

U.S. HISTORY

American Revolutionary War Unit

Goal: Students will learn about the **underlying causes** of the American Revolution as well as **symptoms** of unrest and the **spark** that started the war. They will study documents and gather evidence that supports the following accusation.

The Charges:

King George III, General Burgoyne, General Howe and General Cornwallis. You are all charged with the following **War Crimes** against the American colonies.

1. Gross indifference and negligence toward the American colonists and their needs.
2. Inhuman treatment of colonial civilians and animals.
3. Barbarous actions in battle.
4. Encouraging the Indians to attack the American colonies.
5. Destruction of American property: farms, homes, ships, animals, slaves, etc.

If found guilty of these crimes, this court may sentence you to death, imprisonment, or ask for monetary compensation for the American victims. Since WE the Americans won the war, we have the right to put you and your commanders on trial. We are the judges and jury because we won the war and are a nation, not a colony of Great Britain.

Methods of Instruction:

1. The teacher can role play King George III and the different Generals. The class can then be assigned the duty of finding documents to support the charges.
2. You can divide the class in half and have students role play the King and Generals with each side finding documents to support their sides.
3. The class could be assigned to find evidence on one of the charges and present this to the class during a trial.
4. You could reverse the trial and charge the American colonists including John Hancock, Samuel Adams, George Washington & John Adams with treason against England as well as the above-mentioned charges.

Journey Back In Time:

1. Students can search for evidence using "**ERAS**" and the following list of folders:
 - American Perspectives
 - American Rebellion
 - American Revolution: Acts of Continental Congress
 - American Revolution: Acts of Parliament & the King
 - American Revolution: Opinions & Advice
 - American Revolution: The War
2. Students may also search "**ERAS**" using the following specific phrases:
 - Boston Tea Party
 - Boston Massacre
 - Coercive Acts
 - Townshend Acts
 - Stamp Act
3. Students may also search "**ERAS**" using the following key topics:
 - King George III
 - General Burgoyne

General Cornwallis
General Howe
Samuel Adams
George Washington
John Hancock
John Adams

4. Students might select from “**ERAS**” the following topics:
- Declaration of Independence
 - Manufacturing, Commerce, & Business
 - Slavery
 - Taxation
 - Wars, Warfare, Warships, etc.
 - Western Land Dispute
 - Lexington
 - Yorktown
 - Invasion of Canada

These are just some of the ways to **research** this topic using Journey Back In Time. There are many others and I am sure that students can develop their own path of thinking.

If the teacher really likes to act, it is very fun to role-play King George III and his Generals, using a pompous, egotistical air of superiority over the colonists (students). I made the students **bow down** to me when I entered the room. It really ticked them off and set the tone for the trial. It makes it easier for them to understand how many of the English nobility felt about the colonists. Don't forget that England had nobles and lords whose position was inherited at birth. They were **not** equal to the **common people** and looked upon the colonists as illiterate & uncivilized. They were certainly not as cultured and refined as Englishmen!

History to me was all about Conflict and this trial provided a platform from which one could understand how many differences existed in the 18th century between America and England.

I hope this helps get you and your class started. This “trial” might take anywhere from a week to several weeks, but I found it very exciting and fun to do in class. Enjoy yourselves discovering the past through **Journey Back In Time!**

Definitions:

underlying cause = a grievance or complaint that is deep-rooted, or of a long-standing nature. Usually very general in nature.

symptom of unrest = a specific action or event that creates hostility or disagreement. These are usually observable and have a time, date, or place attached to them.

spark = this is usually the event or action that immediately precedes the conflict. War follows right after this. This is the proverbial “straw that broke the camel's back”.