

Frontier Grant Lesson Plan

Teacher: Karen Wisdom

Topic: The American Revolution/ Revolutionary Songs

Grade/Subject: 5th Grade

Duration: 2 - 3 Class periods

Standards addressed:

5.SS.1.1.3 Discuss significant individuals who have been responsible for bringing about political and social changes in the United States. (452.01b)

5.SS.1.1.7 Discuss the causes and effects of various conflicts in American history.

5.SS.3.1.4 Explain the concepts of tariffs and taxation.

5.SS.3.2.1 Discuss the economic policies of England that contributed to the revolt in the North American colonies. (457.01a)

Guiding /essential questions: What were the colonists revolting against? What were some of the grievances the colonists had against King George and Parliament?

Learning activities: Students will be able to recognize the following vocabulary terms and how they affected the colonists during the revolution. In small groups they will analyze one of the songs. After they have analyzed the song the small group will present their analysis to the rest of the class.

Assessment method: Through their small group presentations all of the following questions will be addressed.

Who was the tyrant?

What were the colonists rebelling against?

What does boycott mean?

Who was being dominated?

What does representation mean?

What was being taxed? Why was this not fair?

How did the colonists express their grievances?

How is slavery used here?

Resources: Vocabulary - Tyrant liberty rebellion boycott
dominate Slavery colonial taxation grievances representation

Lyrics:

Free America

Lift up your hands ye heroes and swear with proud disdain
The wretch that would ensnare you shall lay his snares in vain.
Should Europe empty all her force, we'll meet her in array,
And fight and shout and shout and fight for North America!

Torn from a world of tyrants beneath this western sky.
We form a new dominion, a land of liberty.
The world shall own we're masters here, then hasten on the day.
Huzzah, huzzah, huzzah, huzzah for free America!

Some future day shall crown us the masters of the main.
Our fleet shall speak in thunder, to England, France, and Spain.
And the nations o'er the oceans' spread shall tremble and obey,
The sons, the sons, the sons, the sons of brave America!

Interpretation:

This song would have been sung heartily with the same strong conviction as one would sing at a current day high school football game (i.e. "fight and shout and shout and fight"). The word "huzzah" was used as a celebratory exclamation in colonial America (and in England), and in this context would be like yelling, "Go America!" The last verse refers to the desire to dominate ("the masters of the main") and to be recognized as a free and strong country, similar to the reputation of England, France, and Spain at that time.

Chester

Let tyrants shake their iron rods. And slavery clank her galling chains.
We fear them not, we trust in God. New England's God forever reigns.

The foe comes on with haughty stride, our troops advance with martial noise,
Their veterans flee before our youth, and generals yield to beardless boys

What grateful offerings shall we bring, what shall we render to the Lord,
Loud Hallelujahs let us sing, and praise His name on every chord.

Interpretation:

Chester was a popular tune written by William Billings. It eventually became the anthem for the Continental Army. One can conclude that this was not a song to be sung in taverns. Notice the piety and solemnity of the words and tune, as it trusts in God to win the war. "Slavery clank her galling chains, we fear them not, we trust in God." Men might have marched off to battle singing or humming this patriotic tune. Note that the slavery referred to in this song is not about African chattel slavery, as practiced in the Colonies, but rather slavery to the British crown. This is a good opportunity to discuss the dual notions of slavery in early America.

God Save The King

God save great George our King,
Long live our noble King, God save the King
Send him victorious, happy and glorious.
Long to reign over us, God save the King

God bless the Commonwealth,
May it increase in strength, Its foes annoy
That George is now no more king of this fertile shore,
From whence he drew his store, Completes our joy!

God save great Washington,
Virginia's war-like son, And make him brave
Defend him from all the blows of Howe and all his foes
Guard him where'er he goes, Washington save.

Free states attend the song,
Now independent from the British throne
To earth's remotest bound, echoing skies resound,
The sweet melodious sound. Liberty's our own!

