

# *The Causes of the American Revolution*



*Curriculum Designed by Shae Luch*

*Sources from the William Clements Library  
at the University of Michigan*

## The Causes of the American Revolution Unit Outline

Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time to look through my curriculum on the causes of the American Revolution. While I was previously a middle and high school Social Studies teacher, this is my first time developing an official curriculum. Within this unit, there are 11 lessons that should take about a month to cover with middle school students. I had a clear objective in creating this curriculum that is set through my philosophy of education which is that the purpose of K-12 schooling is to build lifelong learners who are supported in their inquiries, given opportunities to learn actively and authentically, and are challenged to disrupt oppressive structures. With this philosophy as the foundation of my curriculum, I developed my design with three specific skills that I believe address and support my essential questions and learning objectives. My aim, through this curriculum, is to support students' development of *historical knowledge* through actively taking the role of a historian, *historical thinking* through the framework of challenging traditional narratives and addressing a diverse set of historical perspectives, and *historical skills* by authentically developing learning structures and assessments to augment specific academic proficiencies.

Every lesson is structured around a particular historical career and historical skill that the student will be introduced to and practice. For example, in Lesson 3: The Proclamation of 1763, students take the role of cartographers to analyze historical maps about the French and Indian War and the Proclamation of 1763. The skills students will practice in this lesson are how to effectively examine maps to understand their purposes and biases. I used this structure to allow students to be actively involved in the learning process. Throughout this curriculum, students are in charge of their learning and are exposed to many roles that historians take throughout their inquiries and investigations.

For their final project, students will become curators at the Clements Library at the University of Michigan and link primary sources to narrate their own story of the Causes of the American Revolution. In this project, students will need to understand the many perspectives, biases, and misrepresentations of events, ideas, and people throughout history. Students will challenge traditional historical narratives by confronting their own biases and take a firm stand on these misrepresentations to challenge the traditional historical narratives and shine light on those stories that are not often told.

There is an almanac (workbook) that accompanies every lesson to help guide and organize students to prepare for their final project. Every exit slip question supports students by connecting what they learned in that lesson to what they will need to accomplish for the final project. The almanac will create a space for students to keep all their work and sources for the unit, so they can easily flip through it to develop their own historical narrative.

It was a great pleasure for me to create this curriculum and I am so happy to share it with you! Most of the primary sources were taken from the Clements Library at the University of Michigan's digital collections, and some of the secondary sources were taken from Social Studies teaching websites. At the end of each lesson, I provided the links for all my sources, so you are able to look though the sources from the original sites and use them how you see fit.

I hope you enjoy this curriculum and are able to make it your own!

Educationally yours,  
Shae Luch

## Guiding Questions

### *Lesson Level Content Questions:*

- Who is a curator and what does their job entail?
- Throughout the French and Indian War, what were the British fighting for? What were the French fighting for? What were the Native Americans fighting for?
- Why isn't the artistic portrayal of "The Death of General Wolfe" by Benjamin West a credible representation of the actual event?
- What is the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and what were its effects?
- Why did the British Parliament create and enforce the Stamp Act?
- What was the American colonists' view of events and what happened during the Boston Massacre?
- What was the British commander's view of the events and how did it differ from the colonists' view of events?
- What were specific events and factors that led to the beginning of armed resistance by the American colonists against the British?
- How did the Boston Tea Party change the relationship between the colonies and England?
- What were the five acts that British Parliament passed as punishment for the Boston Tea Party?
- What did each of these acts do and what was the message Britain was trying to convey through the Intolerable Acts?
- What are two different depictions of the Battle of Bunker Hill?
- What events led to the American colonists writing the Declaration of Independence?
- What is the structure of the Declaration of Independence?

### *Topical Essential Questions:*

- What decisions must curators make to tell historical stories?
- How do you know if a primary source is trustworthy, unbiased, and credible?
- How did the Royal Proclamation of 1763 raise tensions among Indigenous Peoples and American colonists that set the stage for the American Revolution?
- Was the Royal Proclamation of 1763 fair?
- How does the creation of maps establish systems of power and privilege?
- How can maps show bias?
- What were the varying perspectives surrounding the implementation of the Stamp Act?
- Why were the colonists upset about the implementation of the Stamp Act?
- Why do people who experience the same event have different views of what happened?
- How did Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre influence the colonists' reaction to the event?
- How did the Committees of Correspondence affect the systems of communication between the colonies?
- How can we "know" what happened at a historical event of the distant past?
- Why was the rhetoric of "enslavement" so important to the colonial leaders and how does it exemplify hypocrisy in relation to enslaving Africans in America?
- What are similarities and differences between modern protests and colonial protests?

- What effect did the Intolerable Acts have on the American colonists?
- Why are people of color and women not often included in 'traditional' lists of colonial leaders?
- What impact did colonial leaders have on the colonists?
- Why are Black men and women hardly portrayed in artifacts and sources about the American Revolution? How does this portrayal impact our interpretation today?
- What injustices persist today that were not mentioned in the Declaration of Independence?

***Overarching Essential Question:***

- What are the causes of the American Revolution?

