




The American Revolution

Learning Guide





The American Revolution

LEARNING GUIDE

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FROM THE ASC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



Dear Parents, Artists and Educators:

Thank you for taking the time to explore and use this guide! We hope it helps bring the arts to your kids in a rich and meaningful way.

As always, our goal with this guide is to give you tools to aid you in your exploration. We take pride in our “ASC Field Trip Experience.” The experience incorporates the many services we offer to make your trip to ASC smooth, fun and educational. After every performance we conduct a Curtain Conversation to guide the audience into a deeper discussion of the play and give them a chance to ask their questions of the cast. After you leave the show you can use the follow-up activities and discussion questions in this Guide as a reference tool. We encourage your students to respond to the play and further interact with the cast. We hope that each component of our field trip experience inspires you and offers you the support you need to continue the great work you are doing with your kids in school and at home.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions regarding the Guide, we’d love to hear them. Thank you for being a part of our ASC community and we look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Many Thanks,
Dani Bryant

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Hello, my name is Marc Frost and I am the Managing/Artistic Director of Theater Unspeakable. Four years ago, I created TU with the vision of making great devised, physical theater. What do these terms mean?

Devised theater means that we create our shows from scratch without a pre-existing script. The actors work with me to develop the shows, improvising dialogue and creating choreography, while I direct the process of building the show. We work this way because it’s fun and it follows the mantra that “Two heads are better than one”. Or in our case, eight! *The American Revolution* took over a year to create, and the piece continues to evolve with every performance.

Physical theater means we tell our stories primarily through physical and visual means. TU likes to tell big stories in small spaces. To do this we use our bodies in many non-traditional ways: as set pieces, as props, and even as sound effects. We ask our audience—that’s you—to use your imaginations to bring our epic stories to life.

Since we spend so much time on each project, I make sure to pick a story that really speaks to me. While it happened many, many years ago in a time when people lived very differently than we do today, the events of this era changed our lives forever. The Revolution gave birth to our country and when George Washington defeated King George’s army, the world was truly spun on its axis. And ever since, we have been spinning in that direction of freedom and equality.

For all those of you sitting in the audience who have big stories you would like to tell, I would like to encourage you to start bringing them to life—today. Don’t wait until you have a big theater; you can create a show anywhere (just look at our little stage!). Who knows, maybe one day I’ll be coming to the theater to sit and watch your big story come to life...

Many Thanks,
Marc Frost

SPOTLIGHT: MEET THE CAST

What is a piece of advice you would give to your elementary/middle school self?

Who/what inspires you? (A friend, a celebrity, a piece of art, etc...)

If you could split a sandwich with any famous person—real or fictional—from the past, who would it be?



Trey Hobbs

Advice: If I had any advice to give my middle school self it would be to not try to hide a part of you. Enjoy not fitting in a little more.

Inspiration: I've always been inspired by campfires. The conversations around them are always better. Something about the fire ignites a really amazing part of the imagination.

Sandwich: It would be my Granddad. I never knew him very well and would like to catch up.



Brittany Anderson

Advice: I would tell my middle school self to pursue any interest I had had without caring if my peers thought I was "nerdy." At 24 years old, I can honestly say that the "nerdy" ones are the most passionate.

Inspiration: I always feel inspired when I watch music videos by the band Ok Go. They're super fun and colorful and quirky and most of all - simple. Watching them reminds that me you don't need a lot of money to create something really cool.

Sandwich: If I could split a sandwich with anyone it would be a dainty cucumber sandwich with Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. It would be fun to know if Mr. Darcy actually has any not-so-dreamy habits like picking his nose.



Quenna Barrett

Advice: Hey middle school self, make sure your parents put you in guitar lessons now! It's much harder to start in college.

Inspiration: My grandmothers!

Sandwich: Ernest Hemingway



Aaron Rustebakke

Advice: Don't worry about getting it right the first time. People who have mastered any talent, skill, or sport never started that way. They just didn't care if they messed it a lot, and eventually they figured it out.

Inspiration: Steve Prefontaine. He makes me want to be a better person.

