

UNIT 2: American Revolution

Content Focus: Founding Fathers



Historical Question: Were the colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Historical Thinking Skill: Evaluating Multiple Perspectives



LESSON PLAN

The American Revolution

History Focus: Multiple Perspectives

PATRIOTS OR TRAITORS?

Historical Question: Were the Colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Big Idea:

Different perspectives can change history

Student Objective:

Students will evaluate the differing perspectives of the Colonists by examining primary and secondary sources from a British and Colonial perspective

Historical Skill

Evaluating multiple perspectives in history in order to reconstruct the past

01

Anticipatory Set Worksheet

- Students respond to six thought provoking questions about Loyalty and Treason/ Traitors.
- Some questions require internet access.
- This activity teaches what treason is and how our Constitution defines it.

02

Timeline Activity Worksheet

- This activity has students investigate causes of the American Revolution.
- Students will research six important British actions that led the Colonists to declare their Independence from Britain (Internet access or Textbook required).

03

Primary and Secondary Source Activity & Guided Questions

- Four selected primary and secondary sources for students to read and annotate.
- Ten guided questions that help students examine the various perspectives of the Colonist's actions.

04

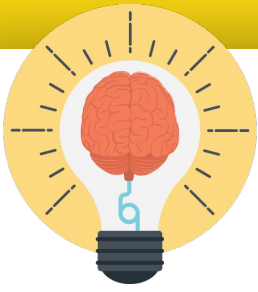
How to Evaluate Multiple Perspectives Handout

- Detailed handout that explains how to evaluate multiple perspectives in history.
- Twenty questions students should ask when they evaluate a historical document.

04

Student Writing Response Worksheet

- Students will write two paragraphs defending two claims.
- Students will utilize evidence from the sources to support historical claims.



ANTICIPATORY SET: The American Revolution

Student Response

Use your prior knowledge and the internet to answer the questions below

LOYALTY vs. TREASON

Historical Question: Were the founding fathers Patriots or Traitors?

1 What does it mean to be a good friend? Is it okay to ever stand up to a friend or “unfriend” a person? Explain your reasoning.

2 (Research) Define Loyalty and Define Treason. Write both definitions in this box.

3 (Research online) According to the American Constitution (law of the land), what is “Treason” (Meaning how is it defined)?

4 (Your thoughts) Why do you think Treason is Punishable by death?

5 (Research online) Make a list of people that have been convicted of Treason in the United States:

6 (Research online) Pick on individual who has been convicted of Treason. In a few sentences explain why they were convicted (meaning what did they do?)



ESTABLISHING CONTEXT

Student Research: Look up the following British actions and describe what was imposed on the Colonies.

Why are the American Colonists so Angry with Britain?

1754-1763

The French and Indian War

What is it and why do you think this angered the Colonists?

1763

Proclamation of 1763

What is it and why do you think this angered the Colonists?

1765

The Stamp Act and The Quartering Act

What is it and why do you think this angered the Colonists?

1770

The Boston “Massacre”

What is it and why do you think this angered the Colonists?

1773

The Tea Act

What is it and why do you think this angered the Colonists?

1774

The “Intolerable Acts”

What is it and why do you think this angered the Colonists?



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Were the colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Student Task:

Read through each primary and secondary source and do the following tasks for each source:

- Circle 3 important or complex words and define term in the margins using context clues, a dictionary or the internet.
- Highlight any information that states whether or not the founding fathers were “Patriots” or “Traitors.”
- Answer the text dependent questions in complete sentences.
- Write down any of your own questions in the margins.

Source 1: Patrick Henry (Colonist) Primary Source

Background: In the Spring of 1765 the British imposed the Stamp Act. Patrick Henry a new delegate in the House of Burgesses made a speech on May 30th before the assembly. He criticized King George III and Parliament (British Government) for imposing new taxes. He later apologized for what he said. He said the following:

“Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell and George the Third — .” [At that point he was interrupted by cries of “Treason!” from delegates who easily recognized the reference to assassinated leaders. Henry paused briefly then calmly finished his sentence:] “...may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it.”

Source: Patrick Henry quoted in Wike, Sudie. *Women in the American Revolution*. McFarland & Co. 2018.

Source 1 Questions:

1. Why did the other delegates cry out “Treason”? What was Patrick Henry subtly proposing to do about King George?

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES Continued...

