

The British Caribbean and Colonial America Graduate Project
Lesson Plans

Gerry Zelenak

HIST 530: The British Caribbean and Colonial America

Course: AP United States History (fulfills the 10th grade requirement for Social Studies)

Grade Level: High School Sophomores

Class Size: 30

Unit: Period 3 (1754-1800)

College Board (Advanced Placement United States History) Standards:

Key Concept 3.1: *British attempts to assert tighter control over its North American colonies and the colonial resolve to pursue self-government led to a colonial independence movement and the Revolutionary War.*

Sub Concept II: The desire of many colonists to assert ideals of self-government in the face of renewed British imperial efforts led to a colonial independence movement and war with Britain.

Course Context and Overview of Text and Unit Content:

This lesson takes place in the context of our Period 3: *A New Nation* unit. The Foner chapter that encompass our activities is:

Chapter 5: The American Revolution (pages 181-215) explains the roots of the American Revolution and the chain of events that led breakdown of the relationship between Britain and her North American colonies. It explains, at length, the significance of the Stamp Act crisis that set the stage for the debate on American independence.

Unit: Period 3 – A New Nation

Topic: American Independence

Lesson: *The Case for Independence – Loyalists and Patriots Debate*

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain the arguments between Loyalists and Patriot regarding independence from Britain.

Activities:

- 1. Introduction:** I will start the class with two brief excerpts regarding independence, one from Daniel Leonard and one from John Adams.

“The Englishman glories in being subject to, and protected by, the British Empire...”

Daniel Leonard

“We observe the Navigation Acts and have submitted to other acts of trade, however grievous some may be...”

John Adams

Allow for a brief discussion on what these quotes were trying to say about the relationship between Britain and the mainland colonies. Then show the clip from the HBO series, John Adams - Episode 2: Independence. The clip shows the dramatized final arguments regarding the vote for independence between Adams and John Dickenson at the Second Continental Congress that starts at 1:07:15. This will introduce the students to the next part of our lesson: The Trial.

- 2. Primary Document Analysis:** After a brief explanation about Leonard and Adams and the loyalist and patriot causes, students will be divided into three groups: Patriots, Loyalists and Indeterminants.

- The patriots will be assigned to read “Novanglus: February 6, 1775”
- The Loyalists will be assigned to read “Massachusettensis: January 9, 1775”
- Indeterminants will be assigned one of several readings from eyewitnesses to the events of the colonial crisis. These are:
 - James Otis Starts a Fire – John Adams
 - A Mob Confronts a Stamp Distributor – Francis Fauquier
 - Franklin Argues Against the Stamp Act in the British Parliament – Benjamin Franklin
 - The Boston Massacre – John Tudor

- The Boston Tea Party – John Andrews
- New Yorkers Abuse Tories – James Rivington
- Conflicting Versions of the Outbreak (British and American)
- A Slave Seeks Freedom by Running Away to the British Army – Boston King

- 3. Building Cases:** The Loyalists and Tories will read their passages (and be told of Thomas Paine and James Chalmers for further research), and work together to build a persuasive case to deliver to the indeterminants to determine the American Answer to the following question: Should the United States remain loyal to Britain or should they pursue independence. Each team will have a discussion board or chatroom to communicate with each other over the next two evenings. When class resumes after that time, the teams will present their case with a similar structure to a court case. The indeterminants will form the “jury” and will deliberate and present their verdict: *Independence or Loyalty*.
- 4. The “Trial” and Verdict:** The trial will occur two days later. First, the Loyalists will present their brief (2-3 minutes) opening statement, followed by the Patriots. Each teammate will need to present either the opening statement or ONE of the arguments/witnesses. Then the loyalists will prosecute their case one argument at a time by calling “witnesses”. These “witnesses” are actually events and arguments (for example, “The Cost of Protecting an Empire: we need to defray the cost of protecting you by having the colonies pay a fraction of that cost...”). When the team has presented that argument, the Patriots will have a chance to rebut that argument. When the Loyalists have rested their case, the Patriots present their case in the same manner. When the Patriots rest, the indeterminants deliberate and present a verdict.
- 5. Debrief:** In small groups, students will discuss the outcomes of the trial and the strongest arguments presented by the “lawyers”. Summarize by mentioning that not all British colonies rebelled against the mother country and describe the case in the West Indies. Allow for further discussion... this last point will generate a fair amount. Perhaps, a good idea might be to assign excerpts from chapter one of O’Shaughnessy’s *An Empire Divided*, British Sojourners, or *Colonial Identity and Revolutionary Loyalty* by Sarah Yeh, for a comparison of the characteristics that made the “Spirit of Independence” stronger on the mainland.

Resource List for Lessons and Activities

- AVID, Advancement via Individual Determination, <https://www.avid.org>
- Colbert, David. *Eyewitness to America: 500 Years of American History in the Words Who Saw it Happen*. New York: Random House, 1997
- College Board, <https://www.collegeboard.org>
- Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- Hofstadter, Richard and Ver Steeg, Clarence L. *Great Issues in American History: From Settlement to Revolution, 1584-1776*. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Johnson, Michael. *Reading the American Past Vol. 1: To 1877*, 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's
- Kennedy, David M. and Bailey, Thomas A. *The American Spirit*, 11th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.
- Shoemaker, Nancy. "A Typology of Colonialism." *Perspectives in History*, (October, 2015): 28-30.
- Taylor, Alan. *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.