

The American Revolution Unit  
Grade 5

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August 4, 2008  
EEDUC-5136

## Overview

This unit was chosen based on the grade 5 standards of the American Revolution time period in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. The lessons include: an introductory lesson covering the time period after the French and Indian War and the major events leading up to the American Revolutionary War. In addition, in this lesson the students will create a “My American Revolution Questions” flipbook that will be answered throughout and completed by the end of the unit. The second lesson is a primary source lesson, which utilizes original copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The students will study the primary source documents and discuss topics of equality and freedoms. The third lesson is a technology inspired lesson in which students will create a timeline of the major battles of the Revolutionary War using the Timeliner 5.0 program. The fourth lesson is a cross-cultural lesson, which refocuses the discussion of the Declaration of Independence to include African-Americans and what this document meant to them. The last lesson is an individual study of an important historical figure in the American Revolution. The students will do research, make an informative poster, and the class will create a living museum. The research project and living museum will be the evaluated activity in this unit, and the flipbook serves as a culminating experience, as well as a reference, for the students

There are several important themes and skills to be utilized throughout this unit. The students will begin to understand higher-level themes of equality, justice, freedom, and rebellion. The students will study these topics from multiple perspectives giving them a broader sense of Colonial life. This unit includes a chance for students to practice using technology in creating a timeline on a computer. This unit also features several opportunities for integrations of Language Arts skills, including an opportunity for students to analyze/create their own poetry, and practice their journal writing skills from a different perspective. In addition, the final project of this unit will help students to gain important researching skills, and work on their oral presentations skills. This unit will provide students with a basis for understanding the foundations of America and democracy.

## Project-Based learning

This paper will seek to answer the question, how does project-based learning enhance student achievement in school? In addition, why is this practice not more widely accepted in our schools? The main points of project-based learning will be identified, as well as the strengths of this model, and the challenges it faces in becoming widely accepted.

Project-based learning is defined as “complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve student design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations” (Jones, Rasmussen, & Moffitt, 1997). This definition allows for project-based learning to encompass a variety of teaching techniques. Typically, students are given authentic materials and content, in order for them to feel like they are performing tasks that are real and meaningful. Through this feeling of doing meaningful work, students gain ownership of their assignments, care more about their work, and ultimately learn more. Teachers generally facilitate the projects and activities, but do not provide much direction. This helps students to increase problem-solving skills, and to gain knowledge for themselves.

According to an evaluation of project-based learning, “researchers have investigated the impact of project-based learning in a wide variety of educational contexts ranging from early childhood education to medical and legal education. PBL (and related instructional approaches) has generally been shown to be effective in increasing student motivation and in improving student problem-solving skills and higher order thinking skills” (Stites, 1998). In addition, in a New Jersey based program, eighth grade students who used project-based learning methods combined with technology scored ten percent higher than students from other urban areas (Stites, 1998.) Various other studies concur

with these findings, including a three-year study of two British secondary schools, “one that used open-ended projects and one that used more traditional, direct instruction—found striking differences in understanding and standardized achievement data in math”(Edutopia, 2001). It was found that students in the project-based learning school scored higher on math problems, which required more analytical or conceptual thought. In addition, “three times as many students at the project-based school received the top grade achievable in math”(Edutopia, 2001). This could show that the higher order thinking required in project-based learning translates to all areas of study, and improves overall performance. In addition, the availability of technology and computers seems to vastly benefit instruction in project-based learning, making it easier to convert lessons from teacher-centered to student-centered projects.

The topic of technology in assisting project-based learning leads to the obvious drawback to this program becoming more widely accepted. Many schools lack the funding to purchase technology such as laptops for all students, as well as other necessary tools. “Because teachers tend to find this approach difficult to implement with low-performing students and may lack supporting technology, it is less likely to be embraced in high-poverty schools, which could increase rather than lessen existing inequities” (David, 2008.) Therefore, as noted previously technology greatly enhances project-based learning and student achievement. However, a lack of funding may be a detriment to starting project-based learning in the areas that need it most.

Another drawback for this program is the lack of teacher training or experience with this type of teaching. This type of learning requires a teacher to take on new and different responsibilities,

“to use project-based learning effectively, teachers must fully understand the concepts embedded in their projects and be able to model thinking and problem-solving strategies effectively (Blumenfield et al., 1991). Worthwhile projects require challenging questions that can support collaboration, as well as methods of measuring the intended learning outcomes. Without carefully designed tasks, skilled teachers, and school conditions that support projects, project-based learning can devolve into a string of activities with no clear purpose or outcome” (David, 2008).