Investigate: Were the colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Source 1 Questions:

2. Does Patrick Henry want to commit Treason? Explain your reasoning.

3. Do you think Patrick Henry would consider himself a Traitor or Patriot? Explain your reasoning.

Source 2: English Law Primary Source

Background: The most serious crime in England and its colonies was "High Treason" in which a person commits treason against the King of England. There are four types of High Treason:

1. "When a man doth compass or imagine the death of our lord the king, of our lady his queen, or of their eldest son and heir."
2. "If a man do violate the king's companion (wife), or the king's eldest daughter unmarried, or the wife of the king's eldest son and heir."
3. "If a man do levy war against our lord the king in his realm."
4. "If a man be adherent to the king's enemies in his realm, giving to them aid and comfort in the realm, or elsewhere."

Source: Blackstone, Knight. Chase, George, ed. *Chase's Blackstone Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books*. New York: Baker, Voorhis & Co., 1936.

Source 2 Questions:

4. (Compare with Source 1) According to British Law did Patrick Henry commit Treason? Explain your reasoning.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES Continued...

Investigate: Were the colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Source 2 Questions:

5. (Research online) The punishments for “High Treason” were extremely brutal. Look up and describe what the various punishments for High Treason.

Source 3: Samuel Johnson Definition of Patriot from the 1770s

In the first (1755) and fourth (1773) editions of his Dictionary, Johnson defines "patriot" as "One whose ruling passion is the love of his country." In the fourth edition, Johnson adds: "It is sometimes used for a factious disturber of the government."

Source: Johnson, Samuel. "The Samuel Johnson Sound Bite Page: Quotes On Patriotism." Samueljohnson.com. Web.

Source 3 Questions:

6. According to this historian, were the founding fathers treasonous or patriotic? Explain your reasoning.

7. Look at the dates from the different editions of his Dictionary. Why do you think he changed the definition? Based on this information do you think he is British or an American?

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES Continued...

Investigate: Were the colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Source 4: David Maxey Secondary Source

“Treason is a political crime committed against a state or government to which the person charged with treason owes a duty of allegiance. The dictionary defines treason as a violation of allegiance toward one’s country or sovereign, especially the betrayal of one’s country by waging war against it or by consciously and purposely acting to aid its enemies (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).”

“The men signing the Declaration of Independence were acutely aware of the risk they ran of committing treason against the British King to whom, but a short time before, they were firmly bound as subjects. They enumerated in the Declaration a long train of abuses and usurpations which they contended dissolved all political connections between the former colonies and Great Britain and absolved them from allegiance to the British Crown.”

Source: Maxey, David. "The American Revolution: Treason in the Revolution." Nps.gov. 2019. Web. 13 June 2019.

Source 4 Questions:

8. From a British perspective, by signing the Declaration of Independence were the founding fathers knowingly committing Treason? Explain your reasoning.

9. (Consider Source 3: The Definition of “Patriot”) From an American Colonist perspective was signing the Declaration of Independence a “Patriotic” thing to do? Explain your reasoning.

10. (Your thoughts) Can someone be a Patriot and a Traitor at the same time? Explain your reasoning.



HISTORICAL THINKING SKILL

Evaluating Multiple Perspectives

How do you Evaluate Multiple Perspectives in History?

Good historians seek **multiple perspectives** and incorporate source material from different points of view. This helps reconstruct the past more accurately, because some perspectives can be one sided or biased. When historians conduct research and examine sources they must consider the perspective of the person who created the source material. Good historians ask the following questions in order to evaluate different perspectives of events in history.

Questions to Consider when you evaluate Multiple Perspectives

01	How factually accurate is this account?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the source “truthful”?• Are they exaggerating?• Are they lying?
02	What are the motives of the author?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why did they write the information?• Did they profit off the publication?• Are they trying to persuade someone?• Is the purpose malicious or well intentioned?
03	How does the author’s identity play a role in writing or producing the source?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could the author’s sex, gender, or ethnicity play a role in what they wrote?• Could a person’s political, social or economic status impact what they wrote?
04	What is omitted (left out)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are some key details intentionally or unintentionally left out?• Is the author trying to hide any details?
05	Is this the “dominant” perspective? What is the underrepresented or marginalized perspective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is this the perspective of people in power?• Is this historian biased or culturally ignorant?• What would the other gender, sex, ethnic or political group say instead?



HISTORICAL WRITING

Use evidence to support a claim

Were the colonists who fought against the British Crown Patriots or Traitors?

Perspective #1

Claim: From a British perspective the colonists who fought against the British Crown were Traitors or Patriots.

Circle One

Task: Defend the claim with evidence (quotes) from the text. Explain what a British person would say about the Colonists who fought the Crown based on the evidence.

Perspective #2

Claim: From an American Colonist perspective the colonists who fought against the British Crown were Traitors or Patriots.

Circle One

Task: Defend the claim with evidence (quotes) from the text. Explain what an American Colonist would say about the Colonists who fought the Crown based on the evidence.
