Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan

Let it begin here! Lexington & Concord: First battles of the American Revolution

Written by Dennis Brindell Fradin

Let it begin here! Lexington & Concord: First battles of the American Revolution was originally designed for use with eighth grade students as part of a larger discussion of the American Revolution and its impact on the colonies. However, this lesson plan can be adapted for any middle or high school grade level studying the American Revolution and, if the teacher desires, any group of states that were part of the original colonies may be substituted for using a singular state. This book serves as a catalyst to interest students in the period, including the people; how they lived, fought, and died. Students will incorporate nonfiction and reference books, Internet resources, including state provided databases, to delve deeper into the lesson. They will study the various people, places, living conditions, weather, transportation, and other topics to extend the lesson. They will also create a blog on their discoveries and record dramatizations of the “biographical characters” they find.

About the Authors

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Recommendation for use to read aloud as part of an overview of a unit on the American Revolution. This lesson is a small unit that will take four to six class sessions to complete, depending upon the number of minutes available for each class session. This lesson plan was designed originally for an eighth grade unit but may readily be adapted for other grade levels, including high school.

The action, drama, and pathos in this retelling of the events at Lexington and Concord create a story rich in human interest and historical fact. A replay of the opening shots of the American Revolution, it also is a “who’s who,” of the major personalities in those battles. Included is an informative section that could be titled a “what happened to the people later” section. The battles are not romanticized; they include the bloody and deadly nature of war. The format provides rich contextual information combined with beautiful pen and ink, watercolor and gouache illustrations that makes it appropriate for a great real aloud. *Includes a bibliography.*

NCSS Standards

Standard Topics

I. Culture

II. Time, Continuity, and Change

III. People, Places, and Environment

V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

X. Civic Ideals and Practices
Materials

- A teacher’s copy of Let It Begin Here! Lexington & Concord: First Battles of the American Revolution.
- A computer with high speed Internet access (media center if collaborating with the media specialist).
- Reference and non-fiction resources from or in the media center.
- Drama props (costumes for Revolutionary period).
- (This link is to handouts and video through PeachStar/Discovery at gpb.org. Pre-tests, timeline, vocabulary list, and cloze tests are included. These should be printed and given to students during this lesson).

Materials

- Digital Flip Camera or other similar equipment.
- 6. 3 x 5 note cards to record resources (or other method for note taking).

Objectives

Students will …

- Research the American Revolution and the roles of the colonies during that time on the media center’s automated card catalog and search primary sources, including personal diaries, on available databases.
- Record findings in a Microsoft Word document; cite source and give attribution.
- Retrieve reference books in the media center to gather information using keywords such as “Colonial Georgia” a colony in particular, “Diary,” or “American Revolution” and “Journal.”
- Recognize non-fiction books in the media center by using the Call Numbers and electronic card catalog. Take notes on information found listing at least three important facts in several areas.
- Create a classroom blog entry on research findings. Use information from books and various databases available to post ideas. (Each student will need a gmail account if using blogs available through Google. Signed Internet Agreements (AUP) should be turned in prior to participation.). Other monitored educational blogs are available.
- Use Flip Camera to record the group dramas representing a reenactment of a scene from the Revolutionary War.

Procedures

Students will be divided into pairs to research the history of the American Revolution/one colony per pair. The goal for each pair is to locate a primary source so they can tell/blog the story of a real person who lived, fought, or had a connection to any of the colonies during the time period of the American Revolutionary War. They will correctly cite/attribute their source information. Students will create a dialogue for their biography character, dress the part, and recall their escapades using the Flip Camera (or similar camera).
Procedures

Specific steps

- Take notes from the information researched on 3x5 note cards or other note taking materials.

- Find quotable material from the source and write these down word for word (remember to give credit to the source).

- Use reference sources (almanac, encyclopedias…) to find information on whether a specific date is mentioned, find what technology was available, what modes of transportation …. Include what is found in the notes.

- The pairs will then use the Flip Camera (or similar camera) to record the dialogue. Save according to directions at a teacher station. Someone will assist students if they need help with this step.

- Finally, the pairs will type the information from the note cards (or other note taking materials) into a Word document. Save the document according to this format: LAST NAME Biography Blog.

The teacher will assist students as they post dialogues (those written and create links to the short video segments they made in pairs) on the classroom blog. Invitations to view the blog will be sent to teachers, parents, board members, and the school superintendent.

