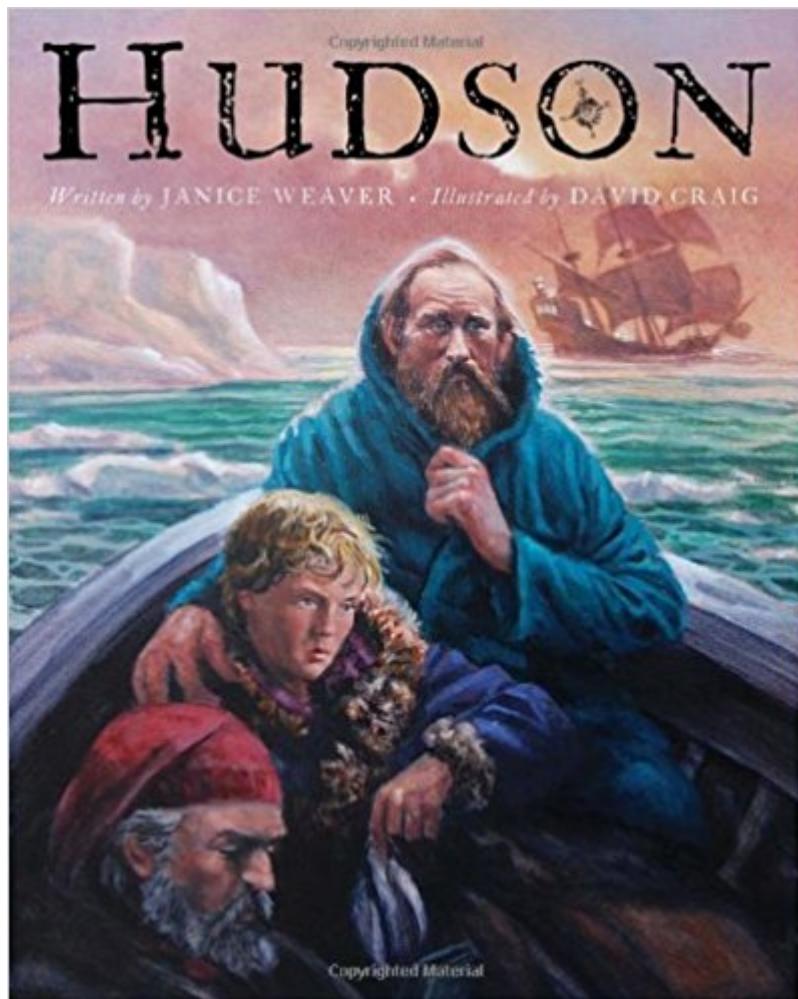


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# Hudson



## Synopsis

History has not been kind to Henry Hudson. He's been dismissed as a short-tempered man who played favorites with his crew and had an unstoppable ambition and tenacity. Although he gave his name to a mighty river, an important strait, and a huge bay, today he is remembered more for the mutiny that took his life. The grandson of a trader, Hudson sailed under both British and Dutch flags, looking for a northern route to China. Although none of his voyages led to the discovery of a northwest passage, he did explore what is now Hudson's Bay and what is now New York City. Whatever his personal shortcomings, to sail through dangerous, ice-filled waters with only a small crew in a rickety old boat, he must have been someone of rare courage and vision. In *Hudson*, Janice Weaver has created a compelling portrait of a man who should be remembered not for his tragic end, but for the way he advanced our understanding of the world.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 3-6  In Weaver's take on this oft-celebrated explorer, Hudson is portrayed as merely a human being, with positive and negative characteristics; his dogged determination to find a water passage to Asia, despite constant failure, is both admirable and quixotic. The author gives enough detail to bring the story to life without overloading children with information, a downfall all too common in other books about Hudson. She emphasizes the bits of the story with the most kid

appeal—âœharsh living conditions on the ships, battles with Native Americans, and the mutinous crew that eventually abandoned Hudson and his supporters. This book is also visually engaging: Craig's original, full-page paintings are vibrantly hued, and the print is well laid out on white or pale earth-toned pages. The most similar book, Jean Elizabeth Goodman's *Beyond the Sea of Ice: The Voyages of Henry Hudson* (Mikaya, 1999), has more content but an excruciatingly unreadable font and layout. Where it excels is with its simple but adequately labeled foldout map, with which readers can follow Hudson's expeditions; the only map in Hudson is in the front of the book and only the continents are labeled. Its compelling text and beautiful paintings still make for a good read, but the lack of a practical map dulls its shine. *Rebecca Dash, New York Public Library* © Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

