

Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death

The Journey to Revolution



Susan McHale

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

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? How did the speeches and writings of patriots influence the call for revolution?

Summary

Students will analyze two primary sources, Patrick Henry's speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses and Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlet to understand the colonial resistance to British rule and how these primary sources influenced the American Revolution.

Snapshot

Engage

Students consider Patrick Henry's famous quote, "Give me liberty or give me death." They participate in a Commit and Toss activity answering the question, "What would you be willing to fight and die for?"

Explore

Students watch a short video about Patrick Henry's speech.

Explain

Students compare Patrick Henry's speech with an excerpt from Thomas Paine's "Common Sense." Students identify and compare how these two men made the case for revolution and independence from Britain.

Extend

Students choose a RAFT activity to demonstrate and apply their understanding of the primary source documents.

Evaluate

The T-Chart comparison of the two speeches and the RAFT writing activity will serve as assessments of this lesson.

Standards

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

- 8.1.5:** Analyze the ideological and propaganda war between Great Britain and the colonies including:
- 8.1.5A:** points of views of the Patriots and the Loyalists
- 8.1.5E:** Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death, speech attributed to Patrick Henry
- 8.1.5F:** Common Sense pamphlet by Thomas Paine

Attachments

- [Common Sense Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Common Sense Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Common Sense Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.docx](#)
- [Common Sense Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.pptx](#)
- [Patrick Henry's Speech Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Patrick Henry's Speech Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Patrick Henry's Speech Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.docx](#)
- [Patrick Henry's Speech Excerpt—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.pdf](#)
- [RAFT Activity—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.docx](#)
- [RAFT Activity—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [RAFT Activity—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.docx](#)
- [RAFT Activity—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.pdf](#)
- [T-Chart—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.docx](#)
- [T-Chart—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [T-Chart—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.docx](#)
- [T-Chart—Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Common Sense Excerpt (attached)
- Patrick Henry Speech Excerpt (attached)
- T-Chart (attached)
- RAFT Activity (attached)
- Highlighters

25 minutes

Engage

Display the essential questions for this lesson, found on **slide 3** of the **Lesson Slides**. Tell students that we will look at how two patriots, Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine, contributed to the journey toward revolution in the American colonies.

Transition to **slide 4**, displaying Patrick Henry's famous quote, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Ask students to think about the quote. Give them 2-3 minutes to make their responses.

Teacher's Note: Context Of Patrick Henry's Speech

Henry spoke these words, "Give me liberty or give me death!" at the 2nd Virginia Convention of the colony of Virginia on March 20, 1775. Virginia, like other colonies, was debating whether to submit more official complaints to Britain about its laws and tariffs. Henry, considered a radical by moderate Virginians, was asking Virginia to form a militia prepared to fight British regulars if needed. To prove his point, he told the assembly that he would rather die than lose his liberty under the tyranny of Britain.

Move to **slide 5** and lead the class in a [Commit and Toss](#) activity. Ask students to take out a half sheet of notebook paper and answer the question, *"What would you be willing to fight and die for?"* Allow a few minutes for students to write a response. Tell students to stand up, crumple their notebook paper, and toss it toward the front of the room. When everyone has tossed their paper, mix them up even more, then have students come to the front and pick up someone else's paper. Call on students to read some of the responses. After four or five responses are read aloud, have students crumple the paper and toss it to the front of the room again. Remix paper wads, have students pick up a new crumpled paper, and then ask for volunteers to read any only any new responses, ones that were not heard in the first round. Continue for one more round.

25 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 6** and using the [T-Chart](#) strategy, distribute the **T-Chart** student handout (attached). Tell students that they will be watching Patrick Henry deliver his speech to the 2nd Virginia Convention. A link to the YouTube video can be found [here](#). The URL is also listed in resources at the end of this lesson and in the notes on slide 6. As they watch the video (which is five minutes in length), ask them to jot down on the left-hand side of the T-Chart any reasons that Henry gives the Virginia delegates to fight British rule.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=DbghWFMLyiA>

Assign students to partners. After the video, have partners discuss what they wrote down on their T-Charts as Henry's reasons for fighting British rule. Ask students to add to their list any new reasons that arose from the conversation with their partner.

After partners have discussed and added reasons to their list, pass out highlighters and the written version of **Patrick Henry's Speech** (attached). Display **slide 7** and lead a [Categorical Highlighting](#) activity. Have pairs look for any more reasons for resistance to British rule they may have missed in the video but are present in the written speech. Ask students to add these additional reasons to their T-Chart list.

Teacher's Note: Scaffolding Henry's Speech

You may wish to read the speech aloud once for students if the language of primary source documents is unfamiliar or challenging. The written version of Patrick Henry's speech is excerpted and has annotations to help with unfamiliar vocabulary.

Before moving on to the next activity, have partners share out some of the reasons for fighting British rule that they found either in the video or written speech.

30 minutes

Explain

Tell partners they are now going to compare Patrick Henry's reasons for rebellion and resistance with Thomas Paine's writing in the **Common Sense** excerpt. Display **slide 8**, which provides further information about the publication of Paine's famous Common Sense pamphlet.

Teacher's Note: Background For Paine's "common Sense"

Henry had called for resistance to British authority. Point out that Common Sense was published almost ten months after Patrick Henry's speech. The Continental Army had been formed, and battles and skirmishes were occurring between the army and British regulars. While colonists were supportive of resistance and rebellion, they were not in agreement for total independence from Britain. Many hoped that England would come to its senses. Paine's "Common Sense" was intended to persuade them that independence was necessary. You may wish to read the Common Sense excerpt aloud for students first if they have difficulty reading and understanding primary sources.

Display **slide 9** and ask partners to use the Categorical Highlighting strategy once again as they read or review together the Common Sense excerpt. Have them highlight Paine's reasons for separation from England. After highlighting, they are to jot down their ideas in the second column of the T-Chart handout.

Next, on **slide 10**, ask partners to also write a summary at the bottom of their T-Chart about the similarities and differences between the two primary sources. Have them share how both men influenced the road to independence from England.

20 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 11** and pass out the attached **RAFT** handout. Read aloud and explain the [Roles, Audience, Format, and Topic \(RAFT\)](#) choices for the RAFT activity. Ask students to each pick one of the four writing formats (letter, speech, illustration, or news report) and place themselves in the role of the writer. They will write about the topic shown and to the audience described on the handout. Students are to use their T-Chart as information for the substance of their writing.

Teacher's Note: Raft Choices

A blank section is provided at the bottom of the RAFT handout so that the teacher (or the student) can design their own RAFT creative writing assignment that demonstrates their learning.

Evaluate

The completed T-Chart and the RAFT writing will serve as assessments of this lesson. Collect these from students or have them submit their work to you once they have completed their tasks.

Resources

- 240th anniversary of Patrick Henry's liberty or death speech (2015). [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbghWFMLyiA>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Categorical highlighting. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/192>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Commit and toss. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/119>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). T-Chart. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/86>
- Henry, P. (1775). Patrick Henry, give me liberty or give me death [text]. 18th century documents collection. Avalon project: Yale Law School. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/patrick.asp
- Paine, T. (1776). Common sense manuscript. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. <http://gilderlehrman.pastperfect-online.com/33267cgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=407F8541-C845-4A05-B1CD-201253887840;type=301>
- Patrick Henry. (n.d.). Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Henry#%22Liberty_or_Death%22_\(1775\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Henry#%22Liberty_or_Death%22_(1775))
- Thomas Paine. (n.d.). Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Paine#Common_Sense_\(1776\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Paine#Common_Sense_(1776))