

How to...

Use the *Roadmap* Podcasts

Among the unique features of the *Roadmap* curriculum that accompanies *America: The Last Best Hope* are the audio podcasts that can be accessed for each chapter (in both the “Teacher View” and Student View” sections of the site – under “Chapter Media”).

There are one or two podcasts for each chapter. One is a chapter introduction. The other is a “Beyond the Chapter” podcast. These podcasts give students the opportunity to hear directly from the author, William J. Bennett, and even more importantly to have him enter their classroom for an informal “conversation.”



One of Dr. Bennett’s great gifts is his ability to communicate.
Listening to these podcasts will make that clear.

Chapter Introductions

The chapter introduction podcasts are essentially the same as the chapter introductions in the text, although the author sometimes includes additional points of emphasis. Classes might play these and read along with the text while listening to the audio.

After the podcasts, teachers can ask students what names, places, or events in the introduction are familiar. What details concerning the events in the introduction do they already know? Is there any foreshadowing in the introduction? If so, what do students anticipate will happen regarding the people or events introduced by the author?

Another possibility is to listen to the chapter introduction podcast (while reading along in the book) *after* the class has read the chapter. Then teachers can ask students what important events or people from the chapter were *not* included in the podcast. Why? Did the introduction truly capture the chapter's main ideas? What else might have been emphasized?

"Beyond the Chapter" Podcasts

The "Beyond the Chapter" podcasts give Dr. Bennett a chance to discuss things not necessarily covered in the chapter: perhaps an additional story or two or questions about issues that deserve further and deeper discussion. Teachers should preview these podcasts before playing them for the class to decide how they can best be utilized.

The "Beyond the Chapter" podcasts are designed to be played *after* students have read the given chapter. That being the case, they can work well as either class **openers** to get students talking about the chapter, or as class **closure** activities to bring together key ideas, concepts, or issues that have been covered in the book or through class instruction.

Each "Beyond the Chapter" podcast is only a few minutes long, so one suggestion is to play the podcast in its entirety, then go back and play it again, using the pause feature to solicit student reaction.

- Pause whenever the author mentions a person or term students should know and check their knowledge and understanding of the material by asking them to elaborate and add information they gleaned from reading the chapter.
- Pause when the author asks a question the students can discuss. Get their reaction and ask further questions to stimulate the discussion. In this way, they are actually having a conversation with Dr. Bennett, the author of *Last Best Hope*.
- At the conclusion of the podcast, teachers might also ask students to restate Dr. Bennett's main points. To do this, ask students to write down at least three main points as they are listening.

By listening to both the chapter introduction podcasts and the "Beyond the Chapter" podcasts, students will gain deeper insight into Dr. Bennett's process and thinking as he took the broad story of American history and captured the most important and significant aspects of that story in the two volumes of *America: The Last Best Hope*.