

# 21st Century Skills Unit: American Colonies Road to Revolution



Learning Experience Title: American Colonies Road to Revolution	Target Audience: 8th grade Social Studies	Delivery Format: Virtual or Blended
<p>Learning Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Students will identify and explain major differences between 3 regions of colonial America by designing a sales pitch to “sell” 1 colony and compare it to the colonies of other regions.</li><li>2) Students will also have to identify and explain 5 events in history that caused the 13 colonies to declare independence from England.</li><li>3) Students will evaluate the reasons cited by American colonists, to assess whether the decision to declare independence from England was justified in history.</li><li>4) Students will use 21st century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication to demonstrate their learning. <b>Embedded skills practice highlighted in yellow.</b></li></ol>		
<b>Pre Assessment</b>		
<p>Learner Readiness Assessment (Students will use <a href="#">PearDeck for Google Slides</a> to assess their background knowledge of key vocabulary for the unit, important historical background knowledge, and skills strategies that will be</p>		

used for the learning activities: (Ex. influential debate skills) Questions are a mix of short answer and multiple choice.



**Question #1:** What is the difference between weather and climate?

**Question #2:** Describe the REGION we live in using 3 of the following characteristics: land, climate, resources, or cultural groups.

**Question #3:** Using the map below, predict one way that the people of each colonial region might be impacted by their climate.

**Question #4:** Which strategy do you think is the most effective when debating?

A) Focus on your argument strengths.

B) Focus on your opponent's argument weaknesses.

C) Try to predict your opponent's arguments and prepare counter arguments.

**Question #5:** What are 3 roles or duties that any government has for leading a country or group of people?

### Activity 1: Colonial Sales Booth

#### Warm-Up Activity

- For engagement, fun, and practice “selling” an item or idea: Pick 2-3 student volunteers to sell an item to another student in front of the class. (Example: Sell a book, lunch item, classroom poster etc.)

#### Learning Objective

– Students will identify and explain major differences between 3 regions of colonial America by designing a sales pitch to “sell” 1 colony and compare it to the colonies of other regions.

#### Activity Description

– Students will research the geographic and economic differences between 3 regions of the original 13 American colonies and then create a video presentation to “sell” one colony to their peers that represent immigrants from England during the 1700's.

### Activity Steps

1. Students will use online resources to describe geographic and economic differences between the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies of America.
2. Click here to access "[Early British Colonies in America](#)" from [Newsela.com](#). Kids Discover online magazine and Newsela provide a library of news and content articles for specific curriculum topics in the K-12 classroom. Both resources also provide content that can be assigned by reading and academic grade level.
3. Once students have gathered their information, they will be prompted to choose 1 specific American colony to create a group presentation for. Presentations will require students to advertise and sell the best traits of their colony to their peers that represent immigrants from Europe. Each sales pitch will have to compare and contrast their region to others for the purpose of convincing others to move there.
4. Presentations will need to be acted out and "pitched" using the online video recording app called [WeVideo](#).

### Extension for Creativity:

- Prompt students to create **a slogan and a jingle** to advertise their chosen colony. Students can sing or perform their jingle in front of students or in their video creation.

### **Embedding 21st Century Skills:**

- **Creativity:** In this activity students have to use their imaginations to sell a product in a similar way to how a product might be sold or advertised in modern times. Furthermore they have to record themselves and describe their colony in a convincing way to compete against the other colony presentations. The selling of the colony using props or costumes is meant to allow for creative talents, engagement, and fun for the audience.
- **Critical Thinking:** The Colonial Sales Booth promotes critical thinking because it challenges a group to highlight the best characteristics of a colony when there may in fact be few compared to other regions or colonies. They have to apply what they have learned about the reasons that immigrants would be moving to the American colonies and focus on geographic or economic strengths that their colony or region has to offer. Much the way a company has to focus on their audience or consumer base to highlight the best characteristics of a product, students have to find a way to show that their colony's traits are the most desirable even if there are also downsides or weaknesses. I have applied this critical thinking component so that students will have to carefully compare and understand the differences between 3 regions of colonies in America. It also helps them understand how geography was a cause or major impacting factor for how different regional cultures and societies were established in early America. Economic and cultural divides based on geographic diversity is a common thread of American history all the way up to the 21st century.
- **Communication & Collaboration:** In this activity students have to collaborate in a group to create their sales booth. They also have to communicate their ideas to group members before using technology to communicate with their class. Communication and collaboration is required for success throughout the activity. The purpose of collaboration in this case is for students to discuss and come to a consensus about the strengths and weaknesses of their colony.

