

Guns and Ships

Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance

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Grade Level	8th Grade	**Time Frame**	2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	100 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

How does conflict create change? What events before or during the Revolutionary War significantly impacted the colonies and the outcome of the war?

Summary

Students will use text analysis strategies to summarize two significant events of the Revolutionary War - the Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance. Then students, working in collaborative groups, will use their knowledge of these events to annotate the lyrics of the song "Guns and Ships" from the musical Hamilton. Students will also create their own lyrics about either the Battle of Saratoga or the French Alliance to explain how these events impacted the course and outcome of the Revolutionary War ultimately affecting change for the colonies. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning. Resources for use in Google Classroom are included.

Snapshot

Engage

Students listen to the song "Guns and Ships" and hypothesize about how the song answers the question posed in its first line. Essentially, how does America ultimately defeat Great Britain?

Explore

While reading short summaries of the Battle of Saratoga, the French Alliance and a letter by General Washington after Saratoga, students individually complete a Post-It Note summary activity. They form groups of three and write a three-sentence summary for each reading.

Explain

Students return to their Guns and Ships handout. They annotate and further explain the selected phrases in the lyrics. An annotating strategy is explained to scaffold this activity.

Extend

Student groups write a rap, chant, or song based on either the Battle of Saratoga reading or the French Alliance reading. The perform their rap, chant, or song for the class.

Evaluate

The group's written summary from the readings, the annotated hand-out and the written song product will serve as assessments for this lesson.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.2.5B: victories at Boston, Trenton, and Saratoga
8.2.5E: French alliance, negotiated by Benjamin Franklin

Attachments

- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance.docx
- Guns and Ships handout .docx
- Guns and Ships teacher slides.pptx
- Washington letter to Horatio Gates after Saratoga.docx

Materials

- Internet access to play the YouTube video of song "Guns and Ships"
- Guns and Ships handout - provided
- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance handout - provided
- Washington letter to Horatio Gates primary source - provided
- Post-its- nine per student
- Teacher slides for student directions-provided

Engage

Teacher Instructional Strategy Note - Prior To Beginning Class

Have the YouTube song link, Guns and Ships, ready on a browser tab for playing.

Tell students that they are going to listen to a song from the musical Hamilton. Give students the "Guns and Ships" handout and beginning with slide 3 have them create an I Think/We Think two-column chart on notebook paper. There are instructions for a later activity at the top of the "Guns and Ships" handout. If students ask, explain this activity will be done later in the lesson.

After the I Think/We Think chart is drawn, move to slide 4 and ask students to look at the first two lines of the song on their "Guns and Ships" handout, "How does a ragtag volunteer army in need of a shower / Somehow defeat a global superpower?" Ask students to think about what this questions means and how they might answer this question as they listen to the song "Guns and Ships." Students will use the "Guns and Ships" handout to follow along with the lyrics as the song plays. Students may write down their thoughts in the "I Think" column of their chart.

After listening to the song, assign students to working groups of three to four. Tell them this will be their group assignment throughout different parts of the lesson. Move to slide 5 and have students share their "I Think" answers with the group and based on their conversations and the lyrics of the song, complete the "We Think" side of the chart. Students should come to a consensus about the meaning of the first two lines of the song. Ask a few groups to share out some of their We Think opinions. Use student responses as a foundation for a whole-class discussion of the Revolutionary War to engage students in using their prior knowledge of the topic. Continue this line of discussion to review events of the Revolutionary War leading up to the Battle of Saratoga that have already been studied, asking students how the war was going for the Patriots at this time.

Possible Teacher Questions/student Response

You could ask students: What do you think the first two lines of the song mean? Students might want to comment that the Patriots did not have a well-established military and were facing many disadvantages in the war with Great Britain. You could then ask: How has the war been going for the Patriots up to this point? Can you think of examples to support your response? Students might want to comment: Aside from the Battle of Trenton the Patriots have suffered many defeats, such as the loss of New York City. Also, the Continental Army is facing a shortage of money, supplies, troops, and low morale.

Teacher Instructional Strategy Note

As an alternative product for the I Think/We Think strategy, you can have student groups collaborate on a "We Think" poster (using big Post-it or chart tablet paper.

Next, move to slide 6, showing students the essential questions for this lesson - How does conflict create change? What events during the Revolutionary War significantly impacted the course and outcome of the war? Explain to students that they will explore two major events of the Revolutionary War to reflect on this broader issue of American independence and how conflicts like war, consequences of battle, and alliances can influence the outcome of war to create change.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

For online or distance learning environment, consider creating multiple blank documents for students to share their I Think/We Think notes using Google Docs. Assign students to a document and have them collaborate virtually. Students can add notes to the document and collaborate as a group using the "chat" feature in the document. You may also consider making this activity a discussion board post to which your students can respond directly. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

Explore

Pass out the Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance handout and the Washington letter primary source. Give each student 9 post-it notes. Students will individually read the summaries of the Battle of Saratoga, the French Alliance and Washington's letter to General Gates. As they read, they will complete a Three Post-It Notes activity. Display slide 7 for student directions. Once students have filled out their three post-its for each reading, they will be given time in groups to share their ideas.