Sandwich: Terry Crews. Because he is just cool.

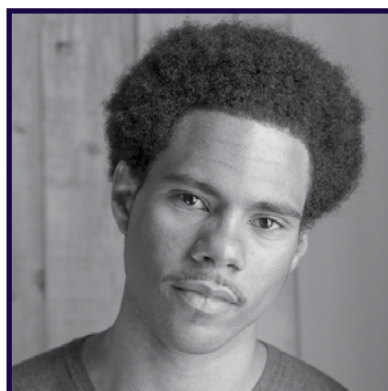


Kathleen Hoil

Advice: It's okay to be a weirdo!

Inspiration: Nature, music, strangers on the street, folklore.

Sandwich: J.R.R. Tolkien!

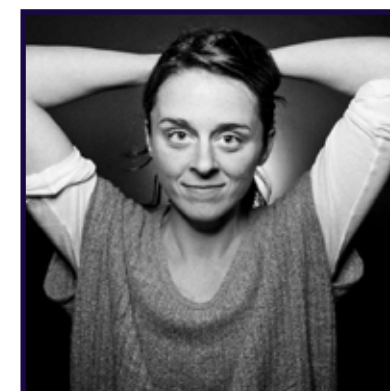


Jeffery Freelon

Advice: Don't be afraid to fail just as long as you plan to learn from those failures swiftly and effectively.

Inspiration: Simply the fun of theatre. I can be anybody I want to be, I can be Spider-Man without all the life threatening responsibilities!

Sandwich: It would be Huey P. Newton, just to know how he would handle all these unfortunate grave instances of young unarmed black men being unjustly murdered.



Vanessa Valliere

Advice: I tried really hard to get my older sister to like me more. (She loved me all along, I just didn't know it yet.) I would just say, "Vanessa, don't worry, your sister loves you so, so much. One day the two of you will be impossibly close."

Inspiration: My friends Lindsey and Katy inspire me. They are beautiful people who do amazing things and they love me without judgment.

Sandwich: I would love to have lunch with Theo Decker from Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*. I am a big reader and I don't think I've ever loved a character more than I loved him.

CONNECT WITH THE CAST OF *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

Dear Educators:

Adventure Stage creates work for young people, and we deeply value their insights and reactions. We look forward to the student letters, artwork, photos, and video we receive each year.

We welcome and encourage your students to dialogue and engage with us by writing letters or sharing artwork, photos, or videos with the cast of the show! We'd like to share several ways for you and your students to get involved.

Students are always welcome to reach out individually via social media outlets.

Instagram: @adventurestagechicago
Twitter: @adventure_stage
Facebook: www.facebook.com/adventurestage

