

Delaware Recommended Curriculum

Lesson Title: Delaware Public Archives- Continental vs. British Soldiers (Lesson H)

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District: Red Clay Consolidated School District

Content Area: Social Studies (History)

Grade Level: Grades 4-5

Summary of Lesson

In this lesson, students will compare the British and American Armies using "The battle of Lexington" published by John H. Daniels & Son, and Percy Moran's "Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga." Students will also view and analyze a letter written by an Army officer from Delaware to the President (Governor) of Delaware during the American Revolution to understand the challenges the Continental Army faced.

Resources Needed:

- Lesson H, Delaware Public Archives, Delaware Archives Volume 1
- Image 1: Lesson H – The battle of Lexington – courtesy of Library of Congress
- Image 2: Lesson H – Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga – courtesy of Library of Congress
- Handout 1: "I notice" graphic organizer
- Handout 2: Transcript of Document, Letter by Captain William McKennan

Stage 1 – Desired Results

What students will know, do, and understand

Delaware Content Standards

History Anchor Standard Four: Students will develop historical knowledge of major events and phenomena in world, United States, and Delaware history [Content].

History Anchor Standard Two: Students will gather, examine, and analyze historical data [Analysis].

4-5a: Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials.

Big Ideas

American Revolution, challenges faced by Continental soldiers, drawing conclusions.

Lesson Essential Questions

- How does the appearance of the Continental Army compare to the appearance of the British Army?
- What challenges does the Continental Army face?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will know...

- challenges the Continental Army faced
- a firsthand perspective of a Captain in the Continental Army

Students will be able to...

- find supporting details in primary source materials
- analyze images to determine similarities and differences
- draw conclusions from primary sources

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not Desired Results are achieved

Assessment

What challenges was the Continental Army facing at the time William McKennan wrote this letter?

Rubric

2= response gives a relevant and/or accurate conclusion and uses examples from the document to support the explanation.

1= response gives a relevant and/or accurate conclusion, but fails to use examples from the document to support the explanation.

or

response uses examples from the documents, but fails to draw a relevant conclusion.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

(Design learning activities to align with Stage 1 and Stage 2 expectations)

Instructional Strategies

Procedures

I. Warm-Up (developing context):

To begin the lesson, have students draw a sketch of a Continental soldier with all the necessary equipment. When students have finished, ask students to share their ideas/drawings with the class.

II. Think-Pair-Share/ Analyzing Images:

Project, or hand out, Image 1 "The battle of Lexington", Image 2 "Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga", and the "I notice" graphic organizer (Hand Out 1).

Give the student pairs several minutes to study each image, record, and discuss what they noticed in each image. Then allow students time to share their findings with the class.

Ask the class:

- Which image represents the Continental Army? Which image represents the British Army? How do you know?
- What similarities and differences do you notice between the two images? *"The battle of Lexington" - (American Army). "Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga" - (British Army) Note the well supplied and well clothed British soldiers.*
- What conclusion can you draw about the American Revolution? What details support your conclusion?

III. Analyzing a Source:

Display the original document from the public archives, pass out copies of the original document transcript written by William McKennan to student pairs (Source 1). Inform students of the document background information.

Read the letter aloud to the class and ask students to highlight any challenges or hardships the Continental soldiers faced, according to the letter.

Discuss student findings as a class, and record shared information on the board if needed.

IV. Debrief:

Share and discuss the background of the American Revolution and how the American Army had to deal with many hardships including a lack of supplies

and clothing. Discuss the contrast between the American Army and the well-equipped, well-clothed British. (See background information.)

Ask students to explain how their soldier drawings from the beginning of the lesson and their view of a Continental soldier has changed.

Ask: Given the challenges the Continental Army faced, why do you think the Americans won the war when they were faced with such overwhelming odds?

V. Assessment:

What challenges was the Continental Army facing at the time William McKennan wrote this letter?

Background Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION of American Revolution

During the American Revolution, the Continental Army continually dealt with a lack of men, supplies, weapons, uniforms, and food. Each former colony was required to raise a set number of troops. To induce men to enlist, 100 acres of land was offered to each man who served for the length of the war. The recruits were furnished with weapons, wages, and uniforms by their respective states. Most states were unable to meet their quota of soldiers or the material needs of the soldiers that did serve. The letter and overhead of the American soldiers used in this lesson are evidence of this problem. In contrast to the Continental Army, the British troops were well supplied with uniforms, supplies, and weapons.

DOCUMENT BACKGROUND (Source 1)

This letter is part of Delaware Archives (Volume I, page 126) - a collection of military papers that start in the mid-18th century and continue through the conclusion of the War of 1812. William McKennan, the author of the letter, was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the American Army in 1776. Wounded at the Battle of Germantown, McKennan was promoted to Captain in 1779. The letter, written on October 26, 1781, was composed in the American camp near Yorktown, Virginia. The British Army under General Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown on October 19 - effectively ending the fighting of the American Revolution.

THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON (Image 1)

Considered part of the start of the Revolutionary War, the Battle of Lexington started before daybreak on April 19, 1775. Although Captain John Parker and the British lieutenant ordered their men to hold their fire, but an unknown shot came from somewhere, and the British opened fire on the colonists. In the end, eight men died, all colonists, and another ten were injured.

BURGOYNE'S SURRENDER AT SARATOGA (Image 2)

The surrender of British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York, on October 17, 1777, came after battles with American General Horatio Gates around Saratoga in September and October. Burgoyne's surrender to Gates was a turning point in the Revolutionary War because it prevented the British from isolating New England and convinced the French to actively support the American cause.