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Teaching American History

The Enduring Legacy of the American Revolution

First Proposal: This lesson will focus on the significance of writers/leaders of the eighteenth century and the impact that their perspectives of liberty had on the people and events during the American Revolutionary period. Consideration will be given as well to how their written correspondences have continued to influence people throughout our United States history to the present. This lesson will also highlight the relationship between the art of persuasive writing and the emerging leaders for liberty. Primary sources will be analyzed and used as evidence to illustrate the beliefs held by leaders of the Revolutionary War era.

Grade level: Grade 5

Seminar Impact: The summer session of this seminar has been tremendously worthwhile for me as a classroom teacher. This seminar has given me the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues at the elementary through high school levels sharing relevant and creative ideas. The time to research the numerous websites relative to the topic of the Revolution was valuable and the new information, sites and sources will enhance my elementary social studies curriculum and directly benefit my students. Throughout this course, which included presentations from authors and educators, field studies and discussions, I have come to appreciate the incredible impact the people and the events of the past have had on us as Americans and how their influence continues to affect our country's present and future. I look forward to presenting the wealth of information I have learned and accumulated from this course with my students.

Central Questions:

- What are some reasons and ways writers of the eighteenth century emerged as leaders of the American Revolution?
- What ideas about liberty and freedom from American Revolutionary documents, letters, songs and poems inspired Americans to rebel?
- What ideas about liberty and freedom from writers of the eighteenth century continue to influence Americans today?

Challenge Questions:

- From the perspective of either a Patriot or a Loyalist, what are some of the persuasive reasons for rebelling against or supporting the King of England?
- What affects would today's modern technology and methods of communication have had on an event(s) during the Revolution?
- **Lesson Length:** Two school weeks (10 days during Language Arts or Social Studies periods.)

Key Ideas:

- Communication during the eighteenth century was primarily through oral or written form
- The art of writing and speaking was critical to influencing people and events of the American Revolution
- Individuals who were proficient as writers or speakers emerged as leaders of that era
- An aptitude to communicate continues into the 21st century to be a vital component in persuading others and emerging as a leader

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Understand the importance of oral and written expression and how these forms of communication greatly influenced the outcome of many events during this time by researching writers'/leaders' lives and writings
- Recognize key elements of persuasive writing used by some eighteenth century writers and apply to the student's own persuasive pieces
- Compare and contrast the modes of communication during the American Revolution with the present methods
- Find examples of documents, letters, songs that influenced an event of this period or continue to inspire individuals of today in the quest for liberty
- Gather new information about events and perspectives of people during this period by reading books such as The Declaration of Independence, The Preamble to the Constitution, or novels such as The Winter of Red Snow

National History Standards:

Era 3: Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820)

- **Standard 1:** The causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory.
- **Standard 2:** The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society
- **Standard 3:** The institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Vermont Standards:**H&SS 5-6:1 Students initiate an inquiry by:**

- Asking relevant and focusing question that will lead to independent research based on what they have seen, what they have read, what they have listened to, and/or what they have researched.

H&SS 5-6:2 Students develop a hypotheses, thesis, or research statement by:

- Using prior knowledge, relevant questions, and facts to develop a prediction and/or propose an explanation or solution.

H&SS 5-6:3 Students design research by:

- Identifying the quality and quantity of information needed including primary and secondary resources.
- Identifying tools, tasks, and procedures needed for conducting an inquiry, including a plan for citing sources.
- Determining possible ways to present data (report).

H&SS 5-6:4 Students conduct research by:

- Locating relevant materials such as print, electronic, or human resources.
- Describing evidence and recording observations using notecards, journals

H&SS 5-6:5 Students develop reasonable explanations that support the research statement by:

- Organizing and displaying information, in a manner appropriate to the research statement through narratives, posters, timelines, models, maps, or dramatizations.

H&SS 5-6:10 Students show understanding of the past, present, and future time by:

- Identifying the beginning, middle, and end of an historical narrative or story.
- Identifying an important event in the United States and/or world, and describing multiple causes and effects of that event.
- Explaining transitions that occurred over time as well as those that occurred as a result of pivotal event.

