



The American Revolution 1775–1783

The American Revolution

1775–1783

Lesson 1

Overview

Comprehension Question

How did the colonists win the Revolutionary War?

Materials

- Video: “The American Revolution in 5 Breathtaking Minutes” (5:38; on Videos DVD)
- American Revolution essential words documents: *independence, tyranny, liberty, revolution, character*
- Student Materials book

Comprehension Canopy Routine 7–10 minutes

Materials

Video: “The American Revolution in 5 Breathtaking Minutes”

Introduction and Prior Knowledge

Why did the colonists declare independence, even though they knew it would lead to a war they might not win?

Historians have argued that it was “almost a miracle” that the colonists won the American Revolution. What makes something a miracle?

During the next couple of weeks, we will learn about the American Revolution and try to understand how the colonists won.

Springboard

- Introduce the video.

This video will prepare you to learn more about what happened during the American Revolution, how people felt, and what they experienced.

- Provide a purpose for viewing the video.

As you watch the video, write one of the causes of the war and one way that the British soldiers seem different from the American soldiers.

- Show the video.
- Prompt students to begin a “turn and talk” activity.

Tell your partner one of the causes of the war and one way that the British soldiers seem different from the American soldiers.

Comprehension Question

State the comprehension question that will guide students’ learning throughout the unit.

The colonists almost lost the war. General George Washington put it best when he said that American victory was “little short of a miracle.”

The British had the most powerful army in the world; it was made of professional soldiers who were disciplined and well trained. The Colonial Army was mostly made up of farmers and part-time soldiers. They were poorly paid, and few had formal training.

How did the colonists win the Revolutionary War?

Essential Words Introductory Routine

25–30 minutes

Materials

- American Revolution essential words documents: *independence, tyranny, liberty, revolution, character*
- Student Materials book

Procedure

- Have students turn to the essential word log in their Student Materials books.
- Use the essential words documents to introduce each essential word.
- Have students write important information in their essential word log.
- Have students discuss the turn and talk questions in pairs.

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revolution
An overthrow and replacement of a government by the people governed; drastic action or change
Related words: overthrow, rebellion, uprising, revolt

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tyranny
An abuse of authority, especially by a government or ruler with total power
Related words: dictatorship, harsh treatment

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Essential Word Log
As you go through the unit, note the people, events, ideas, and places that connect to these five concepts:

independence	tyranny	liberty	revolution	character

independence
Freedom from the control of others
Related words: autonomy, freedom, liberty

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independence

Freedom from the control of others



Related Words: *autonomy, freedom, liberty*

Example Usage:

Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" helped convince many Americans of the need for **independence** from Britain.

Example: *A recent college graduate who is employed, lives on her own, and supports herself*

Nonexample: *An eighth-grader who needs her parents to drive her places*

Turn and Talk:

What kind of **independence** do you wish you had?

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Lesson 2

Overview

Comprehension Question

How did the colonists win the Revolutionary War?

Materials

- Video: “Matt Damon: The Declaration of Independence” (2:02; on Videos DVD)
- Text: “Declaring Independence”
- Student Materials book

Before Reading

- Determine the grouping structure for text reading. Facilitate student movement into groups or pairs as needed.
- Introduce the video.

In this video, actor Matt Damon recites and gives his thoughts on portions of the Declaration of Independence. As you watch, think about what he says about “the point of the country.” What do you think is the point or purpose of our country?

- Show the video.
- Refer students to the passage in their Student Materials books.
- Introduce the reading.

The Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, is considered one of the most important documents in the history of the United States. The following describes how it came about.

As we read, we’ll stop at the boxes to answer questions and take notes about what we’ve read.

During Reading

- As needed, clarify vocabulary. Point out connections to essential words where applicable.
- At each stopping point (including the final one), facilitate student note-taking in response to the provided questions.
- Provide corrective feedback if students misunderstand the material.

After Reading

- Facilitate student note-taking in response to the final questions.
- Have students write connections to any essential words in their word logs.

Declaring Independence

(1)

I have a date for you to remember. Something happened on this day that changed America—it even changed the whole world. It was a day that King George III didn't think important. He would find out how wrong he was. The date is July 4, 1776. That was the day the members of the Second Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. It was a year after the Battle of Bunker Hill, and finally, the Americans had made up their minds to be free of Great Britain.

(2)

But that wasn't why the world was changed. It was the words they used in that declaration that made all the difference.

(3)

The delegates believed that if they were going to vote for **independence**, they should have a good reason. They knew that when they signed the declaration, they would become traitors to England. They would each be hanged if England captured them. If they were going to take that big risk, they wanted to make it worthwhile. And it would be worthwhile if they could help create a free nation, a great nation, a nation run by its citizens.

