomes soft and pliable.

The Blacksmith

That means it can be shaped into whatever shape the blacksmith wants.

The Blacksmith

To heat the iron, a blacksmith used a special oven, or fireplace, called a forge. A forge is a blacksmith's oven or fireplace. Most forges were simply open fire pits, like the ones in the first picture, so that the blacksmith could work closely and easily with the metal he put in the fire. The most important thing was that the fire burned hot--so hot that it could melt metal.

The Blacksmith

Once the forge was hot enough, the blacksmith would put a piece of iron in it. Because the forge was so hot, he had to use tongs. Tongs have two long metal arms connected by a hinge.

By squeezing the two arms together, you can grab things without using your own hands. You may have tongs in your kitchen to pick up food.

The Blacksmith

You can see the blacksmith using tongs in this picture. Tongs were an essential tool for the blacksmith-almost like a second pair of hands for him! They were both necessary and important--he couldn't do his job without them!

The Blacksmith

The blacksmith would leave the iron in the forge until it was red hot, meaning that it actually got so hot that it turned bright red in the fire. Then he'd pull it out, using his tongs again, to keep from burning his hands.

The Blacksmith

After quickly removing the red-hot piece of iron from the fire, he placed it on the anvil, and started to bang away at it with his hammer. In this picture you can see the anvil--the big block of metal on which the blacksmith shaped the iron.

The Blacksmith

The blacksmith had to work quickly, because the metal was only soft and pliable when it was red hot. Once the iron cooled, it would harden.

The Blacksmith

As long as the blacksmith kept the metal hot, he could shape it however he liked. He could make the metal longer or shorter, thicker or thinner. He could bend it and mold it into special shapes. In this picture you can see how the blacksmith is shaping a horseshoe.

The Blacksmith

When he was happy with the size and shape of whatever he was making, the blacksmith would let the iron cool off, sometimes by plunging it into a bucket of cold water, and it would harden. What would make the iron harden faster, leaving it out in the air or plunging it into the cold water? Why?

The Blacksmith

Because a blacksmith lifted hammers and heavy iron pieces all day long, he was usually one of the strongest, toughest men in town. A blacksmith probably had more than his share of scars and burns from the hot metal he handled every day.

The Blacksmith

Blacksmiths were often thought of as clever and resourceful people, meaning they were able to figure out how to fix things and make things work. If a person needed a special tool for a special job, chances were the local blacksmith could figure it out and make whatever was needed.

The Blacksmith

Is anyone wondering where the name blacksmith came from? Well, the word smith comes from the word smite, which is another word hit. And, iron is black, so a blacksmith is a person who smites, or hits, black metal for a living.

The Blacksmith

Today, machines do the work of blacksmiths, melting iron in large pots and pouring the hot metal into molds, or shapes. For example, there is a mold for horseshoes. The good thing about using a mold is that no one gets burned and all the horseshoes come out the same. But we still appreciate the handmade ironwork of the blacksmiths from years ago. No town in early America was without a blacksmith; he was the essential tradesperson in every town.

The Blacksmith

Comprehension Questions:

Evaluative

Please answer in complete sentences.

Were your predictions correct about the job that helped everyone else do their jobs? Why or why not?

The Blacksmith

Comprehension Questions:

Please answer in complete sentences.

Literal

What kind of metal do blacksmiths work with?

The Blacksmith

Comprehension Questions:

Please answer in complete sentences.

Literal

Metal is hard. How is a blacksmith able to bend iron into different shapes?

The Blacksmith

Comprehension Questions:

Inferential

Please answer in complete sentences.

What are the different steps that the blacksmith used to make a horseshoe? We will go through each step together. First, start out by telling me about the forge. Next, tell me what the blacksmith did next with the tongs, the anvil, and the hammer. Last, how did he cool the hot iron quickly so that it would harden?

The Blacksmith

Comprehension Questions:

Inferential

Please answer in complete sentences.

Why was a blacksmith so important to the people in a colonial town?

Think. Pair. Share.

I'm going to ask you a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

Think. Pair. Share.

Evaluative:

The read aloud said that the blacksmith was one of the most important tradespeople in town because he made tools for everyone else. Which tradesperson do you think is most important? Why?

Word Work

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

The Blacksmith

In the read aloud you heard, "Tongs were an **essential** tool for the blacksmith--almost like a second pair of hands."

Say the word **essential** with me.
Whisper essential to the ceiling.
Whisper essential to your neighbor.
Let's clap it out.

The Blacksmith

Essential means necessary or needed and important.

Practice is essential if you want to get better at a task, such as reading or playing soccer.

The Blacksmith

Tell me about something that is essential to you. Try to use the word essential when you tell about it.

"_____ is essential to me because..."

The Blacksmith

What's the word we have been talking about?

Let's clap it out.

The Blacksmith

I am going to name some objects. Thumbs up if the object is essential to a blacksmith's work. Thumbs down if it would not be essential to a blacksmith's work.

The Blacksmith

forge

The Blacksmith

tongs

The Blacksmith

horses

The Blacksmith

cotton

The Blacksmith

anvil