

American Revolution Puppet Shows!

Special Area: Connections (Grade 3 or 4 Social Studies)

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Length of Unit: Number of social studies lessons: 5

I. ABSTRACT

Students produce puppet plays in which they put themselves in the role of colonists and loyalists living at the time of the revolution. Students research an event from the revolution, focusing on a given character. As they write scripts, students synthesize factual knowledge with their own interpretations of what people's motivations and emotions were at that time. Historically accurate puppet costumes and props are designed and the students present their learning through performance of the play. Student learning is assessed as students acquire factual knowledge, write and revise scripts, strive to cooperate with group members, and apply their learning artistically.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives:

Students should gain an understanding of:

1. Why the Colonies decided to turn their backs on England and the rule of King George III.
2. How differing points of view can influence how history is written.
3. How the roles played by different people influenced the American Revolution. Such as how continental and British soldiers had differing views of the war, or how women such as Betsy Ross and Abigail Adams helped change the course of history.

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*

Students should become familiar with:

Facts surrounding specific events:

1. Boston Massacre (Crispus Attucks, Protests against King George III, Redcoats)
2. Boston Tea Party (British Taxation, The Intolerable Acts closed the port of Boston, British quartering)
3. Declaration of Independence (Continental Congress, Thomas Jefferson primary author, adopted July 4th 1776, key phrases from the Declaration's preamble, such as "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," women in the Revolution: Abigail Adams)
4. Making of the New Flag (George Washington, Commander-In-Chief of Continental Army, women in the Revolution such as Betsy Ross)
5. Shot Heard 'Round the World (Paul Revere's Ride, "One if by land, two if by sea," Concord and Lexington, Redcoats and Minute Men)
6. Give Me Liberty (Loyalists, the story of Patrick Henry, British quartering, "No Taxation Without Representation," "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!")

C. Skill Objectives:

1. Reading about the causes of the Revolutionary War
2. Researching events, characters, and costumes using the internet.

3. Cooperatively writing and revising scripts, including stage directions, for puppet shows
4. Create puppet costumes and props to be reasonable facsimiles of period attire.
5. Rehearse and develop a performance using puppets. Consideration of stage arrangements (where characters should be situated on stage for each scene), audience view of puppets, moving puppets for affect, being sufficiently loud, etc.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers:
1. Ellis, Joseph J. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2001. ISBN: 0-375-40544-5
 2. Hakim, Joy. *A History of US: Book 3: From Colonies to Country*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1995
 3. Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (editor) *The American Revolution*. Parsippany, New Jersey: Pearson Education. 2002. ISBN: 0-7690-5101-4
- B. For Students:
1. Study of American Revolution in grade 2 Core Knowledge.
 2. Study of Ancient Greece in grade 2 Core Knowledge
 3. Study of Ancient Rome earlier in grade 3 Core Knowledge.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (editor) *The American Revolution*. Parsippany, New Jersey: Pearson Education. 2002. ISBN: 0-7690-5101-4. Most of the factual content for your plays and characters can be preened from this text.
- B. Previous years' play Scripts as format models for students to follow.
- C. Paper, Pencil, and Computers for script writing. Note: Most groups wrote their initial drafts best while using paper and pencil and working around a single table. Final drafts of scripts, lists of roles, title pages, and props lists were produced on the computer, as was a student designed program for the audience.
- D. Internet Access: Essential for student research about events, characters, and costumes.
- E. Puppets – We had a group of parents sew together and stuff basic hand puppets; they donated the materials. Our art teacher coached students on how to draw puppet faces.
- F. A puppet show stage – Our woodworking project helped make very basic sawhorses, then we ran a long 2"x 4" between them, and draped some dark colored sheets over the wood. We hung a dark sheet behind the stage as a backdrop.
- G. A mural depicting scenes from each of the plays. Students who finished their puppets early produced this with some help.
- H. A parent volunteer to make a video for post performance reflection.
- I. Various materials for costumes and props: felt, buttons, yarn for hair, lace trim for ruffles, pipe cleaners for glasses on Ben Franklin, balsa wood for miniature tables or chairs, a feather from the beach as a pen quill, a cardboard box for the Old North Church, oak tag for Boston Tea Party Ships, etc.