(4)

That's why the members asked Thomas Jefferson, one of the members of the Congress, to write a paper—called a “declaration”—that would:

- Tell their beliefs about good government
- Tell what King George had done wrong
- Announce that the colonies were now free and **independent**—no longer under British rule

Why were the words of the Declaration of Independence so important?

(5)

Some people thought it surprising that Thomas Jefferson was asked to write the declaration. Jefferson was one of the youngest members of the Continental Congress. He was a tall, shy redhead who loved to read, run, ride horseback, and play the violin. He had a reputation for writing well. John Adams said of him, “Though a silent member in Congress, he was so prompt, frank...and decisive upon committees and in conversation—not even Samuel Adams was more so—that he soon seized upon my heart.”

(6)

Jefferson wasn’t sure he could write a good declaration. But John Adams and Benjamin Franklin had faith in him. They talked Thomas Jefferson into trying. Adams told him, “You can write ten times better than I can.”

(7)

Adams and Franklin were right. Thomas Jefferson knew just what to say, and he said it in a way that inspired people all over the world. The whole declaration is something to read and think about, but one part will ring in your ears with its greatness. Jefferson wrote:

*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.*

(8)

Just what does “equal” mean? Are we all the same? Look around you. Of course we aren’t. Some of us are smarter than others, and some of us are better athletes, and some of us are better looking, and some are nicer. But none of that matters, said Jefferson. We are all equal in the eyes of our Creator, and we are entitled to natural rights: the right to live, the right to be free, the right to be able to try to find the kind of life that will make us happy. And that is the whole reason for having governments, he said. Governments are not made to make kings happy. They are for the benefit of the people who are governed. Governments should have the “consent of the governed.” When lawmakers try to gain or give someone else absolute power over lives, **liberties**, and property of the people, they abuse the power the people had put into their hands. It is then the privilege of the people to establish a new group of lawmakers to provide for their safety and security.

What does the author mean when he says, “Governments should have the consent of the governed”?

(9)

The Declaration of Independence primarily referred to the rights of white men. Other minorities such as women and African Americans used the Declaration of Independence to fight to win **liberty**. Jefferson said, “all men are created equal.” He didn’t mention women. Did he mean to include women? No one knows. Perhaps not. In the 18th century, very few people thought much about women’s rights. It was the 20th century before women in America had the right to vote.

(10)

Did Thomas Jefferson mean to include black men when he said “all men”? Historians sometimes argue about that. He said that “nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free.” In the first draft of the declaration, he described slavery as a “cruel war against human nature.” Many congressmen agreed. John Adams spoke out strongly against slavery. So did Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush. But South Carolina and Georgia would not sign the declaration if it contained the antislavery section. So Jefferson’s antislavery words were taken out.

Adapted from Hakim, J. (1993). *A history of US: From colonies to country*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

How did the Declaration of Independence help the colonists win the Revolutionary War?

TBL Comprehension Check

20 minutes

Materials

- TBL Comprehension Check, The American Revolution #1 (print 1 per student and 1 per pair; on Materials CD)
- TBL Comprehension Check, The American Revolution #1 scratch-offs (1 per pair; provided separately)
- Answer Key (on Materials CD)
- Student Materials book, textbook, notes, and/or other relevant material

Individual Comprehension Check

8 minutes

- Pass out the comprehension check.
- Introduce the individual comprehension check.

We will complete a short quiz that will check how much you have learned so far in this unit. When you take the quiz on your own, you do not need to fill in anything in the box. You will fill that in as a team later. You will have 7 minutes to complete this quiz.

- Set the timer for 7 minutes.
- Collect the individual checks. If time allows, review questions that prove difficult for students.

Team Comprehension Check

9 minutes

- Divide the class into pairs and pass out the comprehension check and scratch-offs.
- Introduce the team comprehension check.

Now you will take the same quiz with a partner. This time, you can use your textbook, notes, and other materials to help you.

*The first step is to discuss the question with your partner until you agree on the right answer. Once you think you have it, be sure to explain **why** you think the answer is correct. For the first question, write your answer in the “Team Explanation” area. For the following questions, don’t write down your explanation, but be prepared to share your reasons with the class.*

The last step is to scratch the letter of your answer off your card. If the answer is correct, you will see a star. If you do not see a star, keep discussing and using your resources until you find the right answer.

I will walk around to help you if you get stuck, but I won’t give you answers. You have 8 minutes to complete your team check.

- Set the timer for 8 minutes. Monitor to ensure that students discuss the questions. As needed, advise students on which resources to use to find an answer.