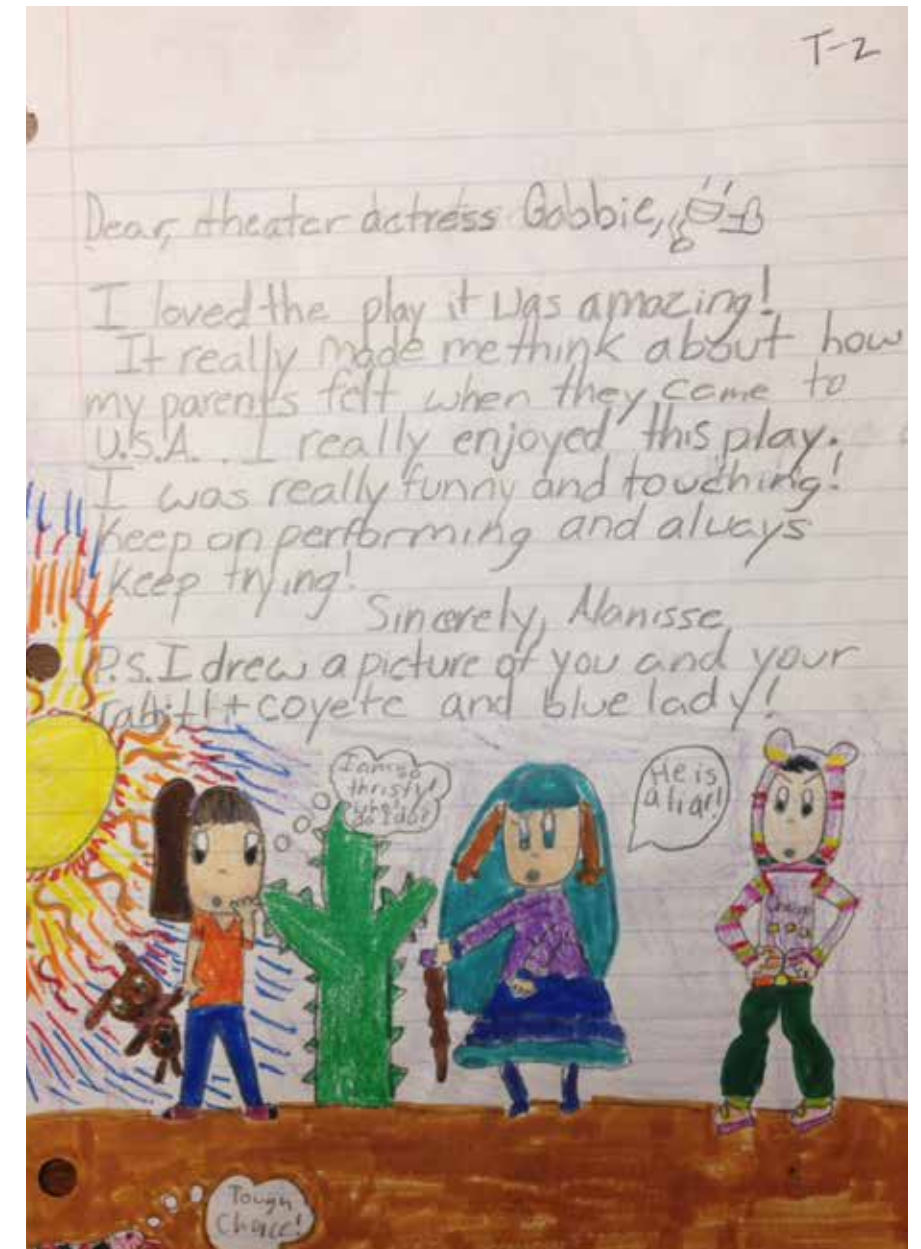
Students can also hand-write or type letters to the cast and send them back to us.

Email: ascletters@gmail.com
Mail:
Dani Bryant
c/o Adventure Stage Chicago
1012 N. Noble
Chicago, IL 60642

We will respond to all student correspondence that arrives before the show closes!
We may post letters, artwork, videos, and photos to our Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook pages.

Tips for Students:

1. Make sure your first name and school is on your artwork, photo, video or letter!
2. Ask the cast at least one question—they love to talk about the show!
3. Share your experience of watching the show!
4. You and your friends can pick different actors so that every cast member gets letters, artwork or media!
5. Send in your letters, artwork, and media as soon as you can so we have time to respond!



OFF THE STAGE

Questions for before the show:

What does freedom mean to you? What does it mean to be free?
Is everyone in America free? What are freedoms we can still fight for today?
When do you follow the rules and when do you break them?

PUTTING THE PLAY INTO CONTEXT

An interview with Marc Frost and ASC intern Cristabel Donker

Why did Theater Unspeakable choose to make this play?

The American Revolution is definitely a big story -- with all its important political and historical moments not to mention eight years of battles -- but it's also a story that we don't hear very much today. Maybe this is because Civil War-era films are popular right now (see *Lincoln*, *12 Years a Slave*, *Glory*), or maybe it's because our nation's founding story seems too academic, too stale, too far removed from the way we live today. That's where movement-based narrative, or what may also be called Physical Theater, can help us make a story fresh and alive for a contemporary audience.

