

Lesson Plan 1: Getting Started

Duration: *1 class period*

This lesson precedes the *A Bundle of Silences* video series to stimulate interest and skills to critically analyze knowledge and question preconceptions.

Overview

The American Revolution has been part of students' social studies lessons since primary grades. As residents of New Jersey, students' may have visited Revolutionary War sites and heard stories about the conflict. This lesson invites students to consider what they previously learned about the Revolution and the evidence that informed it.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Grades 6-8

9.4.8.IML.15: Explain ways that individuals may experience the same media message differently.

Grades 9-12

9.4.12.IML.2: Evaluate digital sources for timeliness, accuracy, perspective, credibility of the source, and relevance of information, in media, data, or other resources

9.4.12.IML.8: Evaluate media sources for point of view, bias, and motivations

9.4.12.IML.9: Analyze the decisions creators make to reveal explicit and implicit messages within information and media (e.g., 1.5.12acc.C2a, 7.1.IL.IPRET.4)

9.4.12.IML.1: Compare search browsers and recognize features that allow for filtering of information.

Vocabulary

Factoid: a brief or trivial item of news or information; an assumption or speculation that is reported and repeated so often that it becomes accepted as fact.

Cross check: the process of verifying figures or information by using an alternative source or method.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to cross check one factoid that they know about the American Revolution using resources familiar to them in order to critically analyze “what they know and how they know it.”

Essential Understandings

There is “more to the story” that is revealed by asking questions and seeking answers through further research.

Essential Questions

- How do we know what we know?
- Where do we get our information?
- What can be gained by cross checking what we know?

Anticipatory Set/Modeling

The teacher models critical analysis students will be asked to do by presenting a commonly accepted factoid from pop culture/current events. The example should follow the format, “This is what I know. This is how I know it.”

Examples:

- The Great Wall of China is visible from space. I know this because I heard it from my father.
 - *You would have to have incredible eyesight to see the Great Wall of China from space.*
- Napoleon Bonaparte was short. I know this because he was in a television show.
 - *At 5’7” he was considered average height for a man of his time period.*
- Vikings wore helmets with horns on them. I know this because I see pictures of Vikings with these helmets all the time.
 - *The horned helmet was part of a costume created for a 19th century opera.*

But is there more to the story? Teacher and students should ask key questions: Where did I get my information? Is the source credible? Do others have a different understanding? Why? Students will use “rapid research” (Google) to answer questions. Then students will conduct in-depth research using primary and secondary sources and compare the information they

thought they knew, to the information that they learned through rapid research, and then to in-depth research.

Lesson Plan

What do we know and how do we know it? Analyzing one factoid, cross-checking using readily accessible resources, analyzing how understanding is elaborated.

Step 1:

- Each student notes ONE factoid they know about the American Revolution.
- The student notes how they know this: From a school lesson? A book they read? A movie they saw? A historic site they visited? Students can also write, “Not sure” or “I just know it.”
- Using familiar “rapid research” methods (e.g., Google), the student looks for more information to cross-check the factoid. Student notes new and additional information found, and sources used.

Step 2: Pair/share

- Student shares notes with a partner.
 - state the factoid
 - how they knew this
 - what further research showed - additional information
 - Switch and 2nd student shares his/her notes
- Together, students discuss: Was anything new revealed? Surprises? Reactions?

Step 3: Further research

- Assign students to research their fact (factoid) by using primary and/or sources that they find using EBSCO Host, such as the America: History and Life database.
- Students should create a T-chart comparing things they learned doing rapid research to facts they learned using primary and/or secondary sources.

Step 4: Whole class discussion

- Students offer what they discovered
- Look for commonalities or patterns
- Draw conclusions about the relation of factoids and facts

Check for understanding: pair/share and whole class review of findings

Independent practice: The activity and cross-checking activities in further lessons is practice.

Elaborate:

- Informational: to explain the main idea in depth using key details that also describe or develop the topic
- Opinion: to dig into the reasons that support your opinion to add depth to your opinion

Closure Activity: Whole class discussion and drawing conclusions from findings.

Modifications/Accommodations

- provide technology as needed (devices for rapid research)
- Provide reading assistance as needed
- Provide presentation assistance as needed – group and class sharing

Materials, Resources & Technology

- Paper and pen for notes
- personal devices (phones, chrome books, class computer) for rapid research

Interdisciplinary Connections

Reading/Language Arts – connections to novels on American Revolution