Whole-Group Targeted Instruction

3 minutes

- Set the timer for 3 minutes.
- Have two to three pairs share their team explanation for the first question. Provide feedback on the quality and content of what they wrote.

What is your team's explanation of why _____ is the correct answer for the first question?

- Have one to two pairs share the question they struggled with most.

Which question was the hardest for your team? How did you find the answer?

- Have one to two pairs share their explanations of a commonly missed question.

I noticed that many of you missed question ___ the first time. What is the correct answer? Why is that the correct answer?

- Collect the comprehension checks and scratch-off cards.

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Lesson 9

Overview

Comprehension Question

How did the colonists win the Revolutionary War?

Materials

- Race to Victory Activity Warm-Up sheet (one per student; on Materials CD)
- Race to Victory poster
- Round 1, Round 2, and Round 3 cards (one set of each per team)
- Bluecoat cards and Redcoat cards (one set of each)
- Student Materials book, textbook, and other relevant content resources
- Dry-erase markers (one per team)
- Timer

Activity Warm-Up

10 minutes

- Before class, identify student teams. Each team should include at least three students; consider using “doubled pairs” for easy grouping.
- Facilitate student movement into teams. Have students take their Student Materials books, textbooks, and other relevant content resources with them.
- Hand out one Activity Warm-Up sheet to each team.
- Introduce the activity.

Today we will work in teams to discuss how the colonists won the Revolutionary War.

- Introduce step 1 of the warm-up.

First, we will work together to brainstorm events and people that helped the colonists win the war and those that hurt the colonists’ chances to win the war. We will write our ideas in the appropriate place in step 1 of the Activity Warm-Up sheet.

- Complete step 1 with the whole class.
- Introduce step 2 of the warm-up.

Now that we have an overview of things that helped and hurt the colonists’ chances to win the war, let’s go through an example of what we will do in the game. In step 2 of your Activity Warm-Up sheet is a picture of the battles of Lexington and Concord. How might you finish this sentence: “The battles of Lexington and Concord helped the colonists win the war because...”?

- Allow time for students to answer.

*A good answer shows that I know **what** the event is and, most importantly, **how** it helped the colonists win the war.*

- Write the following answer on your Activity Warm-Up sheet and display for students.

My answer to this question might be: “The battles of Lexington and Concord helped the colonists win the war because they marked the first colonist defeat of the British Army. The militias began to believe that if they could win these battles, they had a chance to win the war.”

- Briefly review with students that a good answer includes what the event is and how it helped colonists win the war. Help students write their answer on their Activity Warm-Up sheets.

Race to Victory Activity Warm-Up Sheet (on Materials CD)

TBL Knowledge Application

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NAME(S) _____

Race to Victory Activity Warm-Up

Step 1

Brainstorm the events and people that helped the colonists win the war and those that were obstacles to the colonists' victory.

Who/what helped?	Who/what were obstacles?

Step 2

Complete the sentence. A good answer shows that you know **what** the event is and **why** it helped the colonists win the Revolutionary War.

The battles of Lexington and Concord
(April 19, 1775)



helped the colonists win the war because:

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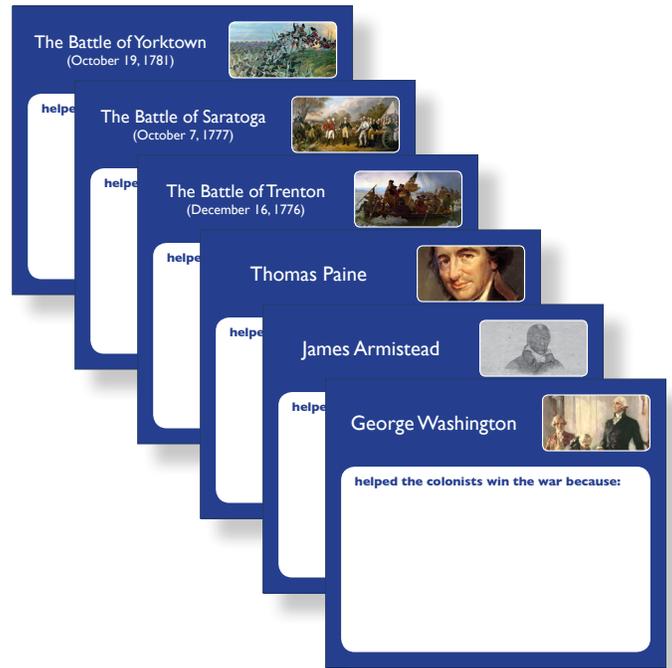
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**Bluecoat Cards
(144 total)**



**Redcoat Cards
(48 total)**

Round 1 Cards (6 per set)



Round 2 Cards (6 per set)



Round 3 Cards (4 per set)