It is important to tell both sides of any story, but when you are trying to condense a big story into a small space (and time!) you have to paint the action with a thicker brush while also maintaining some of the finer details. In this case, I think most US audience members can sympathize with the American side and that is where we have tried to show the most complexity. That George Washington was not born a hero, that John Adams had major ego problems and that the Founding Fathers and Mothers were real people trying to deal with real situations long before they became mythologized into marble portraits.

How did you approach the obvious presence of slavery in this time period without making it central to the story?

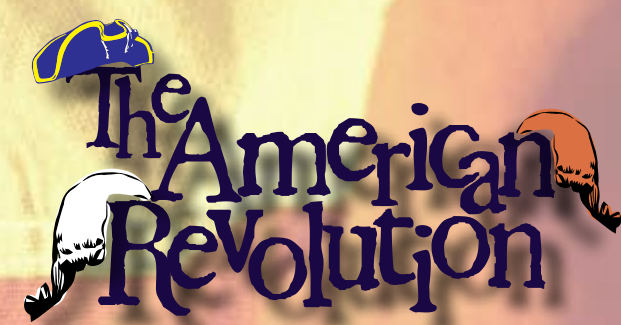
We did not want to shy away from the fact that slavery was an everyday fact of life during the American Revolution. Washington, Jefferson, and many other famous revolutionaries spoke about "unshackling themselves from the chains of England's tyranny" while at the same time keeping thousands of slaves in their own households.

What message or feeling are you hoping audiences walk away with?

Billy Lee once said of Washington, "When I think about George, I think of our country. Not a perfect one, but a good one." This is the same message I would like people to take with them when they leave the theater. The country's founding had an imperfect beginning, built upon the sacrifice, slaughter, and subjugation of many individuals and peoples, but I want them to leave feeling proud of their country's founding, because it truly was the dawning of a new era for personal freedom. Even in its most beatified heroes, we see the flaws, the human shortcomings, which to me, make the achievements all the more inspiring. We also hope they laugh.



OFF THE STAGE



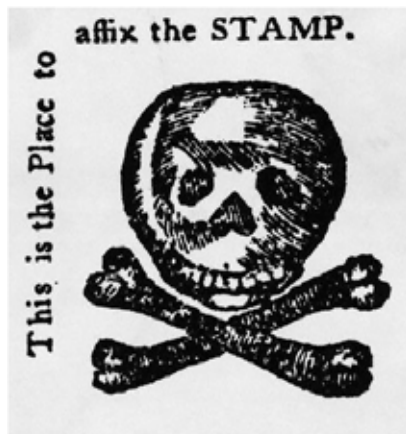
TIMELINE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1754-63 – An attack led by George Washington leads to the French and Indian War, or the Seven Years war. The war ends in British victory and land acquisition in America, but the British government also finds itself in massive debt.

1753 – Washington delivers message from the British Royal Army to the French troops in Fort Le Boeuf, Pennsylvania, telling the French to remove themselves at once.

1765 – King George III enacts the Stamp Act, taxing the colonists in order to pay off the debt from the Seven Years War. The Act is met with much resistance by the Colonists, and is eventually repealed in 1766.

“To the King...May the fleas of a thousand camels fill his armpits!”



1767 – When the Stamp Act fails, the King enacts the Townshend Acts, further taxing the colonists. Like the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts meets many protests and boycotts.



1770 – The Boston Massacre raises tensions amidst the Red Coats and the Colonists when a protest against British soldiers ends in 5 deaths and 6 injuries.

1774 – Paul Revere embarks on his famous Midnight Ride, warning the colonists in Lexington that the British troops are approaching and to move their weaponry and other goods elsewhere.



1773 – British Parliament further taxes the Colonists with the enactment of the Tea Act. In protest, the Boston Tea Party destroys a shipment of tea from the East India Trading Company.

“We’re not fighting for South Carolina or Virginia or Massachusetts now. We’re fighting for America!”

1775 – The Continental Army is established, and George Washington is named its Commander in Chief.

1775 – The first major battles between the Continental and British armies begin at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The first British soldiers fall in battle in what is famously called “the shot heard round the world.”