H&SS 5-6:13 Students analyze how and why cultures continue and change over time by:

- Describing the contributions of various cultural groups to the world, both past and present.
- Identifying ways in which culture in the United States and the world has changed.

Preparation for Teaching:

- **Read/discuss events during the eighteenth century focusing on The American Revolution in Social Studies text, Language Arts text**

Primary Sources:

- <http://www.earlyamerica.com/> (Archiving Early America)
- <http://www.footnote.com/searchdocuments.php?query=letters+about+liberty+from+King+George#443124> (Correspondence about Freedom and Liberty from Britain)
- http://www.amreonline.org/museum/main_page.cgi (American Revolution letters, biographies, etc.)
- <http://www.masshist.org/education/> (Letters from Abigail to John Adams)

Secondary Sources:

- Build Our Nation, Houghton Mifflin, 1997 (Unit 4,5, and 6)
- <http://www.history.org/media/audio.cfm> (Audio and text of Patrick Henry's speech)

Activities:

- Read The Declaration of Independence by Sam Finke and illustrate portions of the document for meaning

- Read The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States by Sam Finke and illustrate portions of the document for meaning
- Research an historical leader's life and their writings and/or correspondence using a variety of primary sources to then write a biographical report with emphasis on their opinions of liberty and revolution
- Use biographical sketch of a Revolutionary leader/writer to prepare a display of books, artifacts, models for the presentation of the Wax Museum
- Write "Letters of Correspondence" between the Castleton College History students and fifth grade students discussing selected events of the Revolution
- Read letters of correspondence between Abigail and John Adams and answer constructed responses about daily life and emotions they experienced.
- Read The Winter of Red Snow by Kristianna Gregory. Answer Constructed Responses, other comprehension and vocabulary questions
- Write a "Response to Literature" writing portfolio piece based on The Winter of Red Snow
- Compare and contrast modes of communication of the eighteenth century with present day methods using a Venn Diagram
- As an integrated math lesson following the study of events and writings of leaders during the Boston Tea Party, students will taste samples of tea flavors, collect data, and create percent circle graphs
- As an integrated math activity, use information about the monetary system of the eighteenth century and calculate

Assessment:

- **Wax museum presentations/projects**
- **Letters of Correspondence with college students rubric**
- **Writing portfolio: Response to Literature**
- **Writing portfolio: Reports**
- **Student Journals responding to Constructed Responses**

Accommodations

- Students work with a partner or in small groups
- Class discussions prior to students' independent work
- Modify assignments to meet needs of student

Annotated Bibliography

Adams, John, Abigail Adams and edited by Margaret A. Hogan and C. James Taylor. *My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2007

This book includes over 280 unedited letters of correspondence between John Adams and his wife, Abigail that are organized chronologically beginning in October of 1762 when

the couple began courting and end in February 1801. The information gathered from these letters pertains to aspects of their personal relationship, their concerns for their family, as well as their individual perspective about the events and political affairs of the country's fight for independence and creation of a new government. The book can be used as a good source of interesting information to share with grade five and up students that would help them gain a broader understanding of these famous individuals and perhaps see them as "real" persons coping with issues of their time. The time line of major events of the American Revolution at the end of the book is also useful and shows how John and Abigail were involved in those events.

Schmittroth, Linda and edited by Lawrence W Baker and Stacy A. McConnell. *American Revolution Primary Sources Edition 1 (American Revolution Reference Library)*. Farmington Hills, MI: U.X.L. an imprint of The Gale Group. 2000

Linda Schmittroth has included thirty-two primary source pieces from documents, letters, narrative, satirical piece, and other pamphlets beginning with the Stamp Act and ending with General George Washington's farewell address. Each primary source includes information to give students good background knowledge and helps the student understand the historical significance of that primary source. Other interesting facts about the particular time or events are included as well and a concluding piece of what events happened later and the impact that particular primary source may have had on the people and events of that time. This book is very useful source for grades 5 and up because each primary source has a short summarization provided by Schmittroth that helps for better understanding. A vocabulary list of defined words used throughout the book is included at the beginning and also ensures greater understanding for students.

McCullough, David. *1776*. New York, NY 2005: Simon & Schuster.

