

**Challenging the Narrative of the American Revolution:
Giving a Voice to America’s First Generation of Women
Middle/High School Lesson Plan**

Enduring Understandings: Students should have already studied the American Revolution and should have an understanding of basic vocabulary, people, events, and a timeline of the American Revolution. Be sure students have knowledge of the 15 British colonies in North America and remind them that most accepted narratives refer only to the 13 “original” colonies. If needed, provide students a blank map of the 15 British colonies in North America, and have them label each of the colonies. (see lesson resources)

This lesson is designed to enrich students’ understanding of the American Revolution, build on prior knowledge, allow for practice using historical thinking/reading skills, promote creativity, improve writing skills, and incorporate 21st Century learning/technology.

In this lesson, students will learn...

- How the ideologies of the time period limited social, political, and military interaction in society.
- Examples of honesty, courage, and responsibility in American history.
- The lengths to which women would go to “fight” for what they believe in.
- To what extent women impacted the American Revolution.
- The importance of citing evidence to support an argument.

Essential Questions:

- What role did women play in the American Revolution?
- How do these stories differ from the traditional historical narrative of the American Revolution? Do these sources challenge existing narratives in American history?
- To what extent did women impact the American Revolution?

Vocabulary/Targeted Skills:

- [Link to Colonial RA 'Vocabulary' for Women of the American Revolution](#)
- [Link to Colonial RA 'Challenge Words' for Women of the American Revolution](#)
- [Link to Colonial RA 'Words in Context' for Women of the American Revolution](#)
- Historical Literacy (Thinking/Reading Like a Historian): Sourcing, Contextualizing, Close Reading, and Corroborating - [Stanford History Education Group - Reading Like a Historian Intro Materials Link](#)

Unit Assessment/Culminating Unit Activity: Written response to central historical question(s) - Using your knowledge from the lesson and the sources you have encountered in your research, how do these sources challenge existing narratives in American history? To what extent do you think the women of the British colonies in North America impacted the American Revolution? Do you believe the actions of these women affected the outcome of the war? Make sure to use historical evidence to support your argument.

Lesson: <i>Challenging the Narrative of the American Revolution: Giving a Voice to America's First Generation of Women</i>	Time: 230-260 minutes
Standard(s): SS.1.A.1.1: Develop an understanding of a primary source. SS.1.A.2.1: Understand history tells the story of people and events of other times and places. SS.1.A.2.4: Identify people from the past who have shown character ideals and principles including honesty, courage, and responsibility. SS.1.A.2.5: Distinguish between historical fact and fiction using various materials. SS.8.A.1.2: Analyze charts, graphs, maps, photographs and timelines; analyze political cartoons; determine cause and effect. SS.8.A.1.4: Differentiate fact from opinion, utilize appropriate historical research and fiction/nonfiction support materials. SS.8.A.1.7: View historic events through the eyes of those who were there as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts. SS.8.A.2.4: Identify the impact of key colonial figures on the economic, political, and social development of the colonies.	
Content Purpose: I will...use historical thinking skills to examine multiple sources regarding the roles of women of the American Revolution. So I can... articulate the extent to which women impacted the American Revolution, and evaluate existing historical narratives.	
Assessment/Evaluation/Success Criteria (for this lesson): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class discussion ● Note taking Chart (accountable team task/group work) ● Scrapbook page (accountable team task/group work) ● Written response to central historical question (independent evaluation) <p>I know I have it when...I am able to write a response to the prompt, citing multiple sources as evidence to support my argument.</p>	
Reading Materials/Primary Source links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Women of the American Revolution: Lost Voices of America's First Generation</i> ● Map of the Colonies: http://www.colonialra.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Blank-colonies-map-v3-1.pdf ● Link to the Library of Congress Site ● Link to the National Archives Site ● Link to the Florida Memory Site ● Link to TeachingAmericanHistory.org Site ● Link to the PK Yonge Library Site ● Link to the National Women's History Museum Site ● Link to the Smithsonian's Exhibit: Women's History 	
Suggested Procedures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellwork activity to connect students to the lesson: Tell students that the school system/American education is going through some difficult times and money is tight. 	

The state has decided to cut funding to school districts, which means the budget for supplies, furniture, technology, building repairs, campus security, staff salaries, etc. will be cut dramatically and perhaps receive no additional funding.