\*Starred Review\* Failure is not usually at the heart of an exciting adventure story, but this dramatic picture-book biography about Henry Hudson, who discovered neither the new land nor the passage to Asia he sought, makes the explorer's lack of success a gripping read. The text even states that Hudson was at least partly to blame for all the trouble on his ships, which led his crew to mutiny and set him adrift, never to be seen again. At the same time, Weaver emphasizes that in pushing through the strait and into the great bay that both now bear his name, Hudson helped draw the map of North America and advanced our understanding of the world. Throughout, Weaver is clear about what is fact and what is supposition, and the tumultuous early-seventeenth-century history is meticulously documented, while text boxes discuss related subjects such as scurvy, the whaling industry, the struggle to find a quicker route to the riches of the Far East, and Hudson's journal accounts of his mainly friendly encounters with Native Americans. Craig's glowing period portraits, landscapes, and watercolors of the ship in dangerous seas intensify the drama, and archival prints and maps add interest. An appended reference section leads to accessible online resources for students who want to dive further into the explorer's life story. Grades 3-6. --Hazel Rochman

Janice Weaver's "Hudson" is an interesting and quick paced history of the explorer that is really reader-friendly. She immediately grabbed my attention by her lively prose and the fact she didn't waste my time boring me with dates, but instead focused upon those things that students of history, or beginning history readers, are going to find interesting. Things like scurvy, rebellion, scheming, starving, being shot through the neck with an arrow, and jail time. Since I was trained as an historian I can be pretty critical as to how material is handled, but I've got no complaints here. The author

doesn't just pretend that we know everything there is to know about Hudson, the way some textbooks do. Instead she explains to the reader that there are large gaps in Hudson's timeline, and that we don't even know what he looks like. At the end Ms. Weaver further endeared herself to me by suggesting that young readers look to the primary sources of Hudson's time -- like Hudson's and Juet's logs -- rather than other textbooks. This is the only way, in my opinion, to ever grow a love of the study of history. **THE SKINNY:::** "Hudson" is a beautiful book. The cover is especially nice as it has full color images just like the jacket, instead of being just plain with a title. The jacket is really cool in that there's an excellent map of Hudson's voyages on the inside. Ms. Weaver presents a quick, but thorough mini-history of Hudson that focuses on the important aspects of his journeys and the reasons for them, rather than boring old dates. She does a good job of making the dangers and discomfort of those early sea voyages come alive. I like that there are breakouts in this book which discuss side-issues like scurvy, whaling, and mermaids. The approach is kid-friendly and would be suitable for history classes or anyone interested in Hudson. The Reading Level is 4.0 or at the entering Fourth Grade level. [Pam T!booksforkids-reviews](#)

*Hudson* written by Janice Weaver and illustrated by David Craig provides an excellent introduction to the life of Henry Hudson. This beautifully illustrated book provides factual information about Hudson's life in an interesting way. The combination of photographs of artifacts, era paintings, historical maps, and new illustrations by David Craig add depth to the visual aspects of the book. Hudson's story is told chronologically through a series of short, focused chapters. The author is careful to point out that little factual information is known about his life, so the narrative focuses on those elements that have been established through history. I was particularly drawn to information that's often overlooked in books for young people. Half and whole page informational boxes woven throughout the book provide insights into the time period, tools, or other interesting background content. For instance, the author explains that we really don't know what the explorer looked like because the paintings of him were created by people who never met him. Long sentences and some complex language may limit the appeal of the book for younger researchers. However middle grade students investigating explorers will find the text very useful for projects. Pages about historical sites and monuments, suggestions for additional reading, and a useful index are found at the end of the book. Overall, *Hudson* is an excellent example of quality writing for young people.

I gave this book first to my 9 year old, and she devoured it, rating it a 7 out of 10 (since she mainly likes fantasy fiction, that's a pretty good rating for a nonfiction book). I have to say I was pleased to

receive it, as there is a mystifying dearth of good books on this subject for this age group. Hudson's story is fascinating, and well-told in the book, along with informative sidebars and attractive illustrations, though I must say that at times the relationship between the illustrations and the nearby text was a little hard to discern. Definitely a valuable book for the 8-12 age group.

Henry Hudson's life and times are captured in a lovely picturebook biography, illustrated by David Craig and focusing on a man who should be remembered for his contributions to discovery. Hudson explored Hudson's Bay and what is now New York City: this reviews his achievements in a compelling story of how Hudson made discoveries in the course of seeking something different. Good reading skills will lend to appreciation of the story for kids in grades 3-4.

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