

REPORTING

The Revolutionary War

Lesson Plan: Evaluating Civil Disobedience

RATIONALE: By and large, early protests against the Sugar and Stamp Acts were peaceful and nonviolent. However, as time wore on, pressure built among the restless Americans who saw Parliament as slow to act on their concerns. By September of 1765, tensions were running extremely high. Several malicious acts, ranging from the burning of effigies to the destruction of property, were committed throughout the colonies. The *Supplement to the Boston News-Letter* on September 5, 1765 reported on a variety of these events. This lesson is designed to evaluate these actions. While this lesson is primarily focused on these specific actions, the lesson could be modified to address a number of other events throughout the Revolutionary War, including the Boston Tea Party.

TIME: Two 45-minute class periods

PRIOR LEARNING: Students should already be familiar with the Sugar and Stamp Acts, as well as the ways in which American and British

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to...

- Understand the series of events related to an act of civil disobedience
- Analyze and evaluate the roles that individual choice and chance play in the events that occurred.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED: (*Common Core Standards*)

Listed below are some of the Common Core Standards for Literacy in History and Social Studies addressed for grades 9-10, but teachers can easily level down to grades 6-7-8 or up to 11-12 with minor modifications. Depending on how a teacher structures an assignment and the requirements for completion, these assignments can be modified to address many of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards. You can find the reading standards broken down for history at: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

RI: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.10 By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

RI: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

RI: Craft and Structure

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.5](#) Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6](#) Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

RI: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8](#) Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

W: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7](#) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W: Range of Writing

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.10](#) Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

(National Center for History in the Schools)**▪ Historical Comprehension**

- *Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage* by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments and what consequences or outcomes followed.
- *Read historical narratives imaginatively*, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved—their probably values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

▪ Historical Issues

- *Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served*; estimating the position, power and priority of each player involved; assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives

SUGGESTED MATERIALS:

- Copies of individual articles from the Supplement to *the Boston News Letter* on September 5, 1765.
- Computer and LCD projector, or some other means of sharing images.

DAY 1**WARM-UP: 5 minutes**

1. Discuss with students the meaning of “civil disobedience.” Give one or two famous examples (such as Tiananmen Square or the burning of draft cards). Talk about how each led to both good and bad outcomes.
2. Have students “shout out” as many examples as they can think of that fit the definitions of either civil disobedience. Write them on the board, or briefly discuss a few in relation to the definition. Ask students to identify the good and bad outcomes of each act of civil disobedience.

ACTIVITY:

1. Give students a copy of the first account in the Supplement of the Boston News Letter (the full first column and part of the second).
2. **(3 minutes) MODEL:** project the first paragraph and have students read it quietly as you read it aloud. As you read, mark the three events as 1, 2, 3 in the paragraph, and underline a word or two that might be difficult to understand. At this point, do not discuss the event in any way, other than to clarify what happened. Point out that this is all they have to do as they read the rest of the article.
3. **(15 minutes) Have students read the rest of the article independently,** continuing to mark each event of the account in the margin of their handout. They should also identify any words or phrases they do not understand.
4. **(5 minutes) Briefly discuss the course of events.** Make sure all students understand what happened, but discourage any discussion of how students feel about those events. Tell them they will have the opportunity to do so shortly. Encourage all students to participate.
5. **Think-Pair-Share**
 - a. **(5 minutes) THINK:** Have students respond to the following question quietly, in writing: *“As an act of civil disobedience, were the “rioters” morally justified in their actions?”* Remind them to support their answer with references to the text. Remind them that in 1765, Americans were not yet considering full-out Revolution. Encourage students to think as if these events have just happened, not through the lens of history. They should try to consider all possible perspectives.
 - b. **(3 minutes) PAIR:** Have students pair up and share their point of view on the question. They should not read their written response to each other. Rather, each should express their point of view verbally, without referring to their writing. They do not have to come to an agreement.
 - c. **(rest of class) SHARE:** Have a variety of students share their thoughts with the class. Encourage different viewpoints.
6. **HOMEWORK, DAY 1:** Have students respond in writing to the following questions, in two to three sentences each (adjust according to the level of students: Advanced students should be encouraged to write more, lower ability students may be asked to provide less.)
 - a. *What were the motives of the people involved?*
 - b. *What was gained by their actions?*
 - c. *What were the consequences?*
 - d. *How might the British have viewed their actions?*
 - e. *How might other Colonial Americans have viewed their actions? (Encourage students to think like a Colonial American, not someone who knows the outcome of the Revolution.)*

For questions d & e, students should consider multiple possibilities.

DAY 2

WARM-UP: (5 Minutes)

- Before collecting students' answers from the previous night's homework, ask students to quietly reread their answers and choose the one that was most well-written to share with the class. You may choose to present these on a Document Projector or have students read them aloud. Have students explain why they feel the paragraph is well written. Remind them to focus on the writing, not the opinion itself (structure, depth of argument, use of examples, etc) This warm-up helps students evaluate their own writing skills as they also refresh their memories on the day's lesson.
- Collect students papers before beginning the activity for day 2.

ACTIVITY:

- 1. (10 minutes) Have students read the rest of page 1, related to the burning of effigies.** Make sure that students understand what an effigy is before they read and clarify any other words with which you think students may have difficulty. As they read, students should underline important information and write any questions they have in the margin.
- 2. (15 minutes) Parliament Discussion.** Divide students into groups. Instruct them to think like members of the British Parliament, who have just received the accounts the students have read over the last two days. Write the following questions on the board:
 - a. How would members of parliament have reacted to the events?*
 - b. How would they have thought local authorities had handled those events, given the few clues that are offered by the articles that are presented?*
 - c. What should be done in response to these accounts?*

Encourage students to consider these questions as if they do not know the outcome of the Revolutionary War. They should consider a number of possible responses to the rebellious actions of the Americans. One member of the group should be the recorder of the group discussion.

- 3. (15 Minutes) Parliamentary Resolution.** As a group, determine which course of action should be taken in response to the actions of the Americans. Give them the example of a resolution as a model, and a copy of the "resolution handout" to fill out.

The Resolution should meet the following requirements:

- a. At least three "whereas" statements, listing the reasons for the resolution
- b. At least two resolutions.
- c. Well written, using proper sentence construction, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

SUGGESTED ACCOMODATIONS:

- Give lower ability students a handout with of comprehension questions to answer as they read each passage.
- For Day 1 homework, have students write a time-line of the events, identifying at least 8 individual points along the way.
- Instead of a parliamentary discussion and resolution, have students answer the following questions:

- If you were in charge of the British army in Boston, Norwich or Newport, how would you handle the situation? List at least three orders you would give your soldiers.
- If you were a member of British Parliament, how would you respond to the actions of the Americans? List at least three different ways the British Parliament could have responded to these actions.

SUGGESTED EXTENSIONS:

- Have students read the second page of the Supplement and write a 1-2 page reaction.
- Watch a news report of a recent riot. Discuss the motives of the rioters, the similarities between the modern event and the historical account already discussed, and evaluate the possible costs and benefits of modern event.

SUGGESTED ALTERNATE EXERPTS:

This lesson could be easily modified to work with accounts of any of the following Revolutionary War events:

- The Boston Tea Party
- The Battle of Lexington and Concord
- Nonimportation Agreements

SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL READING:

Reporting the Revolutionary War: Before It Was History, It Was News by Todd Andrlik