Exploration/Introduction

Differentiation Statement: This entire lesson has been built to accommodate different learning modalities and learning levels as an integral part. Opportunities abound for visual, kinesthetic, and audio experiences. The assigned tasks present situations for all students to be involved and the resources chosen are at a variety of levels.

Students will explore a colony’s history by using print, non-print, secondary and primary resources in the state databases and in the school’s media center. They will delve into sources that include information about various persons who were involved with the American Revolution. They will locate monuments or place names in their assigned colony dedicated to American Revolutionary heroes (Polish Count Casimir Pulaski/Savannah is one example). They will explore economic conditions, weather conditions, and day-to-day tasks of ordinary families of that time period. They will compare jobs/careers today to the jobs of the late 1700s. They will study transportation, clothing, trade, music, communication, and technology of that time period. Their “biography character” will speak about these topics in their dialogues.
Exploration/Introduction

Introduce topic and read *Let It Begin Here! Lexington & Concord: First Battles of the American Revolution*. Connect to the automated card catalog and tell students they are to search for a fiction book with an American Revolution setting. (There may be multiple copies of the proposed titles, though students may also choose a book with a similar setting that is not from the multiple copy choices with teacher approval.)

(Teacher should choose five to six of these titles and order extra copies ahead of time, either from other schools in the district or an inter-library loan, prior to the lesson so that small groups or pairs of students can read the same title. Teacher should order one large print copy of each of the titles if a visually impaired student will be participating in the lesson. Once students have had a chance to preview the books, they will check their choice out and write their name and book title on a list for the teacher.)

Possible Teacher Dialogue:

“Each of you will read a book about The American Revolutionary War. You will keep a journal of what happens to the character in your book. Then, you will locate a real person that lived during that time period and blog information about that person to the classroom blog. Use the databases available in the media center to search full text articles. Look for diaries or first-hand accounts of the American Revolution, specifically your assigned colony. You should notice the resources for your colony listed in the databases. While half the class works at the computer stations, the rest of you will search non-fiction and reference print sources in the media center. Raise your hand if you need assistance.”

Development

Pre-assess students’ understanding about the American Revolution and role of the individual colonies by discussing and asking:

1. What do we mean by the word "Patriot"?
2. Who were the Loyalists?
3. Why did the American Revolution take place?
4. Do you know if one of your ancestors fought in the American Revolution? If so, what do you know about him?
5. Other questions that are appropriate to the chosen area may also be added here.

For those interested in the southern colonies, show segments on the American Revolution in Georgia by viewing *Georgia Stories* through Georgia Public Broadcast at: http://www.gpb.org/. Click on Education and then click on Georgia Stories. Registration is required, but it is open to any interested party.

Read and discuss *Let It Begin Here! Lexington & Concord: First Battles of the American Revolution*, emphasizing the multiple perspectives represented.
At the end of the lesson, watch the video, *Johnny Tremain: The Shot Heard Round the World*.

**Expansion**

Provide the information below to students electronically and use the following as a web quest with interactive map. (Instructions: Copy and paste this portion of the lesson into a Word document, save it to a public drive or the desktop of each station so that the document will be available when students go to the computers in the media center to work. Once the lesson is complete, the link will be erased.) *(Extending the Lesson links and information: National Endowment for the Humanities website. http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=679)*

Lacking a substantial navy, the United States relied heavily on privateers — that is, private ship owners who were licensed by the government to attack enemy vessels. More information about this is available at the page "Privateers in the American Revolution," an EDSITEment-reviewed site maintained by the National Park Service. In addition, among the documents of the Continental Congress located at the EDSITEment-reviewed [American Memory Project](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/americanrevolution/) are several pieces of legislation related to this subject:

- Instructions to the captains and commanders of private armed vessels which shall have commissions or letters of marque and reprisal, May 2, 1780
- An ordinance, relative to the capture and condemnation of prizes
- An ordinance, for amending the ordinance, ascertaining what captures on water shall be lawful
- Resolution on letters of marque and reprisal, April 3, 1776
- Letter of marque and reprisal

Any of the locations indicated [on the interactive map](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=679) may be the subject for deeper study. In particular, Links to the Past, the EDSITEment-reviewed site of the [National Park Service](http://www.nps.gov/inter/), contains a resource called "Teaching with Historic Places", which includes several lesson plans dealing with specific battles from the Revolutionary War.

Students may use the events indicated [on the interactive map](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=679), as well as the documents referenced in this lesson, to develop an interactive timeline of the southern phase of the Revolutionary War.