If there is not a clear method for project-based learning and the teachers are not properly trained, the students will not benefit. In addition, there is not much research on project-based learning and student achievement, because there is such a broad range of activities considered to be project-based learning. It is difficult to measure and compare all of them in a standard way. “The handful of studies that have measured the effects of project-based learning have looked at programs that were more well developed than the vast majority of projects created and carried out by individual teachers” (David, 2008).

After surveying the literature and studies, it seems that when performed correctly, project-based learning can be a very useful and meaningful way of increasing student interest, motivation and achievement. Students are engaged in real life problems and tasks, which enhance their overall analytical skills and raise test scores. The amount of project-based learning classrooms is few, but the results, like the problems the students solve, are very real. With proper teacher training, more funding, and clearly defined standards, project-based learning could expand and be accessible to all schools and students greatly affecting student achievement.

#### Citations

David, Jane L. (February 2008). *What Research Says About Project-Based Learning*. *Teaching Students to Think*, vol. 65, p. 80-82, 5.

Edutopia. (November 2001). *PBL Research Summary: Studies Validate Project-Based Learning* Research shows the efficacy of an authentic form of education that expects students to immerse themselves in a topic and meaningfully demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge. <http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning-research>.

Jones, Beau Fly, Rasmussen, Claudette M., & Moffitt, Mary C.(1997). *Real Life Problem Solving: A Collaborative Approach To Interdisciplinary Learning*. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.  
<http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/edhd/programs/excite/pbl/model.html>.

## Lesson #1

### Introduction to the American Revolution

#### Lesson Topic: Events leading up to the Revolutionary War

Purpose: The students will be introduced to the time period and factors leading up to the American Revolution.

#### Objectives:

- The students will understand what led to the American Revolution, including: Sugar and Stamp acts, the Townshend duties, “no taxation without representations”, the Sons of Liberty, and the Boston Tea Party.
- The students will listen to the reading of the poem “Revolutionary Tea.”
- The students will create their own original poems based on the factors leading up to the American Revolution.
- The students will create flipbooks with 7 questions about the American Revolution to be completed by the end of the unit.

Time: 2 days

#### MA State Frameworks:

5.15 Explain the reasons for the French and Indian War, how it led to an overhaul of British imperial policy, and the colonial response to these policies. (H, C, E)

A. Sugar Act (1764)

B. Stamp Act (1765)

C. Townsend Duties (1767)

D. Tea Act (1773) and the Intolerable Acts (1774)

E. The slogan, “no taxation without representation”

F. The roles of the Stamp Act Congress, the Sons of Liberty, and the Boston Tea Party

#### Materials:

Copies of the poem “Revolutionary Tea”

Construction paper

Scissors

Markers and crayons

Classroom Configuration: The students will brainstorm their knowledge of the American Revolution on the blackboard as a class. The whole class will listen to and discuss the reading of the poem “Revolutionary Tea.” The students will work in small groups of 3 or 4 students to create their own poems. The students will work in the same groups to create their flipbooks.

#### Instructional Practice:

1. The teacher will begin by having the students come up to the board and write what they remember about the American Revolution. (The students should have read a chapter in their textbook on the period between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution to acquire more background knowledge.)
2. The teacher will discuss the ideas the students have recorded on the board, and expand upon those ideas.
3. The teacher will then introduce the poem “Revolutionary Tea,” and explain the

- difficult terms in the poem such as, pence, shan't, quoth, budget of tea, conveyed, bouncing, boiling, 'tis.
4. The teacher will then read the poem, and the class will discuss the meaning of the poem.
  5. The class will then divide into groups, and each be assigned a section of the events leading up to the Revolutionary war (French and Indian War, Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Duties, Tea Act and Intolerable Acts, "No taxation without representation", the Stamp Act Congress, the Sons of Liberty, and the Boston Tea Party)
  6. Each group will create their own poem based on the original poem "Revolutionary Tea" using their assigned topic from the events leading up to the Revolutionary War.
  7. Each group will read their poems to the class.
  8. After the poem activity the students will create their Revolutionary War flipbook, which asks 7 questions they would like to learn about the Revolutionary War.

**Student Assessment:** The teacher will collect and display the students' poems, as well as assess them for understanding of the events leading up to the Revolutionary War.