“Until an independence is declared the continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business yet knows it must be done.”

1776 – Thomas Paine publishes Common Sense, arguing that the Colonies needed to break away from Great Britain.

1776 – The Continental Congress signs the Declaration of Independence, officially breaking away from Great Britain.



1777-78 – After many losses on the battlefield, George Washington takes his troops to find shelter and train at Valley Forge for a brutal winter. With the help of General von Steuben of Prussia, the Continental Army receives proper training that changes the tide of war once winter turns to spring.

1781 – British General Cornwallis surrenders at the Battle of Yorktown, ending the last major battle of the American Revolution.



1789 – George Washington is elected the first American President, the only president to be elected unanimously...twice!

“When I think of George, I think of our country. Not a perfect one, but a good one.”

1783 – The War of Independence ends with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.



1790

KEY TERMS & EVENTS

Sons of Liberty – A rebel group founded in Boston that opposed the British government, using tactics from newspapers to tar and feathering. The Sons of Liberty were responsible for the Boston Tea Party.

House of Burgesses – The colonial Virginia legislative assembly.

East India Trading Company – A British stock company indirectly controlled by the government. The company traded goods from all over the world, though predominantly in the Indian Ocean.

House of Commons – The lower house of the British Parliament. It is the Parliament that approved the Stamp and Townshend Acts, and it was also the Parliament that repealed those acts.

First Continental Congress – A meeting of delegates from 12 out of the 13 colonies on September 5, 1774. The delegates convened in response to the Intolerable Acts, which the British Parliament had imposed on the Colonies in response to the Boston Tea Party. The Second Continental Congress was held May 10, 1775.

Plan of Union – A plan to keep the Colonies part of the British Empire. It was overturned at the First Continental Congress.

Suffolk Resolves – A declaration endorsed at the First Continental Congress that called for boycotts of British goods until the Intolerable Acts were repealed.

Continental Army – George Washington's troops.

Minutemen – Early responders to times of crisis in the American Revolution. They made up about a quarter of the Continental Army and were typically the best trained of the troops.

The Regulars – Members of the British Army. Also referred to as the Redcoats.

6 Nations Confederacy – Six tribes of Indians in upstate New York who were aligned with the British during the War of Independence. Also referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy.

ARTS INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES



Yes It Is, Mr. Franklin!

Common Core Connections: 26.B.1b, 25.B.2 TH:Cr1.1 a. b. TH:Cr2a.b, TH:Pr6.a

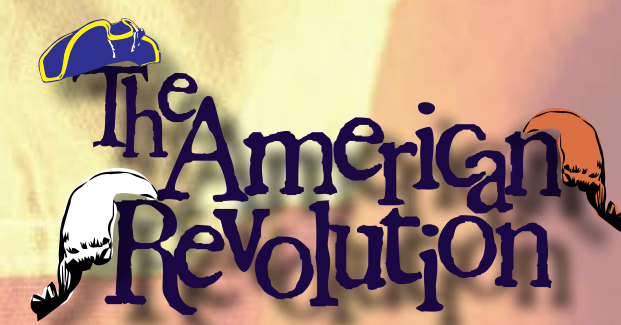
Objective: Aside from being a key player in the road to independence, Benjamin Franklin was also famous for his creative inventions. In this Creative Drama game, students will use their imaginations and critical thinking skills to transform an everyday object into a new invention!

Materials: Any assortment of everyday objects found in the classroom (shoes, tissue boxes, rulers)

Procedure:

1. Gather students in a circle.
2. Present the first everyday item—a water bottle, for example. Explain to the students that though it may look like a water bottle, this is actually Benjamin Franklin's famous telescope invention.
3. Add a gesture or motion with the water bottle to demonstrate the telescope's function.
4. The whole group responds with "Yes, it is, Mr. Franklin."
5. Hand the object to the student next to you. Have them come up with a new invention for the water bottle, along with a gesture. "This a robot unicorn compass!"
6. Again, the group will respond with "Yes, it is, Mr. Franklin!"
7. Hand the object to the next student. Have them come up with a new invention for the water bottle, along with a gesture. "This is a trumpet that tells you the weather as you play it!"
8. Rotate different objects each round.