An excellent resource that allows students to de-sign this timeline may be found at [Read-Write-Think](http://www.readwritethink.org/). A resource for all student materials available is found at [http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp](http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp)

### Assessment
Teacher observation and student work samples serve as documentation of individual and small group performance. Black line masters and teacher resources are provided at the websites mentioned above. Rubrics, created through collaboration of the teacher and media specialist, may also be used to grade written and oral reports.

### Suggested Extension Activities
Beyond the blog reporting by each pair, the following may be used if appropriate for the grade level:

**Technology/History:** Students may locate photographs, letters or postcards, documents, and other information representing an event or personal account of the American Revolution. Print images to display in the media center.

**Economics:** Students may explore examples of taxation issues in their local community. Students might also explore other situations in the world that led to armed conflict.

### Additional References

**Books**


Thirteen-year-old Jonathan goes off to fight in the Revolutionary War and discovers the real war is being fought within himself.


During the summer of 1776, ten-year-old Peggy discovers a wounded soldier in the woods near her Brooklyn farm, and is convinced that his sketchbook contains the secret notes of a Hessian spy.


Henry complains to the royal governor, General Gage, after his plan to sled down the steep hill at Boston Common is thwarted by the masses of British troops camped there.


Recounts the tragedy that strikes the Meeker family during the Revolution when one son joins the rebel forces, while the rest of the family tries to stay neutral in a Tory town. Includes primary source documents and reference resources.
Books


In 1781, twelve-year-old Elizabeth Zane, great-great-aunt of novelist Zane Grey, leaves Philadelphia to return to her brothers’ homestead near Fort Henry in what is now West Virginia, where she plays an important role in the final battle of the American Revolution. Includes bibliographical references (p. 197-198).


"American girl." In 1775, Elspeth Monro struggles to adapt to life in North Carolina after leaving behind her native Scotland, but her new-found comfort is shattered by the brewing Revolution.


After injuring his hand, a silversmith's apprentice in Boston becomes a messenger for the Sons of Liberty in the days before the American Revolution.


Presents a short history of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, and describes how the rebel leaders were warned of the approaching British and the standoff between 70 Lexington militiamen and 250 British regulars.


Left in charge of the family when his father leaves their South Carolina home to fight in the Revolutionary War, 13-year-old Joey Kershaw finds all his resources tested when General Cornwallis comes to town and chooses the Kershaw house as his headquarters.


In Williamsburg, Virginia, two years before the start of the American Revolution, nine-year-old Maria worries that her mother will lose her contract to publish official reports and announcements of the British government because she prints anti-British articles in their family-run newspaper.
Books


Left alone after the deaths of her father and brother who took opposite sides in the War for Independence, and fleeing from the British who seek to arrest her, Sarah struggles to shape a new life for herself in the wilderness.


A priceless, handcrafted rifle, fired throughout the American Revolution, is passed down through the years until it fires on a fateful Christmas Eve of 1994.


In South Carolina in 1780, fourteen-year-old Caroline sees the Revolutionary War take a terrible toll among her family and friends and comes to understand the true nature of war.


With their father away most of the time advocating independence for the American colonies, the children of Patrick Henry try to raise themselves, manage the family plantation, and care for their mentally ill mother.


When British raids off the coast of New England become more frequent, young Asa must row through the night to warn his friends on the Massachusetts coast of an impending attack.

Videos


After injuring his hand, a silversmith's apprentice in Boston becomes a messenger for the Sons of Liberty in the days before the American Revolution.
Weblinks

http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu

This database includes original documents, photographs, and other records of Georgia history. Do not click on Educator Resources; just type in the search box on the left hand side of the screen.

http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?subcategory=74

This large collection includes primary sources such as original letters, photos, receipts, documents, diaries, and other information about the American Revolution. Use the search box.

http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=679

This lesson plan includes an interactive map about the American Revolution.


Includes interviews, dramatizations, and documents about Georgia. This series is also available in video format.

University of Georgia, & GALILEO Databases Collection (GALILEO). (1990s). [Athens, Ga.]: University of Georgia Libraries.
http://www.galileo.peachnet.edu

Some databases are not available to all parties. Includes articles, primary sources, reference, magazine, and other databases.

The following websites have consistently been useful during instruction for both students and teachers:

Amazing Women in War and Peace
http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/femvets.html

American Revolution
http://edtech.kennesaw.edu/web/amrevol.html
### Weblinks

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