

# Opinions Regarding the Revolutionary War

**Grades:** 4-7

**Time Allotment:** 45 minutes

## Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4-7.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4-7.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

## Objective

Students will:

- Understand and explain the different groups of thought during the Revolutionary War among the people of the colonies
- Understand the types of people who were Loyalists and Patriots and why they may have subscribed to these thoughts
- Think creatively about a person living in this time period and be able to explain and defend their opinion regarding the person's thoughts on the Revolutionary War

## Materials:

- Clear wall space
- Magnets/tape
- Three signs that say Loyalists, Neutralists, and Patriots
- Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- Patriot Persona worksheet
- Scissors
- Notebook paper

## Anticipatory Set

- The teacher will explain to students that they will be learning the opinions on the Revolutionary War held by the people of the colonial time period
- The teacher can ask questions such as:
  - Do you think everyone living in America wanted to be free from England? Why?
  - What might be some reasons people wanted to stay connected to England?

- The teacher can explain that while today it may seem strange to be a colony of England rather than a separate country, the Revolutionary War was actually very controversial at the time.
  - Especially at the beginning of the Revolution, many people still wanted to stay with Britain for various reasons that the students will learn about later in the lesson
- The teacher can ask students if they know what the group of people who supported revolting were called (Patriots), what the group of colonists supported Britain were called (Loyalists) and if there were any groups in between (Quakers/neutralists)

### **Teacher Presentation and Modeling**

- The teacher will now explain to the children that they are going to learn the differences between Patriots, Loyalists, and Quakers/neutralists.
- First, the teacher will explain what it meant to be a neutralist with these facts:
  - The teacher can first ask if anyone knows what the word neutral means. If any student answers, use that to explain the definition of the word.
  - In the Revolutionary War, neutralists were those who could not choose a side or did not want to choose a side in the Revolutionary War.
  - The most common group of neutralists were Quakers. Quakers are a religious group that belong to the Religious Society of Friends. A key part of their religion is that they are pacifists.
    - Being a pacifist meant that a person does not believe in war or want to participate in war. Quakers did not fight for either side in the Revolution because of this and thought the conflict between the colonies and Britain could be solved in other ways.
  - Being a Quaker or neutral during the Revolutionary War could be challenging. Often, if someone did not declare allegiance to one side, Patriots would assume that they were secretly Loyalists. Many were bullied or harassed frequently.
  - Not all Quakers were neutral. Some were disowned from the religion for believing in the war and fighting in it.
  - Overall, a large majority of the colonists remained neutral, even if they were not Quakers.
    - The teacher can have students speculate why a colonist may have stayed neutral in the war.
- Next, the teacher will explain what it means to be a Patriot with the facts written below:
  - Patriots were those who believed in the Revolutionary War and thought that the colonies should become independent from England.

- Many people were patriots because they thought Britain was being unfair to the colonies. For instance, they thought that Britain was taxing them unfairly because there was no colonist representation in England's Parliament.
  - For instance, colonists had to pay taxes on things like paper, tea, glass, and lead, which made those goods more expensive.
  - People also thought they could make more money without having to be a colony of England because they could interact with more countries than just England.
- Britain also would not let the colonists move west and live in certain parts of English territory and some colonists were Patriots because they thought that was unfair as well.
- Some people were Patriots after reading things like *Common Sense*, a book advocating for the colonies' independence.
- Overall, many Patriots lived in the New England colonies like Massachusetts. They were often farmers and merchants who were affected by taxes.
- Finally, the teacher will discuss what it means to be a Loyalist with the facts provided below:
  - Loyalists were those who believed the colonies should stay with Britain and not get independence. They were loyal to the King before the war, they did not want the war to happen, and they thought they could find peace with Britain. During the war, they fought for Britain.
  - Often, people were Loyalists if the colonies' connection to Britain was somehow beneficial to them.
    - For instance, if they were a business owner and thought their business benefited from being connected to England economically.
    - If people still had family in England, they might be Loyalist.
    - If they were members of the government or had any political connections to England.
  - They could also be Loyalists because they were scared of the change that comes with being independent.
  - Some supported England because they thought England would win the war and did not want to get in trouble.
  - Often times, Loyalists were wealthy and from New York City or the South.

### **Guided and Independent Practice**

- The teacher will explain that it is time for an activity. Coloring supplies should be set up so they are spread out among groups of children. Each child should have a persona worksheet and template.

- The classroom should be set up so one wall is divided into three different sections: Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutralists. This will be used later for students to label their persona.
- The teacher will explain that the students are creating a colonial persona. Essentially, they are using their imagination and knowledge of the colonial time period to fill out the worksheet with information like their person's name, age, etc.
  - For the other facts section, the teacher should encourage them to be creative and think of things like:
    - Are they a business owner?
    - Have taxes affected them?
    - Do they have family fighting in the war?
    - Are they the same age as people who fought in the war?
    - Does their family support one side already?
- After they are done creating their persona, they can use the template to draw their character and then cut it out. Their name should be somewhere on the drawing
- For the persona, they can use their real name, age, and appearance if they want, or they can make up a completely new person.
- Once they have filled out the worksheet and drawn a person, they should analyze the facts about their character on the worksheet and decide if the person would be a Loyalist, Patriot, or Neutralist.
- Once they have decided, they can tape up their character on to the wall under the section in which it belongs.

### **Closure**

- Once the students have hung up their drawing on the wall, they should write a few sentences on notebook paper about why they choose the side that they chose.
- After students have finished writing their explanations down, the teacher should ask students to share their responses. If their explanation is not correct, the teacher can question it and help the student reach a conclusion.
- The teacher should help the students conclude the reasons why people become Loyalists, Patriots, and neutralists. They could perhaps use character explanations as a review and write it on the board.

### **Assessment**

- The teacher will assess the responses that students wrote about why their character is the group they choose.
- The teacher will also assess the students' fact worksheet that they used to create their persona.

- The teacher will assess the students' responses to the review at the closure of the lesson to see if they understand what makes a Loyalist, Patriot, or neutralist a part of each group.

**Extension of the Lesson**

- Students could have an in-class debate where they take on characters and debate about which side is correct.
- Students could conduct further research into the main causes of the Revolutionary War.
- Students could create a T-chart of similarities and differences between the groups discussed.