

**AN EMPIRE IN THE BALANCE  
FREEDOM & DIGNITY PROJECT – SUMMER 2003**

**Developed by:** Janet Reagon & Jim Molloy

Grade Level: 11-Advanced Placement

NYS Core Curriculum Unit of Study – Foundations of the Constitution  
Revolutionary Period

NYS Learning Standards: 1 (History of the United States and New York); 2 (World History); 3 (Geography); 4 (Economics); and 5 (Civics, Citizenship, and Government).

**Learning Objectives:**

Standard 1: The students will be able to explain the critical importance of New York State during the American Revolution.

Standard 2: The students will understand and be able to explain the place of the American Revolution in the context of the European rivalries that led to other nations' support for the Americans.

Standard 3: Students will be able to explain the strategic importance of the Hudson River during the American Revolution.

Standard 4: Students will be able to explain the importance of trade, how the economies of the river valley towns were tied into the larger trade picture, how shortages of certain commodities led to riots, and how the choice of being Patriot or Loyalist was often linked to economic issues.

Standard 5: Students will see that the American Revolution was really a civil war as well as a struggle for independence. They will analyze the factors that led one person to become a Patriot, while another chose to remain a Loyalist.

**Essential Question:** Through this unit of study can we recreate the historical circumstances that existed in the early stages of the War for Independence by asking the students to examine a variety of sources that reflect the multiplicity of opinions in regard to the essential question of independence?

**Overview:** The date is January of 1775. After a decade of contentious legislation imposed by the British Parliament, the colonists in Boston and other locations throughout British America have taken matters into their own hands by engaging in extralegal “tea parties” that precipitated a series of Coercive Acts that have, among other things, closed the port of Boston to all trade. Boston is now a city of occupation and the rumblings of discontent are being heard throughout British America as anxious colonists await King George III’s next move. At this critical moment the King has dispatched special emissaries (our students) to each region of America and within the Realm to gauge public sentiment, determine where the sympathies of the American colonials and British officials now lie, and report back to His Majesty. This intelligence will then be used to formulate a response to this overriding question; can the British Crown maintain control over that portion of the empire located on the North American continent? In short, will there be a revolution in America? By completing a series of investigating tasks we hope the students will gain an understanding of the political divisions within the colonial

population as well as an understanding of the social, economic, and geographic factors that created those divisions.

**Procedure:** Students will have completed study of the period 1763 to 1775 at the inception of this activity. Having now gained an understanding of the events that have generated discontent, students will be divided into teams of four and will be assigned to a particular region within colonial America. To reinforce understandings gained in the Colonial America Unit, the regions will consist of the New England Colonies, the Middle Colonies, and the Southern Colonies. Each member of the team will be required to complete a series of 5 tasks. Those 5 tasks will require the students to exercise a variety of social studies skills along with the opportunity to present their findings in a creative manner. The information generated by each individual will then be synthesized by the group and presented to His Majesty, King George III with policy recommendations that carry the fate of the empire that hangs in the balance.

**Tasks:** See attachments below

**Time Allotment:** This learning module is designed as a unit of study on the American Revolution that will require one week of class time. Student research should begin early in the school year so that materials will be generated in time for the Revolutionary Unit.

Day 1 – Research

Day 2 – Research

Day 3 – Group work

Day 4 – Presentations

Day 5 - Presentations

**Materials/Resources:** See attached sheet.

**Assessment:** Based on the rubric provided (see attachment).

- Task #1 - Primary Source Documentation – 20%
- Task #2 – Map – 20%
- Task #3 – Interview – 20%
- Task #4 – Group Presentation – 20%

Task #5 – Private Memorial – 20%

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**Task #1** – Each student is required to research 3 primary source documents from their assigned region. Those documents may consist of but are not limited to newspaper editorials or articles, public broadsides, excerpts from published pamphlets, cartoons, letters, and political documents. Students are required to complete a **Document Analysis Sheet** (see attachment) for each document produced. Students are also required to copy appropriate passages for later use in the presentation and memorial. Students should exercise care in the conduct of their research and selection of documentation. Each document selected should reveal, to some significant measure, the sentiments of an individual or the general public on the events of the day or the legacy of more than a decade of discontent. Students are cautioned to be aware of the simple reality that all documents are not created equal.

**Due Date**\_\_\_\_\_

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**Task #2** – Regional Map – Students will be required to produce a regional map depicting the following:

- \*Strategic locations (forts, trade centers, etc.)
- \*Location of Indian tribes denoting tribal allegiance
- \*Major population centers
- \*Seat of colonial government
- \*Loyalist concentrations
- \*Religious concentrations
- \*Major geographic features (rivers, mountain ranges, lakes, etc.)
- \*Potential flashpoints of rebellion
- \*Ethnicity
- \*Primary economic activity

Guiding Questions: Based on the data how would you assess the Crown's strengths and weaknesses in the region? Posit a series of recommendations designed to exploit those strengths and marginalize the weaknesses.

**Due Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Task #3** – The Interview – Having “interviewed” a historical figure, students must compose a 2 page creative narrative reflecting on the substance of that interview as well as an assessment of this individual’s character, loyalties, leadership potential, and threat/asset assessment. In order to complete this task students must:

- \*Conduct a fair degree of research on their individual that includes both primary and secondary sources
- \*Incorporate several direct quotes from the subject
- \*Provide a picture of the individual

Teacher’s Note – Each group will select a subject from each of the four categories so that one student will draw an “A” subject, one a “B” subject, one Loyalist, and one Englishman. The following represents an “approved” list. Subjects may be added or deleted based on student interest and resource availability.