Encourage students to contribute to the conversation by discussing the consequences of such actions by the state government (i.e. It will leave schools/classrooms in poor condition, the Constitution states that all students must be given a free and of quality public education, teacher/staff shortages due to low salaries, no materials, and more).

Tell students, our school district has decided they will not stand for this decision and they want to fight to ensure public education in our state is given adequate funding and support, as promised by the Constitution. They are asking for student volunteers to help the cause. I have been asked to share ways that you can help, and I have your “assignments”.

Pass out their “assignments” randomly (Appendix A). This activity is designed to reflect the context of the 18th century in the British Colonies in North America. Give students time to read their assignments and then generate a class discussion regarding the assignments. Ask students how they felt being excluded when they really want to help. Ask students how they intend to respond to their assignments.

Connect this activity to the lesson. The “assignments” illustrate the inequality of the time period -- the way society viewed women (social issues, ideas and values, geographical influences, and cultural influences). Fifty percent of the “assignments” will give students opportunities to actively participate in the fight for change, and 50% will be denied the opportunity to get involved. This should help students connect with what it must have felt like to be restricted from contributing to the cause (American Revolution) beyond the traditional role of an 18th century woman. *Please note, the percentage of female population is only an estimate. It is the intent of the lesson to include both free-white and enslaved women in this percentage, but it is only an approximation.

2. Review the “historical framework” to help students build an understanding of what life was like during the time period: ideas and values, geographical influences, social issues, and cultural issues (Appendix B). This will assist the students in building context, making connections, and drawing conclusions.
3. Read pages 2-6 of *Women of the American Revolution: Lost Voices of America’s First Generation* as a class to provide some context regarding the lives of 18th century women. As you read, use appropriate reading strategies to support comprehension. Ask students to highlight examples of the historical framework as they read. A “Think-A-Loud” and/or modeling the correct way to complete this task will ensure student success. Students should highlight and annotate (or use 4 different color highlighters with a key) examples of ideas and values, geographical influences, social issues, and

cultural issues. Review examples as a class and connect this activity to the purpose of this lesson.

4. Provide a list of women featured in the book, *Women of the American Revolution: Lost Voices of America's First Generation* (Appendix C). Tell students they will work in pairs to research one of the women featured. Assign one woman per pair of students. Each group should have a different woman. In their research, they are tasked with preserving her legacy. They must find background information [who she was, where she lived (geographically), why she got involved], challenges she faced, risks she took, her contribution to the cause, three adjectives to describe her, and impact she made on the American Revolution. The pair will collaborate to complete a chart with this information (Appendix D). The chart can be completed by hand or electronically.

*Best practice: Provide an example of a completed chart to ensure the students have a clear understanding of the expectations.

5. Each pair of students will use their completed chart to create a scrapbook page (digital or by hand). Scrapbooks are created to preserve family or personal history, presenting and arranging items in the form of a book. Typical memorabilia include photographs, media clippings, artwork, ticket stubs to events or from travel, journaling, and letters. Scrapbook albums are often creatively decorated and reflect the author's personal style.

Scrapbook pages must:

- Display her name and where she was from.
 - Incorporate the three adjectives in some way.
 - Have at least four images or symbols with captions.
 - Include a short paragraph explaining why she got involved, challenges she faced, risks she took, her contribution to the cause, and impact she made on the American Revolution.
 - Be free of spelling and grammatical errors.
 - Use color and creative touches to make the page visually appealing.
6. Display the charts and the scrapbook pages as a set or in a way that shows they correspond with each other on a digital learning platform, website, or on the walls of the classroom. Students will use the charts and the “scrapbook” to collect information about each of the women researched by their classmates. For more advanced students or students in high school, consider only allowing them to use the scrapbook pages. They will record the information and their analysis on a same chart they used for their initial research. Students can draw lines on the chart under each woman they research as they add a new person, or they can use additional (clean) copies of the chart.
 7. (Appendix E) Students will use their knowledge of the Women in the American Revolution to respond to the following writing prompt (Consider allowing students to use their charts to reference their research): In a time when it was believed women did not have the emotional or mental capacities for higher learning and insightful thinking, women had few rights and no say in political decisions or other matters of importance. Despite the mindset of this era, 18th century women of all races, free and enslaved,

resisted the “norms” to stand up for their beliefs and their rights. Using your knowledge from the lesson and the sources you have encountered in your research, how do these sources challenge existing narratives in American history? To what extent do you think the women of the British colonies in North America impacted the American Revolution? Do you believe the actions of these women affected the outcome of the war? Make sure to use historical evidence to support your argument.