### Learner Self-Assessment

– Students will take a 10 question formative assessment using **Socrative.com**.

### Resources:

- Teacher subscription to Kids Discover online magazine and Newsela.com
- WeVideo student accounts
- Free teacher subscription to socrative.com

## Activity 2: Student Blogging: Causes of the American Revolution

### Warm-Up Activity:

In class pair share or small group virtual discussion using **Google Break-Out Rooms**.

Students will discuss the prompt before sharing with the class: *What are the top 3 duties or jobs of any government that leads a nation or group of people?*

### Learning Objective

– Students will identify and explain 5 events in history that caused the 13 colonies to declare independence from England.

### Activity Description

Students will be asked to analyze the major events and select 3 that they believe were impactful or most influenced the American colonies decision to declare independence. Students will be asked to summarize their 3 chosen events in addition to explaining why they chose them in an academic blog that will be shared with the class.

### Activity Steps

1. Following research using [this article from newsela.com](https://www.newsela.com), students will summarize their 3 chosen events in addition to explaining why they chose them in an academic blog that will be shared with the class.
2. Students will summarize their 3 events by creating an academic blog on **Blogger.com** or **Edublogs.org**. They will also explain why they chose those 3 events and believe them to be the most impactful.
3. In addition to providing written descriptions and justifications for the 3 events that students choose, students will also need to take steps to make their blog visually engaging to enhance the clarity of their points and opinions. For example, students will have to embed 1 visual in the form of a map, diagram, portrait, painting or other item to show the event or historical figures connected to their event.
4. Students will share the link to their blog and invite classmates to read them.
5. Students will add comments to each other's blogs and explain if they agree or disagree with the facts and justifications given about how impactful each event was.

### Creativity & Critical Thinking Extensions:

- An optional extension would be to assign each student a historical real life role such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, or a colonial loyalist to role play as they add comments to the blogs they read. Example: Samuel Adams, a leader of a colonial protest group might find the acts of taxation the most unjust or illegal whereas a loyalist might defend taxation by England as a way of paying for the cost of protecting the colonies.

### Embedding 21st Century Skills:

- **Creativity:** Students will use their creativity to choose pictures and visuals to compliment the blogs they have written. They will also have the chance to role play historical figures from this era as they comment, agree, and disagree with the blog statements of their peers. I have added this element of creativity to make the activity more engaging and to prompt students to consider the contrasting perspectives on the events in history.
- **Critical Thinking:** In this activity students have 2 opportunities for critical thinking. Because they have learned about numerous events that led to the declaration of independence and war with England, they have to synthesize those events and compare their impacts to decide which 3 affected the colonists the most and thus had larger impacts when compared to others. Secondly, if the teacher chooses to assign historic roles to students as they comment on the posts of their peers, this would provide another opportunity for critical thinking as they not only have to consider the historical facts/impacts but also the more specific perspective of a person from history. The prompts for critical thinking have been applied here partially so that students are more thoroughly engaging with the history but also to reinforce the important idea that the decision to start a revolution and declare independence in our nation's history was not universally agreed on by colonial citizens at the time. Citizens of a community working with each other to make decisions about how to solve problems and address issues is an essential real world skill.
- **Communication/Collaboration:** Through this activity students are communicating their ideas and opinions on multiple occasions. The writing of their blogs is a communication of their own opinions. The commenting, agreeing, or disagreeing that takes place when students read each other's blogs is another opportunity. In this manner, students are participating in a class-wide collaboration to establish which events in history had the biggest impacts for the start of the American Revolution.