V. LESSONS

Lesson #1: Reading for Meaning: Revolutionary War Events

1. Concept Objective(s)

Students will critically read an assigned Revolutionary War story to understand its sequence of events, and who the key characters were.

Students should gain a factual understanding of:

- a. Why the Colonies decided to turn their backs on England and the rule of King George III.
- b. How differing points of view can influence how history is written.
- c. How the roles played by people of differing backgrounds influenced the American Revolution. Such as how continental and British soldiers had differing views of the war, or how women such as Betsy Ross and Abigail Adams helped change the course of history.

2. Lesson Content

Depending upon which event they read about, students will acquire factual knowledge by reading stories about the following events :

- a. Boston Massacre
- b. Boston Tea Party
- c. Writing of the Declaration of Independence
- d. Making of the New Flag
- e. Paul Revere's Ride and the Shot Heard 'Round the World
- f. Give Me Liberty

3. Skill Objective(s)

- a. Reading about the causes of the Revolutionary War to understand content and identify key parts of each event and who the characters involved were. Students take notes (or underline) identifying key events in the sequence of the story and location of each event. They make lists of characters.
- b. Once the story plot is understood, students work with the one another and the teacher to choose a character of interest. Some groups of students need a fair amount of coaching on this, but all are encouraged to accomplish this task as independently as possible.

Materials

Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (editor) *The American Revolution*. Parsippany, New Jersey: Pearson Education. 2002. ISBN: 0-7690-5101-4. Most of the factual content for your plays and characters can be preened from this text.

Key Vocabulary

Many key vocabulary terms appear in the stories, below are some of the terms:

Crispus Attucks, Protests against King George III, Redcoats, British Taxation, The Intolerable Acts closed the port of Boston, British quartering, Continental Congress, Thomas Jefferson primary author of Declaration of Independence, adopted July 4th 1776, key phrases from the Declaration's preamble, such as "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," women in the Revolution such as Abigail Adams and Betsy Ross, George Washington -- Commander-In-Chief of Continental Army, Paul Revere's Ride, "One if by land, two if by sea," Concord and Lexington, Redcoats and Minute Men, Loyalists, Patrick Henry -- "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!" "No Taxation Without Representation,"

Lesson #2: Researching Characters to Gain an In-depth Understanding

1. Concept Objective(s):

Students will learn to pursue questions of personal interest about a Revolutionary War era character. The hope is that, through research, students will gain an under of what motivated people to take up arms against Britain.

2. Lesson Content

Once characters have been matched with students, researching events and characters becomes our focus. Students need to define what they want to know about their character. Brainstorming of questions can be very student centered.

Students split into groups to begin research using available books, encyclopedias and the internet. Most of our students could comfortably use Google as a search engine and choose among sites to find appropriate reading level and answers to their questions.

Students take notes in their social studies notebooks.

3. Skill Objectives

Students will learn to use a variety of resources to find answers to their own questions about historic figures and events.

Students will begin to discern between differing sources and authors of material and make choices about appropriate reading level and reliability of content.

Students will practice comprehension skills and synthesis skills so they can put material into their own words in an accurate way.

Materials

The World Book Encyclopedias.

Internet Access: Essential for student research about events, characters, and costumes.

Lesson #3: Drafting Scripts with Students as Playwrights

1. Concept Objective(s):

The concept objective of lesson #3 is for students to create written scripts to be used in performing the puppet shows.

2. Lesson Content:

After researching and reading about their topic, each group will sit together to discuss the characters, settings and events that will be involved in the creation of their script. At this point the students should designate character roles between themselves and understand how their character will perform its given role in the script. The students will then begin writing the script, with one or several scribes, each giving input on how the play should evolve. The teacher (s) should rotate around the classroom from table to table in order to observe the progress of each group and to recognize that all students are participating.

Once the students have written the initial scripts, there should be time for proofreading by both students and teachers. The students should practice reading their lines aloud to the group for clarity and understanding. Then the scripts

should be re-drafted, adding in any necessary information and/or lines for each character.