David McCullough applies his narrative skills to tell the history of the first year of America's war for independence from Britain. General Washington, a commander-in-chief who never had led an army in battle is the main focus in the book. However, the citizen-soldiers of the Continental Army's fortitude and patriotism are represented as these soldiers fight the well trained and equipped British led by General Howe. McCullough portrays the Revolution as experienced by not only patriots such as Nathanael Greene and Henry Knox, but by the American Loyalists, politicians, and families in the paths of war. McCullough presents accounts of important battles such as the Siege of Boston and the Battle of Brooklyn as both armies face the difficult terrain, the horrible weather, and limited supplies. The book includes drawings, maps, letters, and portraits that make the book a very useful source to use in grade 5 or above social studies unit on the American Revolution. As a teacher, the detailed information was

helpful in adding greater pieces of information to the very basic information provided in the social studies textbook.

Miller, Brandon Marie . *Declaring Independence: Life during the American Revolution (Peoples History)*. Minneapolis, MI: Lerner Publication Company. 2005

Declaring Independence: Life During the American Revolution, includes first-hand accounts of colonists both Loyalists and Patriots during the American Revolutionary period as well as official documents and contemporary writings. This book is an excellent source of information and can be used by grade 5 students and older as they are researching particular events or documents of this time period between Britain's annoyance with the colonies to George Washington's Farewell Address.

Berkin, Carol. *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence*. New York: Vintage Books; A Division of Random House, Inc. 2005

Very little attention by writers and historians has been given, until the late 1900's in regard to the important roles played by the courageous women of the Revolutionary War period. In her book, Revolutionary Mothers, Women in Struggle for America's Independence, the author, Carol Berkin does "Remember the Ladies", and portrays the conflicts, sacrifices, and challenges faced by women of this time. Berkin describes the tales of ordinary women from three distinctive groups: the white English, the Native American, and the African American. She examines how their differing gender roles in their cultures, their personal struggles, and society's perspectives of their "rightful place" in the community defined the challenges they encountered during this war. Wartime circumstances awaken a new recognition of women's capacities and equalizes the gender roles and although the dramatic transformations of women's responsibilities that occur in the political, economic, and family arenas during the war quickly regress to traditional perspectives of a woman's place in society, Berkin acknowledges that this Revolution did give rise to a gradual recognition that change had begun. This book is an excellent source for a teacher and the information and perspective of women and their challenges they met during this time period is critical to discuss with students as they study the American Revolutionary period.

Shetterly, Robert. *Americans Who Tell The Truth*. New York, NY 2005: Dutton Children's Books: A division of Penguin Young Readers Group.

Artist Robert Shetterly combines thought-provoking quotes and short biographies with fifty portraits of famous Americans such as Mark Twain, Rachel Carson, Chief Joseph, Rosa Parks, Woody Guthrie, and more. This book is an excellent introduction to begin discussions with children about truth, integrity, and patriotism. It was very useful as a

source for my fifth grade class when the students were in the process of selecting a famous American to research for their wax museum project: *A Timeline of American History*.

Delano, Marfe Ferguson. *National Geographic: American Heroes*. Washington D.C. 2005: National Geographic Society.

Marfe Ferguson Delano is an author of thirteen books for National Geographic and Dr. Robert D. Johnston, who wrote the introduction is Associate Professor and Director of the Teaching of History Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is also the author of National Geographic's *The Making of America: The History of the United States from 1492 to the Present*. In *American Heroes*, Delano has included a selection of profiles of both famous as well as unsung heroes from American history. The book includes timelines, historic photo essays and fact boxes for easy reference. It is an excellent source for both teacher and students from grades 5 and up to use while researching people who have played significant roles in the United States destiny.

Hoose, Phillip. *We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History*. Farrar Straus Giroux, New York. 2001: Melanie Kroupa Books.

Phillip Hoose uses primary sources such as first-person accounts, journals, and interviews to tell the stories about the roles of more than seventy young people that have played in America's destiny. Hoose includes compelling stories of a young people throughout the United States history from the late 1400's through the 1900's. The story of a slave kidnapped from Africa, the accounts of two drummer sisters in the War of 1812, and a young girl's experience of being hosed by police during the Birmingham civil rights march are some examples. The book also includes fact boxes, quotes and a concluding paragraph stating what happened to that particular person years later. Not only a great reference book but a book that would be interesting for fifth grade and older students to read.