**Modifications/Adaptations:** The teacher and students will go through the poem "Revolutionary Tea" for difficult words, and explain them to the class. The teacher will also provide questions for the flipbooks for students having a hard time creating questions about the Revolutionary War.

**Resources:** <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/revwar1/>.

Lesson#2  
Primary Sources

Lesson Topic: American Revolution, primary source documents, and Language Arts

Purpose: The lesson is intended to teach students about primary sources, to study the main points of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and to develop writing skills.

Student Objectives

The students will:

- Examine the primary source documents of the American Revolution: the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution.
- Identify the key ideas of the Declaration of Independence such as equality, natural rights, the rule of law, and the purpose of government.
- Identify the authors, the dates, and basic rights of citizens found in the Constitution.
- Write journal entries from the perspective of the authors of Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Time: 45 minutes

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks: 5.16 Explain the meaning of the key ideas on equality, natural rights, the rule of law, and the purpose of government contained in the Declaration of Independence. (H, C, E)

5.19 Identify the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including its date, its primary author (John Adams), and the basic rights it gives to citizens of the Commonwealth. (C)

Materials:

Online access to primary source documents

Overhead projector

Journals

Individual copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution

Classroom configuration: The lesson will begin with the whole class using the overhead projector to read and analyze the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The students will then write independently in their journals, and finally end the lesson discussing their journal entries in small groups.

Instructional Practice:

1. The teacher will first present the primary source documents on the overhead projector.
2. The teacher and students will read the documents and discuss topics of equality, and author's intent.

3. The teacher will then ask the students to brainstorm the main idea behind these documents, and then brainstorm the author's point of view on equality, basic rights, and government.
4. The teacher will list the students' ideas on the blackboard.
5. The students will then write a journal entry from one of the authors to create the author's point of view on these topics.
6. The class will reconvene in small groups to read their journal entries aloud, and discuss their points of view.

**Student Assessment:** The teacher will collect the students' journals and provide feedback, as well as assess the students' level of understanding of key ideas in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

**Modifications:** The brainstorming activity will give students ample time to process the task, and hear other student ideas. This will help students who need more time to complete assignments. In addition, the main ideas of the Declaration of Independence will be first discussed in a teacher-guided activity (examining the documents on the overhead), and then again from a student perspective by brainstorming the authors' point of view. This repetition will give students who have attention or auditory impairments several opportunities to hear main ideas and understand the directions of the assignment.

**Resources:** The images of the primary source documents can be accessed on the National Archives website: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>.

### Lesson#3

#### Technology Lesson Plan

Lesson Topic: Revolutionary War battles and technology

Purpose: This lesson is designed to teach students about Revolutionary war battles, and use technology in a social studies context.

#### Student Objectives:

- The students will be able to identify the major battles of the Revolutionary War (Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill, Saratoga, Valley Forge, Yorktown)
- The students will determine the victors, important aspects of each battle, and the dates for each battle
- Students will create a timeline of the battles, listing important aspects and dates, on the computer program Timeliner 5.0.
- Students will survey the battles and outcomes and hypothesize why the Colonists were victorious in the war

#### Materials:

Library/computer Access  
Timeliner 5.0

Time: 1 hour

MA State Frameworks: 5.17 Describe the major battles of the Revolution and explain the factors leading to American victory and British defeat. (H)

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Lexington and Concord (1775) | D. Valley Forge (1777–1778) |
| B. Bunker Hill (1775)           | E. Yorktown (1781)          |
| C. Saratoga (1777)              |                             |

Classroom Configuration: The class will complete the lesson in the computer room working in pairs at each computer.

#### Instructional Practice:

1. The students will have read a chapter in their textbooks on the Revolutionary War before completing this activity.
2. The class will begin by splitting up into pairs at each computer.
3. The teacher will lead a guided example of how to use the Timeliner program.
4. The students will use their prior knowledge of the Revolutionary War battles, and information from a predetermined web search to complete their timelines.
5. The students will research information and compile the information onto Timeliner.
6. As a closing activity, the students will each summarize what they have learned and hypothesize why they think the Colonists were victorious.
7. The students will then share their theories with their partners. L
8. The class will regroup and discuss their theories together.

Student Assessment: The students will be assessed on the accuracy and completion of their timelines.

Modifications/adaptations: Students with difficulties reading/locating information on a website will be partnered with other students to aid them in this process. The teacher will also monitor students for problems navigating the Timeliner program.

