

On the Road to Revolution: Creating a Living Timeline

Overview

Students will learn about the road to the American Revolution through a living timeline activity highlighting British actions and American reactions. After understanding the origins of the Revolution, students will independently research major military engagements of the War. Finally, students will be responsible for teaching their classmates what they have learned about the American Revolution.

Grade

5

North Carolina Essential Standards

- 5.H.1.3- Analyze the impact of major conflicts, battles and wars on the development of our nation through Reconstruction.

Materials

- Excerpt from *Declaration of Independence* (attached)
- Road to the American Revolution Living Timeline, assignment and worksheets attached
- Revolutionary War Battle Brochures, assignment sheet attached; supplies for this project include:
 - Computers with internet access
 - Markers, colored pencils, crayons
 - Computer or art paper
 - Art supplies (colored pencils, markers, etc.)
 - Printer (optional)

Essential Questions

- What was the Declaration of Independence and why was it written?
- Why did the American colonies choose to separate from Great Britain?
- What were some of the major battles of American Revolution?
- How did those battles influence the overall outcome?

Duration

Two 90-minute class periods (Day 2 is optional)

Student Preparation

Students should have a basic understanding of colonies and their relationship to their “mother country.” Students should also have a basic understanding of the Declaration of Independence.

Procedure

Day 1

Declaration of Independence Analysis

1. As a warm up, project onto the board and copy/hand out the attached Declaration of Independence excerpt. Tell students to silently read the document. Direct the students to write down or underline any words they do not understand. (If necessary, include a list of words and their definitions that students may have difficulty understanding.) After allowing a few minutes of silent exploration, have the students complete a choral reading of the document. Finally, project the following questions for students to discuss and answer with a partner:
 - What are our unalienable rights? (*Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness*)
 - How are these rights preserved? (*Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed*)
 - What do you think consent of the governed means? (*People agree to the government that serves them.*)
 - When can people abolish the government? (*If the government fails to protect people's unalienable rights.*)
 - Why are the colonies rebelling against Great Britain? (*History of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.*)
2. Once the pairs have completed discussion, review the answers as a class. Finally, ask students to ponder:
 - Why was the Declaration of Independence created? What events lead up to the creation of this document?

Road to the American Revolution Living Timeline

3. Tell students that they will be exploring the events that led to the Declaration of Independence in today's lesson. Divide the class into the following nine topic groups (ideally consisting of three students per group):
 - Proclamation of 1763
 - 1763: Passed after French and Indian War, halted colonial expansion west of the Appalachian Mountains. This was done to appease the Native Americans. It angered colonists who were eager to search for new opportunities in territories gained from victory over the French.
 - Sugar Act
 - 1764: Passed to pay off war debt. Imposed taxes on sugar and other goods colonists imported from England. Colonists upset by "taxation without representation."
 - Stamp Act
 - 1765: Placed taxes on various paper goods (legal documents, etc). Eventually repealed due to protests.
 - Townshend Act
 - 1767: Taxed a number of items the colonies import. Colonists respond by boycotting British goods.
 - Boston Massacre
 - 1770: British troops fire on and kill five colonists. John Adams defends soldiers in court and they are found not guilty. Colonists' resentment towards the British increases. The Townshend Acts, except for a tax on tea, are repealed due to boycotts.

- Tea Act
 - 1773: Tea from the East India Company could be shipped directly to the American Colonies without going through London first, but when they arrived in America the Townshend Tax would be applied. Colonists actually would pay less for tea through the Tea Act, but they felt it was still unfair to apply the Townshend Act. Colonists respond by staging the Boston Tea Party, dumping crates of British tea into the Boston Harbor.
- Intolerable (Coercive) Acts
 - 1774: A result of the Boston Tea Party. England tried to reassert control over the Colonies by passing a series of harsh laws which included: closing Boston's port; installing a military governor in Massachusetts and revoking their colony charter; British officials charged with capital offenses could go to England for trial; and arrangement for housing British troops in American houses was revived.
- First Continental Congress Meets
 - 1774: Convened as a response to the Intolerable Acts. Delegates from the Colonies meet to create a list of grievances and petition the King to fix those grievances. They did not advocate independence.
- Lexington and Concord
 - 1775: British forces attempting to destroy munitions at Concord are met by a group of Colonist Minutemen in Lexington. Shots were exchanged and the Minutemen fell back to Concord. The British marched on to Concord and later were met by more Minutemen who forced their retreat back to Boston. Provided a morale boost for the Colonists who defeated the vaunted British military in battle. These were the opening battles of the American Revolution.

4. Once students are seated with their groups, pass out the attached Road to the American Revolution Living Timeline instructions and blank timeline. Go over the steps with students.

- The purpose of this project is to learn about the major events that led up to the American Revolution. Your group will be focusing on researching and presenting the topic assigned to you.
- You must include the following information in your presentations:
 - The year the event occurred
 - Definition/explanation of the event in a few sentences
 - Describe what the impact of the event was and/or how Colonists reacted to the event
- Within your groups, you will each assume one of the following roles: researcher, prop maker, and actor.
 - **Researcher:** Leads the group in answering the above questions using your textbook and other resources available in the classroom (books, computers, handouts, notes, etc.). Researchers will use a blank piece of notebook paper to record the following information, which will be turned in:
 - Group members names
 - Group topic
 - Summary of answers regarding group topic.
 - **Prop Maker:** Creates props (costume pieces, accessories, etc.) to enhance presentation
 - **Actor:** Creates a short 2 – 3 minute sketch that explains your topic to the class, ensuring the required information is conveyed; presents this information as part of the living timeline.

