

# Guns and Ships

## The 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** | 110 minutes |
| **Course** | U.S. History | | |

## Essential Question

How does conflict create change? What events 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 explain how either the Battle of Saratoga or the French Alliance impacted the Revolutionary War.

## 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 Three Sticky Note summary activity. They form groups of three and write a three-sentence summary for each reading.

### Explain

Students annotate the “Guns and Ships” lyrics to further explain what their meaning.

### Extend

Students discuss the events and impacts of the Battle of Saratoga and the Alliance with the French.

### Evaluate

Students create and share their explanations of how either the Battle of Saratoga or the French Alliance impacted the Revolutionary War.

## Standards

*ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)*

**IDT301:** Identify a clear central idea in straightforward paragraphs in somewhat challenging literary narratives
**REL402:** Identify clear comparative relationships in somewhat challenging passages
**WME301:** Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages when the effect is simple
**WME302:** Interpret basic figurative language as it is used in a passage

*ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)*

**ORG 302:** A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Provide a basic organizational structure are grouped locally

*Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (Grade 8)*

**8.C.2.3:** Evaluate the challenges and reasons for the American victory over the British Empire.
**8.C.2.3.A:** Compare military strength and available resources, including financial support from private individuals and allied nations, as well as French support negotiated by Benjamin Franklin.
**8.C.2.3.C:** Summarize the impact of key military turning points of the Revolutionary War, including the victories at Boston, Trenton, Saratoga, and Yorktown.

## Attachments

- 30-Second Expert Planning Sheet—Guns and Ships - Spanish.docx
- 30-Second Expert Planning Sheet—Guns and Ships - Spanish.pdf
- 30-Second Expert Planning Sheet—Guns and Ships.docx
- 30-Second Expert Planning Sheet—Guns and Ships.pdf
- 30-Second Expert Rubric—Guns and Ships - Spanish.docx
- 30-Second Expert Rubric—Guns and Ships - Spanish.pdf
- 30-Second Expert Rubric—Guns and Ships.docx
- 30-Second Expert Rubric—Guns and Ships.pdf
- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance—Guns and Ships - Spanish.docx
- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance—Guns and Ships - Spanish.pdf
- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance—Guns and Ships.docx
- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance—Guns and Ships.pdf
- Guns and Ships Lyrics—Guns and Ships - Spanish.docx
- Guns and Ships Lyrics—Guns and Ships - Spanish.pdf
- Guns and Ships Lyrics—Guns and Ships.docx
- Guns and Ships Lyrics—Guns and Ships.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Guns and Ships.pptx
- Washington Letter—Guns and Ships - Spanish.docx
- Washington Letter—Guns and Ships - Spanish.pdf
- Washington Letter—Guns and Ships.docx
- Washington Letter—Guns and Ships.pdf

## Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Guns and Ships Lyrics handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance document (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Washington Letter primary source (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- 30-Second Expert Planning Sheet handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- 30-Second Expert Rubric handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Notebook paper

- Sticky notes (nine per student)

15 minutes

# Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to introduce the lesson to students. Move to **slide 3** and explain to students that they are going to listen to a song from the musical *Hamilton*. Pass out the **Guns and Ships Lyrics** handout to each student. They can use the lyrics to follow along with the song.

**Embedded video**

https://youtube.com/watch?v=JDL6R2KS3xg

Once the song is done, move to **slide 4**. Introduce students to the I Think/We Think instructional strategy. Have them create a two-column chart on notebook paper and label one as “I Think” and the other as “We Think.” Ask students to look at the first two lines of the song on their Lyrics handout, "How does a ragtag volunteer army in need of a shower / Somehow defeat a global superpower?" Ask students to think about what this question means and how they might answer it as they listen to the song "Guns and Ships." Students may write down their thoughts in the "I Think" column of their chart.

Move to **slide 5** and have students share their "I Think" answers with the group. 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 that 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 morale.

Use **slides 6–7** and go over the essential question and lesson objectives. 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 consequences of battle and alliances can influence the outcome of war to create change.

45 minutes

# Explore

Pass out the **Battle of Saratoga and the French Alliance** document and the **Washington Letter** primary source. Give each student nine sticky notes. Display **slide 8** and introduce students to the Three Sticky Notes instructional strategy. Explain to students that they will individually read the Battle of Saratoga, the French Alliance, and Washington's Letter to Horatio Gates. As they read, they will create a one-word summary, an important phrase, and a sentence summary. Once students have filled out their three sticky notes for each reading, give them an opportunity to share their ideas with their group.

Move to **slide 9**. Have students share their sticky notes, including their word, important phrase, and 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 summaries on notebook paper individually or as a group. Facilitate a group discussion about each of the readings and the groups' summaries.

### Possible Student Responses

Regarding the Battle of Saratoga, student discussion of their sticky notes 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 sticky notes 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 sticky notes and summaries should center around Washington's reaction and how important the victory was. Washington was not happy that Gates had not sent messages immediately about the Battle, and so he sent his aide, Hamilton, to relate further strategies for General Gates.

20 minutes

# Explain

Show **slide 10** and explain to students that annotating text is a close reading strategy. Have students return to their Lyrics handout. 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. Review the first annotation on the Lyrics handout together as a model of what they should do.

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 Lyrics 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.

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.

20 minutes

# Extend

Have student stand or sit in a circle. Move to **slide 11** and introduce students to the Hot Potato instructional strategy. Explain that students that they will be shown two questions on a slide and they should think about what their answers will be. They will pass around a ball around the circle while music or a countdown plays. Whoever is holding the ball has to answer the question. Depending on your class needs, either allow students to choose which question they would like to answer or decide which one they will answer yourself. Repeat this process for the remaining questions on **slides 12–16.**

10 minutes

# Evaluate

Pass out the **30-Second Expert Planning Sheet** handout and **30-Second Expert Rubric** handout to each student. Move to **slide 17** and introduce students to the 30-Second Expert instructional strategy. Explain to students that they will be crafting an argument describing how either the Battle of Saratoga or the French Alliance impacted the Revolutionary War.

## Resources


- Castillo, D. (2002). The American nation: Beginnings through 1877. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Editors (2009). Battle of Saratoga. History.com. https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/battle-of-saratoga
- Hamilton. (2020). *"Guns and Ships" from HAMILTON* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDL6R2KS3xg
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 30-second expert. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1048
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Hot potato. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/4465
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I think / we think. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/141
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Three sticky notes. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/153
- 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. http://atlanticrecords.com/HamiltonMusic/
- Washington papers (n.d.) Founders online. From George Washington to major general Horatio Gates, 30, October 1777. National Archives.gov. https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0049