Resources: The students will survey these websites to gather information for their timelines:

<http://www.USAHistory.info/timeline/revolution.html>

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/revolutionarywartimeline.htm>

<http://www.kidspast.com/world-history/0367-revolutionary-war.php>

## Lesson#4

### Cross-Cultural Lesson

Subjects: The American Revolution, slavery, and the Declaration of Independence

Purpose: This lesson is intended to make students aware of the inequalities that existed during the American Revolution.

#### Objectives:

- The students will focus on the inequalities in the Declaration of Independence and overall in colonial America.
- The students will watch a segment of the PBS program Africans in America Part 2: Revolution 1750-1805
- The students will write a reaction to the Declaration of Independence in the form of a journal, diary entry, or speech from the perspective of an African-American, Native America, or poor white man or woman at the time of the American Revolution.

#### MA State Frameworks:

5.16 Explain the meaning of the key ideas on equality, natural rights, the rule of law, and the purpose of government contained in the Declaration of Independence. (H, C, E)

#### Materials:

The video Africans in America Part 2: Revolution 1750-1805

Overhead projector

Primary sources of Declaration of Independence

Individual copies of the Declaration of Independence

Time: 1 hour

Class Configuration: The whole class will brainstorm ideas and watch the video segment, work in small groups on the Declaration of Independence, and work individually on their journal entries.

#### Instructional Practice:

1. The teacher will first ask students to brainstorm ideas on such questions as, “How did race, gender, and class influence individual rights and freedoms?” and “Did all Americans receive equal rights in the Declaration of Independence?”
2. The students will record their answers, and then watch the video Africans in America.
3. The students will take notes during the video to answer the previously discussed questions.
4. After the video, the class will discuss questions about the film, such as “Were all the people in the Colonies considered to be ‘Americans’ after the Revolutionary War? Why or why not?” The class will discuss whether African-Americans would have wanted the Colonists or the British to win the war.

5. After the class discussion, the class will work in small groups to read through the Declaration of Independence for the second time in the unit. This time they will study the document from the perspective of slaves, Native Americans, or poor white men or women. The students will record their ideas.
6. Next, the students will work individually to use the ideas from the lesson to write a journal, diary entry, or speech from the perspective of a African-American, Native American, or poor white man or women.

Student Assessment: The teacher will collect the journals to assess student understanding of the lesson.

Modifications/Adaptations: The teacher will monitor small group work and independent journal writing, and provide assistance for struggling students.

Resources: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/title.html>.  
<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>.

## Lesson #5

### American Revolution Final Lesson

Lesson Topic: Social Studies and historical figures of the American Revolution

Purpose: This lesson is designed to teach students about the important leaders of the American Revolution, conduct research, and create an oral presentation/poster.

#### Student Objectives:

- 1 The students will research an important individual from the American Revolution using library books and internet sources
- 2 The students will work on their presentations and posters for their Living museum presentations
- 3 The students will complete their American Revolution flip books from the Introduction of this unit

Time: 2 days for research/poster making and 1 day for presentations

#### MA State Frameworks:

5.18 Describe the life and achievements of important leaders during the Revolution and the early years of the United States. (H, C)

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| A. John Adams         | E. Thomas Jefferson  |
| B. Benjamin Franklin  | F. James Madison     |
| C. King George III    | G. George Washington |
| D. Alexander Hamilton |                      |

#### Materials

Poster board

Markers/crayons

Glue

Access to computers/library

Flipbooks

Classroom Configuration: The students will work individually in the library and on library computers for the duration of this lesson.

#### Instructional Practice:

1. The teacher will lead a brainstorming activity with the class on listing the important leaders of the American Revolution (including: John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, King George III, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Washington, Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, General Charles Cornwallis, Benedict Arnold, Nathanael Greene, General John Burgoyne, Patrick Henry, John Hancock, Deborah Sampson, Betsy Ross, Phillis Wheatley, Molly Pitcher, Abigail Adams, etc.)
2. The teacher will explain the assignment, expectations, and rubric for the American Revolution Living Museum.

3. The students will each select an important figure, and begin research on this person.
4. After research and completion of the poster, the students will create a living museum of their important revolutionary figure. The students should dress, act, and be able to talk in detail as their person. The class will display their posters around the room and create a “living museum.” The class will welcome students from the lower grades to walk through their museum.
5. The students should be able to explain who they are and what their importance was in the American Revolution.
6. After the living museum is finished, the students will complete their American Revolution flip books.

