

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## Grades 5 to 12

# Ideas of Freedom in Revolutionary America

## America's Quest for Freedom Series

**Subject Area:** United States History, Social Studies

**Synopsis:** Explores the quest for liberty that inspired colonial men, women and some slaves to fight the British for American independence. Explains how the same quest led many slaves and Native Americans to fight with the British--slaves in exchange for their freedom, and Native Americans in order to protect their lands from American colonists.

### Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to identify the causes of the American Revolution and the contributions of key individuals of the period, including Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to understand the significance of the Declaration of Independence and the ideals set forth in the document pertaining to personal liberties.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to identify the major turning points of the Revolutionary War, including the Battle of Trenton, the Saratoga Campaign, Valley Forge, and the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.
- Objective 4)** Students will be able to explain why many slaves and Native Americans fought with the British against the colonists in the war in order to secure their own freedoms and discuss how the Revolution impacted these groups.
- Objective 5)** Students will be able to discuss the changing role of women in the war, the contributions of Abigail Adams, Molly Pitcher and Deborah Samson, and their legal status following the Revolution.
- Objective 6)** Students will be able to explain the significance of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the protection of individual liberties.

### Pre-Viewing Discussion and Activities:

- 1) What did colonists fight for in the American Revolution? Can you name some of the people involved in the Revolution?
- 2) Vocabulary: colonist, revolution, discontentment, hereditary rule, monarchy, independence, asylum for liberty, indentured servant, Declaration of Independence, natural rights, Hessian mercenaries, maneuver, slave, abolish, surrender, paradoxical, destitute, rebellion, uprising, Constitutional Convention, Constitution, Bill of Rights

### Post-Viewing Discussion and Activities:

- 1) Who was Thomas Paine? What specific issues caused him to become discontent with England? According to Paine, what was the mission of the Revolution? Did the Revolution create an asylum for liberty as he claimed?
- 2) Describe the roles of women during the Revolution. What were the specific achievements of Abigail Adams, Molly Pitcher and Deborah Samson? What did Abigail Adams' say to her husband, John, concerning women's rights? Were women granted equal rights in the Revolution? Did women rebel as Adams suggested? Why not?

- 3) Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? Why was the document significant? How is it significant to Americans today?
- 4) The Declaration of Independence states that “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Did these rights extend to everyone in this time period? What groups of people were not offered equal rights?
- 5) What caused slaves to join the British in the war? How did George Washington respond to the King’s offer of freedom to slaves who fought against the colonists? If you were a slave, would you have fought with the British or the colonists? How did the Revolution mark the beginning of the end of slavery? What ideals were set forth in the Declaration of Independence to set this in motion?
- 6) How did the Revolution impact Native Americans? Why do you think most tribes fought with the British? How do you think this affected their relations with the United States after the war?
- 7) Describe the problems facing the United States after the Revolutionary War. What were the causes of rebellions, such as the one led by Daniel Shays? Why did Thomas Jefferson believe these uprisings were virtuous and necessary?
- 8) What was the purpose of the Constitutional Convention? Why was the Bill of Rights created? How does the Bill of Rights protect citizens? What rights does it guarantee?

**Additional Activities:**

- 1) Discuss the impact of Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense”. What caused him to write the pamphlet? Why was it so effective? Discuss some of the injustices in the world today. Have students select a topic of interest to them and write a pamphlet that will increase readers’ awareness of the problem and suggest how it can be solved.
- 2) The Declaration of Independence made it possible for Americans to oppose the government if their natural rights were being violated. Explore the concept of natural rights in a class discussion. Break the class into groups of four or five to create lists of natural rights. Bring the class back together and have groups share the natural rights on their lists.
- 3) Divide the class into ten groups and assign each group to an amendment in the Bill of Rights. Each group should read the amendment and discuss the freedoms provided by it. Allow each group to present their findings to the class.

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