### Learner Self-Assessment

– Students will take a short quiz embedded in [this video using Edpuzzle.com](#) to see if the events summarized in the video match the events they summarized in their blog.

### Resources

- Article from Newsela.com: [The American Revolution: Political Upheaval Led to U.S. Independence](#)
- Student subscriptions to Blogger.com or Edublog.org
- [Link to Edpuzzle assessment video](#)

## Activity 3: Socratic Circle

### Warm-Up Activity

The teacher will facilitate a 2 minute pair share using the prompt: What are 3 good reasons that would justify a nation or group of people taking action to overthrow their government? The teacher will encourage students to consider the roles & duties of government that were shared in activity #2.

**Virtual class alternative:** The prompt above could be used in a virtual class discussion by using [Padlet.com](#) or other virtual sharing web tool.

### Learning Objective

– Students will evaluate the reasons cited by American colonists, to assess whether the decision to declare independence from England was justified in history.

### Activity Description

Key Question: Was the decision to declare independence justified in history?

This final phase will be a whole class socratic circle. A socratic circle is facilitated with the use of teacher prepared statements about the historical events of the unit that students will have to agree or disagree with using evidence they have gathered through their colonial sales pitch presentations and blog writing in phase 2.

### Activity Steps

1. The teacher will ask students to share their top 3 reasons from the warm up activity and will project examples of these on a Google Jamboard (virtual) or on a class white board (in person).
2. The teacher will share agree/disagree statements (1 at a time) related to the impact of various historical events that led up to the Declaration of Independence.
3. The teacher will facilitate an in person or virtual class discussion (**using Google Meets**) as students share their opinions about why they agree/disagree. The teacher will encourage participants to justify their opinions using facts and knowledge learned from activities 1 and 2.
4. The class will take a final vote about whether or not the American colonies should have declared independence from England as they did in history.
5. Optional extension: Students can participate in the roles of patriots or loyalists. Roles can be randomly selected or assigned by the teacher.

### Embedding 21st Century Skills:

- **Creativity:** An optional extension for creativity would be to assign each student a historical real life role such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, or a colonial loyalist to role play as they add comments to the blogs they read. Example: Samuel Adams, a leader of a colonial protest group might find the acts of taxation the most unjust or illegal whereas a loyalist might defend taxation by England as a way of paying for the cost of protecting the colonies.
- **Critical thinking:** Students will be applying critical thinking skills starting with the warmup activity. They are prompted to generate a list of reasons that would justify a group of people overthrowing their government and then deciding if those justifications/reasons were present in the historical era of the American Revolution. Students are also thinking critically as they try to refute the arguments of their peers to bolster their own case in the socratic circle.
- **Communication/Collaboration:** Collaboration takes place in the warm up activity as the class works together to create the list of justifications. Communication skills are thoroughly embedded as students verbally articulate their opinions and the perspectives they represent related to their roles as patriots or loyalists. Opportunities for further collaboration exist as the teacher can prompt students to partner and discuss their socratic circle responses with others that have the same role as they do. This can occur by allowing for partner "wait time" to partner discussion before whole class response to any given statement.

### Learner Self-Assessment

– Students will play [Kahoot](#), a web based quiz game, with a partner to compete against other partner groups and test their knowledge about the events that led to the war for independence.

Resources:

- Link to virtual Google Meet room for participants
- Teacher created Google Jamboard to project in the Google Meet Room
- Teacher prepared, 10 question, Kahoot quiz using a free teacher subscription to Kahoot.com

**Formative Assessment**

– Students will complete a virtual ticket out using **Google Forms or Socrative.com**. They will write a thesis statement that states their personal opinion/response to the socratic circle key question along with their 3 best reasons to support their statement.

**References**

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