Extensions:

- SS.1.A.2.2: Compare life now with life in the past.
- SS.8.A.1.5: Identify, within both primary and secondary sources, the author, audience, format, and purpose of significant historical documents.
- SS.8.A.1.6: Compare interpretations of key events and issues throughout American History.
 - Use this as an opportunity to review your chapter/unit on reform movements, or to review/assess at the end of the year.
 - The stories of courage and hope illustrated in *Women of the American Revolution: Lost Voices of America’s First Generation* inspired women throughout the course of American history. Do you agree with this statement? (For middle school students, include the following in the prompt for guided practice with historical thinking/disciplinary literacy: Use your knowledge of women of the American revolution and evidence throughout your study of American history to support your argument.) You can also provide students (at all grade levels) with excerpts, images, and documents from various sources for them to specifically reference in their response.
 - Some questions to consider:
 - How does context shape our views of historical events and people?
 - What further evidence is needed to better understand the context of this era in American history?
 - To add further depth to this lesson, consider including sources which do not reflect the sentiments of *Women of the American Revolution: Lost Voices of America’s First Generation*. Sources which solely mention the contributions of men, or refute the claims that women played an important role in the American Revolution. Allow student to analyze the evidence, hold a discussion or perhaps allow time for a writing activity in which are given the opportunity to express how point of view and context can shape historical narratives.

Appendices

Appendix A: Assignments for Civic Participation

Contact your state representatives by email or mail a letter expressing the importance of funding for our schools.

Create a petition in support of your beliefs in the cause and acquire signatures. Present the petition to your state representatives.

Make posters and signs expressing your concern for this decision. Help organize a group to share support with community by hanging the signs or peacefully assembling at an event or public place.

Attend meetings to gain information, discuss issues, or lend support.

Your services are not needed.

Appendix B: Historical Framework

<p style="text-align: center;">IDEAS & VALUES: The ways people involved in a particular historical event thought about life.</p> <p>How did people talk to each other? Did they value manners? What did people think about their environment, human rights, the role of government, etc.?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCE: The difference <i>time and place</i> made in a particular historical event.</p> <p>How did the environment help or hinder people's lives? Were they isolated? Were they subjected to storms and disasters?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL ISSUES: The ways people involved in a particular historical event related to each other.</p> <p>How did age, economic status, sex, and position in a community affect individuals and groups? How did relationships to others limit or benefit them?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CULTURAL ISSUES: The ways customs and traditions of people influenced the developments of a particular historical event.</p> <p>What role did women play? What professions did men and women have? How did religious beliefs and practices influence people?</p>

Appendix C: List of Women of the American Revolution

1. Abigail Adams
2. Mercy Otis Warren
3. Phillis Wheatley
4. Penelope Barker
5. Martha Washington
6. Mary Jemison
7. Elizabeth “Mumbet” Freeman
8. Nancy Hart
9. Mammy Kate
10. Sarah Shattuck
11. Prudence Wright
12. Rachel Silverthorn
13. Sybil Ludinton
14. Margaret Morris
15. Elizabeth Burgin
16. Margaret Corbin
17. Mary Hays McCauley
18. Deborah Sampson
19. Rebecca Motte
20. Mrs. Patrick Tonyn
21. Singing Bid, aka Molly Ockett
22. Annis Stockton
23. Lydiah Darragh
24. Eleanor Hitchcock
25. Molly “Mom” Rinker
26. Patience Wright
27. Anna Smith Strong
28. Agent 355
29. Peggy Shippen Arnold
30. Ann Bates
31. Mary Lindley Murray
32. Camp followers
33. Sarah Franklin Bach

Appendix D: Research Chart

Background	Challenges She Faced	Risks She Took	Contributions to Cause	Three Adjectives to Describe Her	Impact on the American Revolution



Appendix E: Student Written Response

Final Claim

In a time when it was believed women did not have the emotional or mental capacities for higher learning and insightful thinking, women had few rights and no say in political decisions or other matters of importance. Despite the mindset of this era, 18th century women of all races, free and enslaved, resisted the “norms” to stand up for their beliefs and their rights. Using your knowledge from the lesson and the sources you have encountered in your research, how do these sources challenge existing narratives in American history? To what extent do you think the women of the British colonies in North America impacted the American Revolution? Do you believe the actions of these women affected the outcome of the war? Make sure to use historical evidence to support your argument.