

# ***REPORTING***

## ***The Revolutionary War***

### **Lesson Plan: Town Hall Meeting**

**RATIONALE:** This short lesson is designed to introduce students to the first steps of the Revolution and to consider the mindset and various viewpoints of Colonial Americans. However, the general focus of the lesson is to consider various perspectives on an issue. Therefore, it could be modified to address any number of passages from *Reporting the Revolutionary War*.

**TIME:** One 45-minute class period

**PRIOR LEARNING:** Students should have already read about and understood the French and Indian War and the consequences of that for both Britain and America. Students should also be aware that Parliament had already considered the legality of taxing Americans, who had no representation in Parliament. It may be helpful for students to read the article on Page 3 of *Reporting the Revolutionary War* before conducting this lesson.

**OBJECTIVES:** Students will be able to...

- Understand the various perspectives of colonial Americans.
- Evaluate the impact of the taxation on colonial Americans.

### **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.

#### **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.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

**W: Text Types and Purposes**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1a](#) Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

**W: Text Types and Purposes**

[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***

- Appreciate historical perspectives—particularly the ability to ...consider the historical context in which the events unfolded—the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and...avoid “present-mindedness,”—judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

**▪ *Historical Analysis and Interpretation***

- *Compare and contrast different sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences*
- *Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.*

**SUGGESTED MATERIALS:**

- *Pennsylvania Gazette, May 10, 1764* (reprinted on page 4 of *Reporting the Revolutionary War*)
- *New-Hampshire Gazette, July 20, 1764*
- *London Chronicle, December 6, 1764*

**WARM-UP: 5-10 minutes**

1. Give students two minutes to list, on their own, as many facts as they can about the French and Indian War, the Sugar Act, and the Stamp Act.
2. Create a class time-line of these facts. Have students “shout-out” their facts, one at a time. As each new fact is presented, discuss where it happens on the time-line. At first, allow each student to present only one fact, and try to involve as many students as possible. As contributions dwindle, allow students who have already spoken to add to the time-line.
3. Identify any relevant events or facts that are necessary to complete understanding for the day’s lesson.

**ACTIVITY:**

1. **(2 minutes) Quickly divide the class randomly into groups.** Identify each group as follows:
  - a. Merchants and shop keepers (including taverns)
  - b. Shippers (including smugglers)
  - c. Customs Officials (law enforcement)
  - d. Printers (of newspapers, pamphlets, etc)
  - e. Royal Government Officials (Royal Governor, Lieutenant Governor, etc)

2. **(10 minutes) Have students quietly read the excerpt from the *Pennsylvania Gazette, May 10, 1764*.** They should take on the perspective of a colonial American as they read.
  - a. As they read...
    - i. Circle any words or phrases that need clarification for understanding
    - ii. Draw a wavy line under words that are used in an interesting way, or that strike the student as an interesting phrase
    - iii. Underline the most important pieces of information to which a Colonial American (in their role) would react.
  - b. After they read...
    - i. Write a 2-4 sentence reaction to the passage, answering the question: As a representative of your group, how will you be affected by the proposed taxes?
3. **(5-8 minutes) Once all students have finished reading the passage (but all may have not written their response), have students meet with other members of their group to ....**
  - a. (3 minutes, max) clarify the meaning of the passage. Students within the group should be responsible for asking and answering questions related to meanings of words or passages. Remind students that they are being timed for this activity, so they don't waste time.
  - b. Quickly review their reactions to the passage, focusing on their assigned role as a Colonial American.
4. **Call the class together for a "Town Meeting." Remind students that they should remain in their "personas."**
  - a. As the teacher, take on the role of a town leader, who has called the town together to discuss the article. (It would be great if you could wear a tri-cornered hat and bang a gavel here and there!)
  - b. Open the "meeting" with a call to order.
  - c. Ask various "townspeople" to share their point of view on the news. What are their concerns? What are the reasons to support the tax? What are the reasons to fight against the tax? Remind students that the purpose is to get various points of view and that dissenting opinions are valuable, too.
  - d. If students are reluctant to participate or you suspect they will focus on only the "Revolutionary" point of view, consider offering points for participation, especially that which offers new insights or perspectives.
5. **For homework: have students read the reactions that appear in *the New-Hampshire Gazette, July 20, 1764* and *the London Chronicle, December 6, 1764*.** As they read they should underline the most important passages. After reading each article, students should write a two to four sentence reaction to the passage, to be turned in the following day. Primarily, students should focus on how the additional passages would affect the point of view of a colonial American, or of a British citizen.

## SUGGESTED ACCOMODATIONS

- If students have difficulty thinking in abstract terms, ask them to answer the following questions:
  - Comprehension
    - *What are the reasons for the tax?*
    - *What is being taxed?*
    - *What is the debate in Parliament about?*
  - Analysis & Interpretation
    - *In what ways will the colonists be affected by the tax?*
- For the homework assignment, students who have difficulty comprehending the passages could be given just one passage to read, and answer specific questions related to the passage, based on their area of need.
  - List five words you don't understand and find their definition
  - Summarize the article in your own words.
  - Identify three important points the writer makes in the article

## SUGGESTED EXTENSIONS

- Have students work in groups to write and perform a skit in which members of various groups discuss the pros and cons of the act.
- Have students work in groups to write and perform a “news broadcast” in which the information is presented “News-channel” style, with opinions from various members of society.
- Have students analyze a similar issue from current society, using the internet as a source of information. Students should find one news article about a proposed law or tax and write a short response, indicating the reasons for the proposal, and the pros and cons.

## SUGGESTED ALTERNATE ACCOUNTS:

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

- The Townshend Acts
- The Tea Act
- Any of the Intolerable Acts

## SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL READING:

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