3. Skill Objective(s):

The skill objectives of this lesson are to promote reading and understanding of the American Revolution, creation of script writing, development of characters from the time period and drafting several scripts through editing and read through.

Lesson #4: Creating Historically Representative Puppets

1. Concept Objective(s):

The concept objective of lesson #4 is to create character puppets that coincide with the characters of each script, as well as with the time period.

2. Lesson Content:

In this lesson, students will research the clothing, hairstyle and accessories that will make up their character. The students will look for pictures or information that describes what their character (or someone similar to their character) should look like. Then, with the help of teachers and parents, the students will use materials that have been gathered (donated or purchased) to create their puppet. For example, Benjamin Franklin wore short knickers, a ruffled blouse with a jacket, hair in a ponytail with a hat and glasses. He may need a feather for the quill pen he used to sign the Declaration of Independence. Betsy Ross wore lovely dresses with an apron and may have needed material for creating a flag.

3. Skill Objective(s):

The skill objective of this lesson is for students to understand the appearance of their character during the time period of the American Revolution. The students should be able to construct a similar outfit to best demonstrate the identity of their character in the puppet show.

Lesson #5: Rehearsing Lines and Animating Puppets

1. Concept Objective(s):

The concept objective of lesson #5 is to allow the students time to rehearse their lines and animate their puppet. The students will also need to create scenery or other props that will be necessary for their performance.

2. Lesson Content:

During this lesson (which may take several days), the students will be given time in their groups to rehearse their script lines using their puppets. The students should practice reading their lines silently to themselves and then with the other group members before animating their puppets. It is important for the students to understand lines in order to make the actions of the puppet more life-like. The students should practice their puppet show for the other groups in the class in order to feel comfortable maneuvering the puppet while saying their lines. At this point, the students should also work on creating any type of background or props that they will need for their show.

3. Skill Objective(s):

The skill objective of this lesson is to allow students time to practice rehearsing their lines and to get the feel for animating a puppet to those lines. The students

should also be able to understand by this point what props and scenery will be necessary to make their puppet show more realistic to the audience.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY and UNIT ASSESSMENT

The unit was completed with the six play performances for other students, teachers and parents to view. The students watched a video tape of their performance and reflected as a group on their work.

Students took a pre and post test on the American Revolution. We used the Unit Assessment from the grade four Pearson Learning/Core Knowledge Text Teacher's Guide (Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (editor) *The American Revolution*. Parsippany, New Jersey: Pearson Education. 2002. ISBN: 0-7690-5101-4.)

Students had a chance to reflect individually on the entire unit and write a piece from the stand point of their puppet show character.

Students self-evaluated their work on a rubric (shown below).

The students were also evaluated by their teachers based on this same scale in a rubric format (next page).

VII. HANDOUTS/STUDENT WORKSHEETS

Rubric attached

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ellis, Joseph J. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2001. ISBN: 0-375-40544-5

Hakim, Joy. *A History of US: Book 3: From Colonies to Country*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1995

Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (editor) *The American Revolution*. Parsippany, New Jersey: Pearson Education. 2002. ISBN: 0-7690-5101-4

Sample Rubric: Used for Student Self-Evaluation and Teacher Evaluation at End of Unit

American Revolution Puppet Shows! RUBRIC to Assess Your Performance	Self Score (1 to 5)	Teacher Score (1 to 5)
1. Reading your play, understanding the order of events, and choosing a character with your group		
2. Developing questions about your character and researching them using the internet and reference books.		
3. Writing your script with your group.		
4. Making your puppet and costume to look like your character looked in Revolutionary War times.		
5. Rehearsing your lines and making your puppet come alive (animating your puppet).		
6. Culminating Activity: Performing your play for the audience!		
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Overall Score for This Unit (1 to 5)		

Scale Score Explanation:

A Score of:

Has this meaning:

5	This was your best effort and you completely understood how to do this.
4	This was a very good effort and you mostly understood how to do this.
3	This was a good effort for you and you understood parts of how to do this.
2	With more effort you might have understood more about how to do this.
1	This was not your best effort. You need to keep practicing how to do this.