Interpretation:

This patriotic tune originated in Britain and remains the United Kingdom's national anthem today. We borrowed the melody for the song "America" (i.e., "My Country Tis of Thee"). An unknown rebel lyricist changed the words as a mockery of British patriotism. Most likely it was sung without the first verse during the Revolution, but in this version it represents the change in sentiment and shows the origin of a tune many thought was written for the United States. This is a great song to sing as a class.

Revolutionary Tea

There was a rich lady lived over the sea,
And she was an island queen.
Her daughter lived off in the new country,
With an ocean of water between
With an ocean of water between, with an ocean of water between.

The old lady's pockets were filled with gold,
Yet never contented was she
So she ordered her daughter to pay her a tax,
Of thrupence a pound on the tea.
Of thrupence a pound on the tea, of thrupence a pound on the tea.

"Oh mother, dear mother," the daughter replied.
"I'll not do the thing that you ask.
"I'm willing to pay a fair price for the tea,
But never a thrupenny tax,
But never a thrupenny tax, but never a thrupenny tax,

"You shall!" cried the mother, and reddened with rage.
"For you're my own daughter you see.
"And it's only proper that daughter should pay
Her mother a tax on the tea,
Her mother a tax on the tea, her mother a tax on the tea.

She ordered her servant to come up to her
And to wrap up a package of tea.
And eager for threepence a pound she put in
Enough for a large family,
Enough for a large family, enough for a large family

The tea was conveyed to her daughter's own door,
All down by the Oceanside.
But the bouncing girl poured out every pound
On the dark and the boiling tide,
On the dark and the boiling tide, on the dark and the boiling tide.

And then she called out to the island queen
"Oh mother, dear mother," called she.
"Your tea you may have when 'tis steeped enough.
But NEVER a tax from me,
But NEVER a tax from me, but NEVER a tax from me.

Interpretation:

Revolutionary Tea is one of the best songs to truly represent the relationship between England and the colonies: it was a mother-daughter relationship. This song also tells the story of the Tea Tax, which was imposed upon the colonists without a voice in British parliament. Tea was a widely used beverage in Britain and the colonies. Most Colonists drank tea. A note of contempt is clear as England is portrayed as a rich, old queen who only wanted to become wealthier. The rebellious young daughter who is attached to her "dear mother" is willing to pay for the tea, but not a "thrupenny tax." Knowing that her daughter is being rebellious, the mother sends a significant amount of tea to her daughter who promptly throws it into the ocean (The Boston Tea Party), and again declares to her "dear mother" that she will never pay a tax on tea. This is a great and hardy song for a class to sing together provided that the "NEVER" in the last line of the seventh verse is yelled with fists in the air.

Address to the Ladies

Young ladies in town, and those that live round
let a friend at this season advise you;
Since money's so scarce, and times growing worse,
Strange things may soon surprise you;
First then throw aside your high top knots of pride,
Wear none but your own country linen;
Of economy boast, let your pride be the most,
To show clothes of your own make and spinning.

What if homespun they say is not quite so gay,
As brocades, yet be not in a passion;
For when once it is known this is much worn in town
One and all will cry out 'tis the fashion!
No more ribands wear, not in rich dress appear,
Love your country much better than fine things;
Begin without passion, it will soon be the fashion,
To grace your smooth locks with a twine string.

These do without fear, and to all you'll appear Fair,
Charming, true, lovely, and clever,
Tho' the times remain darkish, young men may be sparkish,
And love you much stronger than ever.
Then make yourselves easy, for no one will tease ye,
Nor tax you, if chancing to sneer,
At the sense-ridden tools, who this us all fool;
But they'll find the reverse far and near.

Interpretation:

This "cry out" to the ladies before and during the Revolution rallied them to stop buying goods made in or shipped from Britain. They are being asked to make sacrifices of money and fashion, and not to buy any clothing or other goods from England. The song pleads with the women to "love your country much better than fine things," and in turn the young men will "love you much stronger than ever" because you will "appear fair, charming, true, lovely, and clever." This address can compare with recent advertisement campaigns to encourage people to buy American-made products. It helped boost the American economy, and it told England that the colonies were rebelling in every way. This song helps students understand that it was not only men supporting and perpetuating the war movement, but women, too, came together to help in ways that were socially acceptable for them at that time.