Patriot A Group

Thomas Jefferson  
George Washington  
Ben Franklin  
John Adams  
Sam Adams  
Patrick Henry  
John Hancock

Patriot B Group

Robert Livingston  
John Jay  
John Dickinson  
George Clinton  
Abigail Adams  
Richard Henry Lee  
Mercy Otis Warren

Loyalist

James Delancey  
Fredrick Phillips  
Samuel Seabury  
Beverly Robinson  
Joseph Brandt  
William Franklin  
Walter Butler

British

Thomas Gage  
Thomas Hutchinson  
George Grenville  
Edmund Burke  
Charles Townsend  
Sir Henry Clinton  
Thomas Paine

**Due Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Task #4** – Group Presentation – After completing the first three tasks it will be necessary to provide classroom time for each group to:

- \**Review* their materials,
- \**Revise* the material if necessary,
- \**Organize* their presentation to the King.

Group presentations will be limited to 20 minutes. Each student must participate in the presentation. The presentation will be evaluated on the criteria provided in the project rubric (see attachment).

**Due Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Task #5** – Private Memorial – This task represents the culmination of the activity that requires the students to reflect on their own findings as well as the information generated by their colleagues. The Memorial will take the form of a letter to the King. In this letter the student must clearly respond to the essential question for which they were charged as well as recommend policy options for the King’s consideration. This writing activity should also be two pages in length and will constitute the final product for the student’s project portfolio.

**Due Date**\_\_\_\_\_

**Private Memorial – Task #5 (20)**

Narrative meets two page minimum (2)

\_\_\_\_\_

Print is double spaced with 1” margins (1)

\_\_\_\_\_

Paragraphs, topic sentences, and supporting details are organized in a manner that is coherent, concise, and thematic (2)

\_\_\_\_\_

Paper is free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors (2)

\_\_\_\_\_

Presented in a creative & persuasive manner that holds the reader’s attention (5)

\_\_\_\_\_

Voice and tone are effectively conveyed through precise and original language (4)

\_\_\_\_\_

Control of Language is effectively demonstrated and promotes understanding (4)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Credit**

Writing demonstrates creativity and sophistication of argument

**FINAL GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:



## AN EMPIRE IN THE BALANCE – RESOURCES

### Internet Sources

#### The American Revolution

<http://revolution.h-net.msu.edu/>

A great place to start. Contains an extensive bibliography and document collection. This site also contains essays by scholars that will provide background for student understanding. There is a list of related Internet links including libraries, organizations, and historical societies.

#### Archiving Early America

<http://www.earlyamerica.com>

A simple search for “Loyalists” yielded essays on Chief Joseph Brandt, William Smith, Joseph Galloway, Thomas Hutchinson, and William Howe. This site offers a variety of images including maps and portraits of revolutionary figures. Another area contains featured documents and secondary essays. Watch-out for the pop-ups!

#### The Avalon Project at Yale Law School

[www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm)

This site contains an extensive list of 18<sup>th</sup> century documents in their entirety. This includes state constitutions, treaties, notes on the Philadelphia Convention and the ratification debate. A great source for the entire course!

#### The Massachusetts Historical Society

<http://www.masshist.org/>

A great emphasis on the revolutionary period here. The site contains brief biographical sketches of just about everybody as well as featured articles by noted historians. A great resource for the Adams family. Checkout ABIGAIL – the online catalog.

#### American Memory

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>

Part of the Library of Congress. Checkout the Manuscript Division. This is a great site for primary sources in a variety of forms; documents, photos, songs, etc. Are you working on George Washington? Start here!

## AN EMPIRE IN THE BALANCE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Document Research – Task #1 (20)

Meets minimum (3) source requirements (9) \_\_\_\_\_

Parenthetical documentation is properly formatted and meets minimum requirements (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Document Analysis Sheets are thoroughly completed (8) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Additional Credit

Research exceeds minimum requirements \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### Regional Map – Task #2 (20)

Presents all required information (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Clear evidence of research and accuracy (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Map is attractive, neat, and clearly conveys required information (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Thorough analysis based on the Guiding Question provided (5) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Additional Credit

Quality of presentation is consistent with a professional publication \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### The Interview – Task #3 (20)

Narrative meets two page minimum (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Print is double spaced with 1" margins (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraphs, topic sentences, and supporting details are organized in a manner that is coherent, concise, and thematic (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Paper is free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Material is presented in a creative manner that holds the reader's attention (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Content information is accurate, interesting, and relevant (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Paper contains an assessment that is original, well-supported, and sustained (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Writing style benefits from a variety of sentence structures, types, and lengths (2) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Additional Credit

Demonstrates superior analysis, knowledge, understanding and / or argument \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

### Group Presentation – Task #4 (20)

Each member of the group participates in the presentation (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation falls within the 15-20 minute parameters (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation is clear, concise, and persuasive (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Adequate response to follow-up questions (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Group members paraphrase material, make eye contact, vary tone and pace (4) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Additional Credit

Presentation is authentic, creative, and persuasive \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Activity \_\_\_\_\_

**DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SHEET**

A) **Type of Document** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Document** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author / Source of Document** \_\_\_\_\_

**Perspective of Document** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of Document** \_\_\_\_\_

B) **Substance of Document**

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C) **Key Passages**

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D) **Evidence of Bias**

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E) **Historical Value**

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F) **Unanswered Questions based on the Document**

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