Student Assessment: The students will be assessed based on a rubric of the living museum presentation, and the poster of their important Revolution leader.

Modifications/Adaptations: The students who might struggle with research or reading will be assisted by the teacher, and given a research organization worksheet.

Resources: <http://www.USAHistory.info/timeline/revolution.html>  
<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/revolutionarywartimeline.htm>  
<http://www.kidspast.com/world-history/0367-revolutionary-war.php>

The American Revolution: Living Museum/Poster  
Evaluation Assignment/Unit Assessment  
Grade 5

Revolutionary Person Poster and Living Museum Assignment

For the last week and a half, we have been studying the American Revolution: The war, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the major events. We have learned about Colonial life and times. Now, it is time to reflect on what we have learned and demonstrate what you know about the American Revolution.

Your Assignment:

The American Revolution is filled with exciting and interesting people! There are the members of the First Continental Congress, famous generals, people who led the rebellion against the British, and the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

For your final assignment of our study of the American Revolution, you will become an important Revolutionary person! We will then, as a class, create a living museum of the American Revolution.

Here are the criteria for your project:  
(Check off as you complete!)

- Create a poster about your person including these items:
  1. Tell us who you are! (DOB, history, place of residence, family members)
  2. What is your significant contribution to the Revolution?
  3. Your perspective on the Revolutionary war
  4. 3 more facts about you we haven't learned in class
  5. Include pictures/artifacts, make it creative!
  
- Create a 3-minute presentation to be delivered in the living museum
  
- Wear clothing appropriate for Colonial times  
(Do your best!)
  
- Make sure to include resources and a bibliography for your project including at least 1 book source and 2 different Internet websites. (remember the websites we used in class!)

## Annotated Bibliography and Resources

Discovery Education. (2008). *The American Revolution: Causes*.  
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/revwar1/>.

\*The Discovery Education website includes activities, lesson plans, and school resources for a variety of education topics. This section features activities and resources for units on the American Revolution.

Cohn, Amy. (1993). *From Sea to Shining Sea*. New York: Scholastic.

\*This book is an anthology featuring a wide collection of diverse folk songs, poems, tales, and stories telling history from a variety of perspectives. The poem “Revolutionary Tea” was taken from this anthology.

The National Archives. *The Charters of Freedom*.  
<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html>

\*This is the Government’s National Archives, which features primary source documents used in the primary source lesson plan. The “Charters of Freedom” section of this website is easily accessible for students.

Elson, Henry William. (1904). *History of the United States of America*. New York: MacMillan Company. <http://www.usahistory.info/timeline/revolution.html>.

\*This website is a textbook that was adapted into a website. It features an excellent chronology of the events of the American Revolution. The website features very few ads and easy to navigate. This website was used for technology lesson plan.

White, David. (2002-2008). Social Studies for Kids. *A Timeline of the Revolutionary War: The events leading up to the war*.  
<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/revolutionarywartimeline.htm>.

\*This website is a great website, and should be easily navigated by students. It features few ads and a great timeline of the events of the Revolutionary War.

KidsKnowIt Network. (1998-2008). *Kidspast.com: A Revolutionary War*.  
<http://www.kidspast.com/world-history/0367-revolutionary-war.php>.

\*This website is very colorful and kid-friendly and features historical games, quotes, and thorough explanations of prehistoric times to the French Revolution.

PBS Online. WGBH Educational Foundation. (1998). *Africans in America*  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/tguide/2tgquestact.html>.

\*Africans in America is a PBS series available on video that chronicles the African-American journey through slavery and life in America from 1450-1865. The series is divided into four sections, including a section on revolutionary times. The website is also a great source for teachers on teaching ideas and activities related to the series.

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## Oral Presentation Rubric : American Revolution Living Museum Presentation

Teacher Name: **Ms. Ayers**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Comprehension	Student is able to accurately answer almost all questions posed by classmates about the topic.	Student is able to accurately answer most questions posed by classmates about the topic.	Student is able to accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates about the topic.	Student is unable to accurately answer questions posed by classmates about the topic.
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.
Posture and Eye Contact	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but seem somewhat faked.	Very little use of facial expressions or body language. Did not generate much interest in topic being presented.

Date Created: **Aug 03, 2008 06:08 pm (CDT)**