- The way in which each presentation is delivered will be determined by each group's creativity. Examples may include: acting as a colonial character who delivers the information conversationally or in a monologue; singing a jingle or rap; etc.
 - When each group is finished working, all actors will stand in chronological order in front of the room and present their sketches for the timeline, one at a time. While the actors are presenting, the rest of the class will fill in their blank timelines.
5. When the groups have completed their research, props, and verbal sketches, direct everyone to return to their seats (except for the actors). Have the actors place themselves in chronological order in front of the class. During this time explain to the remainder of the class that they should fill out their timeline with the following information: event, date event occurred, significance of the event. (Students who are presenting as timeline actors can have a classmate fill out their form.)
 6. Before the actors begin, go over respectful audience behavior with the class. Also, instruct the timeline actors to freeze themselves in a particular stance. When it is their turn to share their information, they will unfreeze and speak/move. Once finished, they should refreeze. This will let the student next in line know to unfreeze and begin. Repeat the process until all actors have presented their part of the timeline. Remind the rest of class to fill out their timeline worksheets throughout.
 7. Once all of the presentations have concluded, allow the audience to ask the actors to repeat any information they may have missed.
 8. Reread the section of the Declaration of Independence from the warm up and discuss the following questions at the conclusion of the presentations.
 - What were some of the "injuries and usurpations" that were discussed in the Declaration of Independence?
 - Why did the colonists feel it was necessary to rebel from England and create a new government?

Day 2 (optional project)

Revolutionary Battle Brochures

9. Hand out the attached brochure assignment sheet to go over with students. The way this project is to be completed is entirely up to the teacher. You may randomly assign battles to individual students or allow them to choose their own topic. Once students have completed their brochures, they can either turn them in for a grade or class time can be devoted for them to share their brochures, thus teaching one another about the various battles. This can be done in a jigsaw activity or by creating groups for each battle and having the groups collectively present their brochures to the class.
10. After reviewing the assignment sheet with students and letting them know whether or not they will be presenting their brochures to class, pass out blank sheets of paper on which students will create their final brochure. Show the students how to fold their paper into three columns.

(Teachers should also let students know if they are allowed to use a computer to design, and thus print, their final brochures.)

11. Assign battles such as:
 - Battle of Bunker Hill
 - Battle of Saratoga
 - Battle of Valley Forge
 - Battle of Brooklyn or Long Island (Referred to as both)
 - Battle of Trenton
 - Battle of Yorktown
 - Battle of King's Mountain
12. Let students know how much class time (if any) they will have to work on their brochures, as well as the due date for their final brochure.
13. If students are sharing their brochures with one another on the due date, options for sharing include:
 - Jigsaw Method: group the students so that one brochure of each battle assigned is represented in each group. Have the students share their brochures and ask each other questions about what they have learned. Teachers may also want to have students take notes on each battle they learn about.
 - Group Method: Place all students who worked on the same battle in a group; have them work together to prepare a presentation to present to the remainder of class on their battle. Allow the class to ask questions of the group after their presentation.

Optional: To assess what the students have learned about the major battles, have each student submit one or two multiple choice questions based on their battle. Compile these into a quiz or test for all the students to complete.

Additional Activities

- Have students present their timeline for younger students, parents, the community, etc. during an open house event. Students can enhance their presentations by wearing colonial costumes.
- Have students compare the fighting styles of the British and American troops. Explain why each group fought the way they did.
- Compare the pre and post-Revolutionary governments. How did the post-Revolutionary government seek to prevent the injustices mentioned in the Declaration of Independence?

Excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

On the Road to Revolution: Create a Living Timeline

The purpose of this project is to learn about the major events that led up to the American Revolution. Your group has been assigned the topic of _____ to research and present.

- You must include the following information in your presentations:
 - The year the event occurred
 - Definition/explanation of the event in a few sentences
 - Describe what the impact of the event was and/or how Colonists reacted to the event

- Within your groups you will each assume one of the following roles:
 - **Researcher:** Leads the group in answering the above questions using your textbook and other resources available in the classroom (books, computers, handouts, notes, etc.). Researchers will use a blank piece of notebook paper to record the following information, which will be turned in:
 - Group members names
 - Group topic
 - Summary of answers regarding group topic.
 - **Prop Maker:** Creates props (costume pieces, accessories, etc.) to enhance presentation)
 - **Actor:** Creates a short 2 – 3 minute sketch that explains your topic to the class, ensuring the required information is conveyed; presents this information as part of the living timeline.

- Be CREATIVE! The way in which you deliver your presentation is up to you and will be determined by your originality and creativity. Examples may include: acting as a colonial character who delivers the information conversationally or in a monologue; singing a jingle or rap; etc.

- When each group is finished working, all actors will stand in chronological order in front of the room and present their sketches for the timeline, one at a time.

- While the actors are presenting, the rest of the class will fill in their blank timelines.

Name _____

Date _____

Revolutionary War Battle Brochures

Assigned Battle: _____

The goal of this assignment is to create a brochure that would attract tourists to the site of your assigned Revolutionary War battle. These brochures should be interesting and colorful; your final product should be something you would want to read if you saw it.

- Your brochures must include the following:
 - Front page: The name of your battle and a drawing that relates to your battle
 - Inside:
 - The date your battle took place
 - Where your battle took place
 - British commanders and American commanders (include a picture of each)
 - Five interesting facts about your battle with a drawing or picture that relates to one of those facts
 - Who won the battle
 - On the back: A map of where your battle took place and brief directions on how to get to the battle site from our school.
- Remember to keep the information concise yet informative; you want people to be interested in your battle site, not bored.
- The more colorful and attractive the better. You can include more pictures and drawings than what is required above.
- When you have finished your brochures, we will share the information with our classmates.

Due Date: _____