OFF THE STAGE



ARTS INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

We Hold These Truths

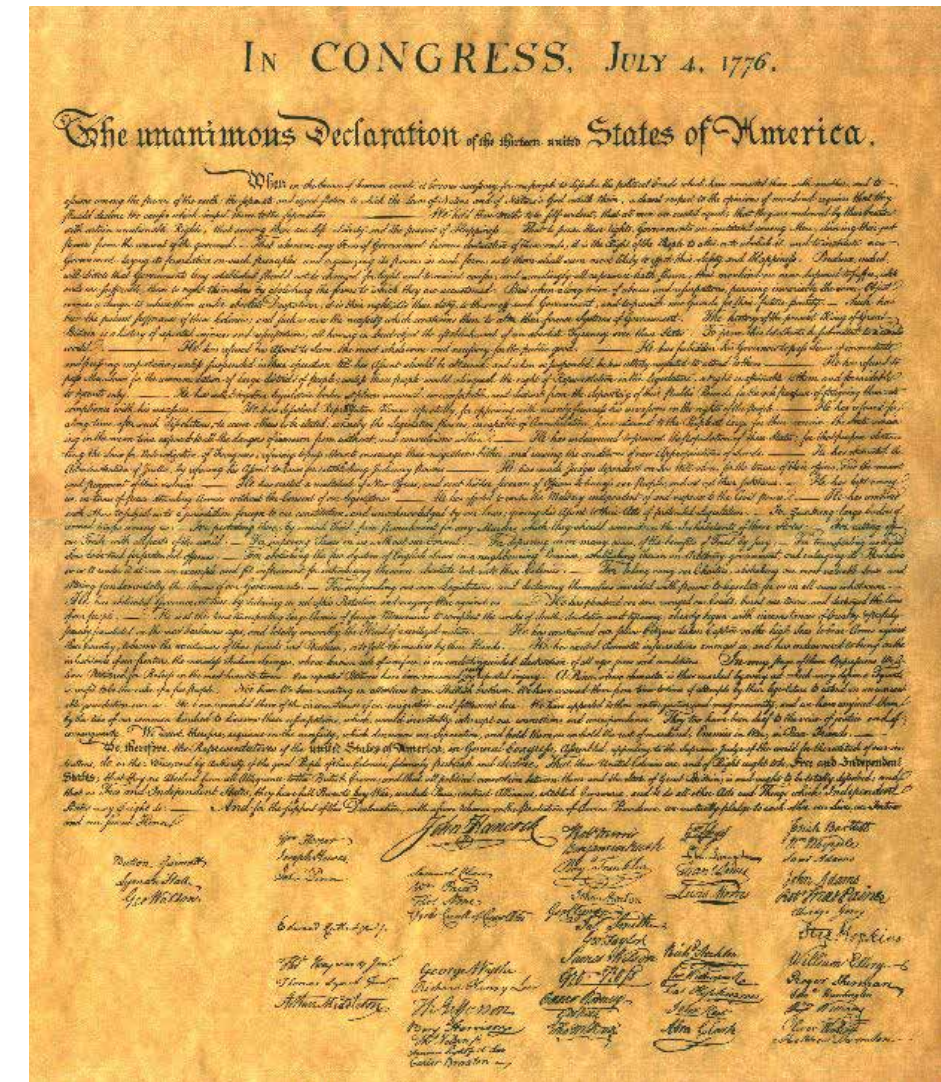
Common Core Connections: 3.C.2a, 3.B.1b , 14.A.2, 14.F.3a, 14.F.1

Objective: Students will consider basic human rights and employ writing skills as they write their own Declaration of Independence.

Materials: Blank paper, pens/markers, poster board for additional activity.