Have students share their post-it notes with the group. Students share their word, important phrase, and their sentence summary with their group. Based on the information shared, as a group students work together to create a three sentence summary of each reading. Students can record their three sentence summaries on notebook paper individually or as a group. Allow 30 minutes for the group work, about ten minutes for each reading.

Possible Student Responses

Regarding the Battle of Saratoga, student discussion of their post-its and summaries should center around the ideas that the battle was a much-needed victory for the Patriots to be able to continue the war effort and that it influenced France to join the Patriot cause. Regarding the French Alliance, student discussion of their post-its and summaries should center around the idea that the Patriots desperately needed help and resources from the French. Students should point out that French support—including supplies, troops, and a navy—were essential to the Patriots' ability to defeat the British and establish independence. Regarding the Washington letter, student discussion of their post-it notes and summaries should center around how pleased and important the victory was. Washington was not happy that Gates had not sent messages immediately about the Battle and so was sending his aide, Hamilton, to relate further strategies for General Gates.

Call on one or two groups to share their summaries about the Battle of Saratoga. Have one or two different groups share their summaries about the French Alliance. Have another group share their summary of Washington's letter to Gates. This can serve as one of the assessments of this lesson.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To make the Three Post-It Notes activity accessible in an online or distance learning environment, you can invite students to post their choices in designated areas of a digital handout (using Google Docs or similar) or within web-based applications such as Padlet. Then, have students share why they chose that word or phrase below it. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

Explain

Return students to the Guns and Ships lyrics. Tell students that they will be working with their groups to annotate the lyrics of Guns and Ships using their knowledge of the Battle of Saratoga, the French Alliance and the Revolutionary War in general.

Students may use their discussion today, their textbook, the readings, and their knowledge about the Revolutionary War for this activity. Read aloud the directions on the Guns and Ships handout. Students are to list their six annotations in the right-hand column. Explain to students that their annotations should help someone who knows nothing about the American Revolution make meaning out of the lyrics.

Annotating text is a close reading strategy. For students to fully understand the annotation process, show slide 8 before they begin. Review the first annotation on the Guns and Ships handout together as a model of what they should do. Allow student groups about 30 minutes for this activity.

Teacher's Instructional Strategy Note- Annotating Text Sample

Please explain the example to the class on the student handout. Burr refers to Aaron Burr and could be used as an annotation example on the Guns and Ships lyrics handout. The annotation in the right-side column might be "Aaron Burr was a Continental Army officer that served during the Revolutionary War."

Once groups have completed their annotations, call on groups to share a few of their annotations with the class. Determine how many examples you want to hear from each group based on your timing.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

For online or distance learning, consider creating multiple copies of the attached handout using Google Docs. Assign a small group of students to each copy of the handout and have them collaborate virtually. Students can add their annotations to the document and collaborate as a group using the "chat" feature in the document. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

Extend

Have student groups revisit their post-it notes , their three sentence summaries, and the readings. Move to slide 9 and explain that student groups will expand one of their summaries into a rap, chant or song using the Chant it, Sing it, Rap it strategy. Groups can choose to create their rap, song or chant based on either the Battle of Saratoga or the French Alliance. Their lyrics should address how either the Battle of Saratoga or the French Alliance impacted the course and the outcome of the Revolutionary War ultimately affecting change for the colonies. Like the Hamilton lyrics, students should create a brief stanza and a repeating chorus. Explain the difference between a stanza which tells the story from the chorus or refrain which is used to emphasize or repeat a main idea. Show slide 10 for an example of the stanza and chorus from the song, Guns and Ships. You may also wish to play Guns and Ships again and emphasize when they are singing the chorus.

As student groups are working, walk around checking in with the groups to make sure their raps, songs, or chants accurately and appropriately represent the event that they chose.

Groups will perform their chant, rap, or song for the class. Groups after the performance may wish to explain some of their lyrics to the class and how the lyrics refer to the event they chose.

After the groups' performance, groups can turn in their written rap, chant, or song lyrics.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

For online or distance learning, you can use an application such as Flipgrid to have students record themselves sharing their Chant It, Sing It, Rap It activity. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

Evaluate

The groups' written summaries of the Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance, the Guns and Ships annotation activity, and a written version of the rap, chant, or song can all serve as assessments of this lesson.

Resources

- Castillo, D. (2002). The American Nation: Beginnings through 1877. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Editors (2009). Battle of Saratoga. History.com. Retrieved from: https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/battle-of-saratoga
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Chant it, sing it, rap it. Strategies. Retrieved from: https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5066ebf
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I think / we think. Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5065bfd
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- Leslie Odom Jr. - Topic. (2015). Guns and Ships [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ovje92D742s
- McDougal, H. (2009). United States History: Beginnings to 1877. New York, NY: Holt McDougal.
- Miranda, L. –M. (2015). Guns and ships [Liner notes]. In Hamilton [CD]. New York, NY: Atlantic Records. Retrieved from http://atlanticrecords.com/HamiltonMusic/
- Washington papers (n.d.) Founders online. From George Washington to major general Horatio Gates, 30, October 1777. National Archives.gov. Retrieved from: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0049