



NAVAL HISTORY *and* HERITAGE COMMAND

Rhode Island, the American Revolution, and the Origins of the U.S. Navy, 1774–75: Instructor's Guide



“A Plan of the Town of Newport, Rhode Island,” *Atlas of the Battles of the American Revolution*, William Faden (surveyed by Charles Blaskowitz), London, 1777.

Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, DC.

Essential Question

- ✿ Why did some Rhode Islanders take the radical step of establishing a naval defense force in 1774–75?

Instructor's Guide:

Rhode Island, the American Revolution, and the Origins of the U.S. Navy, 1774–75

Duration

80 minutes (double period or two single periods)

Grades

9–12

Subjects

- ✿ Social Studies
- ✿ U.S. History and Government

Materials Needed

Student Packet (one per student)

Field-Specific Vocabulary

- ✿ Parliament
- ✿ First Continental Congress
- ✿ the Crown
- ✿ mother country
- ✿ commodities
- ✿ goods
- ✿ Continental Navy

Planning and Preparation

Classroom arrangement: pairs or individual desks, instructor's discretion.
Prior knowledge for the instructor to have:

- Causes of the American Revolution
- Early course of the American Revolution

Skills and Competencies Objectives

- Analyze letters as evidence.
- Build an argument by setting two or more sources in conversation.
- Establish context by combining and evaluating information in sources.
- Use evidence to demonstrate the validity of an argument.
- Assess continuity and change over time according to a given set of sources.
- Determine causality from the evidence.

Content Objectives

- Explain the escalation of hostilities between British authorities and New England colonists on the eve of the American Revolution.
- Identify and assess people's possible motivations and objectives in the disputes between the Crown and the General Assembly of Rhode Island.
- Contextualize the establishment of the first naval defense force for what would become the United States.

Essential Questions

- ✿ Why did some Rhode Islanders take the radical step of establishing a naval defense force in 1774–75?

Sequence of Activities

The lesson (and formative assessment) is designed for a double block (1 hour, 20 minutes) or two class periods (40 minutes each). The homework (summative assessment) is designed to take 30 to 45 minutes.

Sequence of Activities (continued)

At the instructor's discretion, this lesson could expand to include more time for discussion and/or direct instruction. The lesson also contains an optional exercise for deeper engagement with the topic and themes..

1. Distribute the Student Packets.
2. Read the background aloud with the students and answer any questions about the basic causes of the American Revolution.
3. Read Source 1 together and model with the students how to analyze each source: Begin with the information above the source and then allow the students to read the source. Finally, solicit answers to the questions from the students.
4. Put the students in groups in groups of two or three and have them read and discuss each source. Working together, they should talk about the discussion questions at the end of each source and complete the formative assessment at the end.
5. Collect the formative assessment worksheets and redistribute them in random order around the classroom. For questions A and B, ask the students to share answers from the worksheets in hand. For question C, recreate the chart from the worksheet on the classroom black- or whiteboard. Allow the class to fill in the chart by your choice of method.
6. Return worksheets to their respective authors. Allow students to make any corrections or additions to their worksheets from what they learned during the activity (and/or discussion).
7. Explain the homework assignment (summative assessment).
8. At the next class, collect both the formative (worksheet) and summative assessments.

*Please note: This lesson plan does not contain rubrics. The intent is for the plan to be malleable enough for integration into an existing skills-based curriculum. It is therefore recommended that the instructor use those rubrics with which the students are already familiar.

Assessments

Formative: Student worksheet (self- or peer-assessed)

Summative: Homework paragraph (instructor-assessed)

Optional Summative for Extension Exercise: Analytic response (instructor-assessed)

Further Reading

Adam Bisno, “The Birth of the U.S. Navy” (2019), <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/origins-of-the-navy/birth-of-the-us-navy.html>

William B. Clark, ed., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 1 (1964), available for download at <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/publications/publications-by-subject/naval-documents-of-the-american-revolution.html>.

Learning Standards Sources

Common Core: State Sponsored Initiative—Preparing America’s Students for College and Career, accessed 11 September 2019, <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

National Council for the Social Studies, “National Curriculum for Social Studies: Executive Summary,” accessed 11 September 2019, <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/execsummary>.

Adjustments in Relation to Common Core Standards

This lesson adheres to the pedagogical adjustments required by the Common Core standards as implemented by the states. This lesson is a series of skills-based activities designed to develop students’ competencies with respect to the Common Core.

Learning Standards

Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies

For Grades 9 and 10

RH.9–10.1; RH.9–10.2; RH.9–10.3; RH.9–10.4

For Grades 11 and 12

RH.11–12.1; RH.11–12.2; RH.11–12.3; RH.11–12.4; RH.11–12.5; RH.11–12.7; RH.11–12.8

Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Literacy in Reading Informational Texts

For Grades 9 and 10

R.9–10.1; CR.9–10.3; CR.9–10.4; CR.9–10.5; CR.9–10.6; CR.9–10.8

For Grades 11 and 12

RI.11–12.1; RI.11–12.4; RI.11–12.6

Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Literacy in Writing

For Grades 9 and 10

WHST.9–10.1; WHST.9–10.1A; WHST.9–10.1B; WHST.9–10.1C; WHST.9–10.2; WHST.9–10.2C; WHST.9–10.4; WHST.9–10.5; WHST.9–10.9

For Grades 11 and 12

WHST.11–12.1; WHST.11–12.1A; WHST.11–12.1B; WHST.11–12.2B; WHST.11–12.2C; WHST.11–12.4; WHST.11–12.5; WHST.11–12.9

National Council for the Social Studies Themes

- ✿ Culture
- ✿ Time, Continuity, and Change
- ✿ Individual Development and Identity
- ✿ People, Places, and Environments
- ✿ Power, Authority, and Governance
- ✿ Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- ✿ Science, Technology, and Society
- ✿ Global Connections