Procedure:

1. Give each student a piece of paper and a marker or pen.
2. Ask each student to write at the top: "I hold these truths to be self-evident."
3. Define self-evident for students.
 - Self-evident: clearly true and requiring no proof or explanation.
4. The students, like Thomas Jefferson, will write their own Declaration of Independence. Have students consider what rights they think every person should have; what rights are necessary for groups of people to live together peacefully.
5. Continuing Conversations:
 - Should different communities have different rights? Families, classrooms, schools, cities, countries? Why or why not?
 - Make a class declaration! At the top of a poster, write: "We Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident."
 - Have each student write one of their rights on the poster and then sign their name.



ARTS INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES



Spies Like Us

Common Core Connections: 26.A.1e, 27.B.1, 16.A.1a

Objective: Students will place themselves in the shoes of Revolutionary soldiers and spies as they write a letter home encoded with invisible ink.

Materials: Paper, pens/pencils, baking soda, water, small cups, cotton swabs, grape juice concentrate

Procedure:

1. In this activity students are spies for Continental Army. Each student will write a secret message "home" (though it is actually going to the Continental Congress). On the top layer of the letter students are to write their very own top secret message with invisible ink.
2. Give each student a piece of paper, a pen/pencil, a cotton swab, and a cup of equal parts baking soda and water mixed together.
3. Using the baking soda/water mixture and cotton swab, students can write a letter revealing top secret information about the war.
4. Once the paper has dried completely, students will write their "letters home." The letter must be believable, or the British will know it is encoded if they get their hands on it. Suggested questions to consider: Why are you fighting? Is it scary? What do you miss about home? When do you think the war will be over?
5. Have each student give their letter to a classmate to decode. To decode the letter, paint grape juice on the paper with a cotton swab.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Movies

1776 (1972) - Rated PG

In this adaptation of the famous Broadway musical, John Adams, Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson work on the Declaration of Independence as the newly formed Continental Congress tries to come to agreement on how to proceed in the heat of battle.

Felicity: An American Girl Adventure (2005) – NR

Upon turning 10, Felicity Merriman learns about loyalty, patriotism and family in 1775 Williamsburg. When her new best friend, Elizabeth, supports the British troops, Felicity must hold fast to her own conviction as war brews in the new colonies.

The Crossing (2000) - NR

In the darkest hour of the American Revolution, George Washington risks everything in his famous crossing of the Delaware River. This TV film offers a humanized portrayal of Washington and his tactics that led the colonies to victory.

Other

The Pritzker Military Museum and Library - <http://www.pritzkermilitary.org/explore/museum/permanent-current-upcoming-exhibits/citizen-soldier/>

Liberty! – A PBS series on the American Revolution – <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/>

Liberty's Kids (PBS) - <http://www.libertyskids.com/>

School House Rock videos on the American Revolution – “The Shot Heard Round World” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZMmPWTwTHc>), “No More King” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBBTF0Wg7dY>)

Roles of Women in the Revolutionary War – <http://historyofmassachusetts.org/the-roles-of-women-in-the-revolutionary-war/>

Books

Founding Mothers, by Cokie Roberts – ages 7-12

Learn about the important women of the Revolution and their roles in America’s road to independence.

The Fifth of March: A Story of the Boston Massacre,

by Ann Rinaldi – ages 12-14

Rinaldi’s novel gives a historical portrayal of the Boston Massacre told through the eyes of an indentured child of John and Abigail Adams.

Johnny Tremain, by Esther Forbes – ages 9-12

When Tremain is injured, he must leave his post as an apprentice, and his travels have him cross paths with Washington, Revere and many other key players of the Revolution.

The Way Lies North, by Jean Rae Baxter – ages 13-16

With a different approach to the Revolution, Baxter tells the story of Loyalist girl and her family who must flee north when the Sons of Liberty force them out of the home they had built for themselves in the New World.

My Brother Sam Is Dead, by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier – ages 12+

This novel follows Tim Meeker and his family in the months leading up to the war. When Tim’s brother Sam declares his intent to fight against the British, the Meekers are torn apart by their religious and ideological beliefs.

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Putting the Play into Context

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Key Terms from the Play

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Timeline of the American Revolution

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Arts Integrated Activities

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