## Learning Objectives

### **Lesson 1: Curating History!**

- Students will be introduced to the goals of the unit and will explore what they will have to do for the final unit project.
- Students will examine the job of a curator by navigating online exhibits at the Clements Library.
- Students will acknowledge that all historical stories have some purpose and perspective they are told from, and it is the job of historians to try to identify the biases and extract the truth from those stories.

### **Lesson 2: The French and Indian War**

- Students will read and annotate a summary of the French and Indian War.
- Students will analyze, interpret, and challenge the trustworthiness of Benjamin West's painting, "The Death of General Wolf."
- Students will learn to question the credibility of primary and secondary sources.

### **Lesson 3: The Proclamation of 1763**

- Students will identify the significance of the Treaty of Paris and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and assess how these treaties raised tensions within Indigenous communities and the American colonists.
- Students will argue how map creation establishes systems bias and power.

### **Lesson 4: The Stamp Act**

- Students will read and annotate sources about the Stamp Act to understand the varying perspectives between the British government and the American colonists about its implementation.

### **Lesson 5: The Boston Massacre**

- Students will be able to develop a claim about the Boston Massacre using evidence from their reading to support the American colonists or the British military.
- Students will be able to explain their claim in front of the class and respond to questions from the judge.

### **Lesson 6: Committees of Correspondence**

- Students will summarize the specific events and factors that led to the beginning of armed resistance by the Americas.
- Students will explore alternatives to armed resistance by the American colonists.

### **Lesson 7: The Boston Tea Party**

- Students will analyze the causes and effects of the Boston Tea Party.
- Students will reconstruct the events that happened at the Boston Tea Party through a primary source investigation.

- Students will recognize the hypocrisy of how the American patriots used the symbol of enslavement to Britain as a rallying cry for their cause, while also enslaving Africans in America themselves.
- Students will make past to present connections between colonial and modern protests.

#### **Lesson 8: Bostonians in Distress**

- Students will be able to describe the five acts known as the Coercive/Intolerable Acts.
- Students will be able to explain the message Britain was trying to convey through the Intolerable Acts.
- Students will be able to infer the effect that these acts had on the American colonists.

#### **Lesson 9: Colonial Leaders**

- Students will teach the background, goals, and policies of various colonial leaders to their fellow peers.
- Students will examine the gaps in representation of people of color and women throughout historical events.
- Students will practice skills of verbally articulating an argument.

#### **Lesson 10: The Battle of Bunker Hill**

- Students will be able to analyze and explain the two perspectives and depictions of the Battle of Bunker Hill through a primary source investigation.
- Students will be able to discuss the ramifications in present time for the lack of inclusion of Black men and women in the events leading up to the American Revolution.

#### **Lesson 11: The Declaration of Independence**

- Students will be able to explain the structure and basic intent of the American Declaration of Independence.
- Students will be able to write their own modern-day Declaration of Independence to address the injustices and inequities that persist today.

## Historical Competencies

### ***Historical Knowledge:***

*Goal: SWBAT understand a wide range of historical information*

- SWBAT identify the key events which express and define change over time in a particular place or region.
- SWBAT identify how political, economic, social, and cultural change occurs over time.

*Goal: SWBAT explain historical continuity and change*

- SWBAT describe the influence of political ideologies, economic structures, social organization, cultural perceptions, and natural environments on historical events.
- SWBAT discuss the ways in which factors such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, region and religion influence historical narratives.

*Goal: SWBAT develop awareness*

- SWBAT contextualize the diversity and complexity of human social, cultural, political, and economic institutions.
- SWBAT draw connections between the past, present, and future to acknowledge the impacts history has on the world.

### ***Historical Thinking:***

*Goal: SWBAT recognize the pastness of the past*

- SWBAT explain how people existed, acted and thought in particular historical periods.
- SWBAT rationalize the thinking of people in the past and develop understanding for why they thought that way.

*Goal: SWBAT emphasize the complex nature of past experiences*

- SWBAT recognize the complexity and diversity of situations, events, and past mentalities.
- SWBAT compare eras and regions in order to define enduring issues.

*Goal: SWBAT emphasize the complex and problematic nature of the historical record*

- SWBAT compare competing historical narratives.
- SWBAT challenge arguments of historical inevitability.
- SWBAT analyze cause and effect relationships and multiple causations.

*Historical Skills:*

*Goal: SWBAT develop skills in critical thinking and reading*

- SWBAT evaluate debates among historians.
- SWBAT differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.
- SWBAT assess and challenge the credibility of primary and secondary sources.

*Goal: SWBAT develop research skills*

- SWBAT formulate complex historical questions.
- SWBAT corroborate historical data.
- SWBAT identify gaps in available records.

*Goal: SWBAT develop the ability to construct reasonable historical arguments*

- SWBAT construct in writing a well-organized historical argument.
- SWBAT support an interpretation with historical evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources.
- SWBAT use sources to contextualize historical events and describe change over time.
- SWBAT develop strong written and verbal articulations of historical arguments that are well reasoned and supported by evidence.