Gregory, Kristina. *Winter of Red Snow*. Scholastic, Inc. 1996.

In the fictionalized diary of an eleven-year old Abigail Jane Stewart, a very vivid portrayal of what it may have been like to have family, friends, and neighbors meet the challenges of living near George Washington and his troop's encampment in Valley Forge during the memorable winter of the American Revolution gives students from grades 4 and up a better understanding of the impact of this war had on colonial families.

Students could relate to the hardships of this time and compare with their own lives today. Google the title of this book and several student activities, comprehension questions and vocabulary are available.

Bobrick, Benson. *Fight for Freedom: The American Revolutionary War*. New York, New York: Scholastic INC. 2007

Fight for Freedom: The American Revolutionary War is an excellent reference book for students from grade 5 and older who may just be beginning to research. The short summaries of people and events of the American Revolution give the basic facts, as well as some primary paintings, and maps. The easy-to-use book also offers other areas and sources to research such as Internet sources on this topic.

Wax Museum

Name _____

Wax Museum Topic _____

Date of Wax Museum _____

Research: (Use all resources; books, encyclopedias, Internet etc. Keep a running list of all bibliography.

Take notes and find evidence to support the following:)

- **Who:** (Name of famous person)_____
- **What:** (Find interesting facts about what this person did as a leader.)
- **When:** (When did this person live? When did certain important events take place?)
- **Where:** (Describe place(s) where this person lived. Also find details where certain important events took place.)
- **Why/How:**
(Find evidence to show how and why this person became famous. How did this person impact the events of their era? What challenges did this person meet? How did these achievements affect others and help this person to be remembered today?)

___ **Write a paragraph to summarize the facts**

___ **Memorize your paragraph**

___ **Choose a costume to wear**

___ **Make a poster or display board of pictures about your topic**

___ **Collect props and books to display.**

___ **Design a brochure (in school)**

Wax Museum Outline

Name _____

Date _____

First Draft Outline

Introduction

Name/ famous person from what century

Background facts about life

Other interesting facts

Focus statement: "I am famous for _____ and also remembered for the many (letters, speeches, quotes, books etc) that influenced the people and events of my time.

Accomplishments

- A. First accomplishment / and how this impacted the people and events of that time. Elaborate with details.
- B. Second accomplishment/ and how this impacted the people and events of that time. Elaborate with details.
- C. Third accomplishment/ and how this impacted the people and events of that time. Elaborate with details.
- D. Conclusion about accomplishments

Influential Communicator

- A. Quote that influenced people or events of that time/ how it did/ what it means
- B. Quote that influenced people or events of that time/ how it did/ what it means
- C. Quote that influenced people or events of that time/ how it did/ what it means
- D. Conclusion about this person as an influential communicator

Conclusion

Letter to Parents about Wax Museum Project

Dear Parent(s),

In Language Arts, students have started to research a famous person in US history. They are using many resources such as books, encyclopedias, and the Internet. As they take notes they are finding interesting background information about this individual. They are also trying to find evidence on how this person was an influential communicator. They can use quotes from speeches, letters, or other writings that show how this individual made an impact on the major events of their era.

As part of the Wax Museum project, students will write a research report, memorize important parts of their report, dress in character of their famous person, create a display of pictures, models, artifacts, maps, and/or photos etc., and have fun performing their part as a wax figure in a museum. On the back of this sheet is an outline of the project. Your child should have its own copy as well.

Your support in this project is welcomed. Please help your child find a simple costume and/or props that depict their famous person. A 3-paneled display board (About \$3-4 at Staples or WalMart) can be used as a great background for the collection of pictures, maps, etc. Once their report has been written, help your child memorize and practice it at home.

An exact date for the "opening " of the Wax Museum presentation will be announced later, but display boards, artifacts, and costume will be due by _____ . Please send in the costume and items etc in a box with your child's name clearly printed on it. Completed display boards should also be labeled.

The Wax Museum will be open to visitations from various grade levels. The presentation also will be taped and a Castleton State College history class that consists of teachers/administrators will also view portions of it. The museum will be open for a special parent day but date and time will be announced later.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,