

Document #1

Letter from General George Washington to Continental Congress, May 27, 1780

Sir:

It is with infinite pain I inform Congress, that we are reduced again to a situation of extremity for want of meat. On several days of late, the Troops have been entirely destitute of any, and for a considerable time past they have been at bet, at half, a quarter, an Eighth allowance of this essential article of provisions...Accordingly Two Regiments of the Connecticut line mutinied and got under Arms on Thursday night...

I have been informed by the Two Colonels of the Pennsylva. Line in whom I have the utmost confidence, who were called to assist Colo. Meigs to suppress the mutiny on Thursday, that in the course of their expostulations, the troops very pointedly mentioned besides their distresses for provision, their not being paid for Five months; and, what is of a still more serious and delicate nature in our present circumstances, they mentioned the great depreciation of the Money, it's being of little or no value at all, and yet if they should be paid, that it would be in this way and according to the usual amount, without an adequate allowance for the depreciation...

Document #2

Excerpts from Joseph Plumb Martin's Journal

"We are absolutely, literally starved. I do solemnly declare that I did not put a single morsel of victuals into my mouth for four days and as many nights, except for a little black birch bark which I gnawed off a stick of wood. I saw men roast their old shoes and eat them."

His uniform was "what laughingly could be called a uniform, and possessed a blanket thin enough to have straws shoot through it without discommoding the threads."

"I was soon relieved from this guard, and with those who were able, of our two regiments, sent to reinforce those in the fort [Mifflin], which was then besieged by the British. Here I endured hardships sufficient to kill half a dozen horses. Let the reader only consider for a moment and he will still be satisfied if not sickened. In the cold month of November, without provisions, without clothing, not a scrap of either shoes or stockings to my feet or legs, and in this condition to endure a siege in such a place as that was appalling in the highest degree."

Document #1

Still one year away from Yorktown,
the final battle of the War

Letter from General George Washington to Continental Congress, May 27, 1780

Sir:

Teacher should emphasize the
"again" after reading this
sentence. Point out that this
isn't the first time they're
low on food.

It is with infinite pain I inform Congress, that we are reduced again to a situation of extremity for want of meat. On several days of late, the Troops have been

Explain what extremity means. Want of meat = they need more

define
destitute: entirely
without basic
necessities
of life.
What could
those
necessities
be?

entirely destitute of any, and for a considerable time past they have been at bet, at half, a quarter, an Eighth allowance of this essential article of provisions...Accordingly

Have students try
to interpret. Explain
that every soldier
was guaranteed a
certain amount of
food/drink (provisions)
and from this, Washing-
ton says they're getting
1/2, 1/4, 1/8 of what
they were promised

Two Regiments of the Connecticut line mutinied and got under Arms on Thursday

Define. A mutiny = a rebellion by soldiers

night... → Soldiers from Connecticut fought/rebelled against Washington due to conditions.

I have been informed by the Two Colonels of the Pennsylv. Line in whom I have the utmost confidence, who were called to assist Colo. Meigs to suppress the

mutiny on Thursday, that in the course of their expostulations, the troops very

pointedly mentioned besides their distresses for provision, their not being paid for

Lack of food not only reason for mutiny

Ask students
what another reason
for the mutiny
was besides lack of
food. Explain that
soldiers also
were promised pay
for their time in
the Army but Congress
hasn't paid them in
five months.

Five months; and, what is of a still more serious and delicate nature in our present

Define/explain: A decrease in asset

circumstances, they mentioned the great depreciation of the Money, it's being of little

or no value at all, and yet if they should be paid, that it would be in this way and

according to the usual amount, without an adequate allowance for the depreciation...

Document #2

Excerpts from Joseph Plumb Martin's Journal

↳ Solider in the war that served as a private most of the war. Published his journal that he kept during the war.

"We are absolutely, literally starved. I do solemnly declare that I did not put a single morsel of victuals into my mouth for four days and as many nights, except for a little black birch bark which I gnawed off a stick of wood. I saw men roast their old shoes and eat them."

His uniform was "what laughingly could be called a uniform, and possessed a blanket thin enough to have straws shoot through it without discommoding the threads."

→ Have students think about weather and what would happen in the winter with a thin blanket

"I was soon relieved from this guard, and with those who were able, of our two regiments, sent to reinforce those in the fort [Mifflin], which was then besieged by the British. Here I endured hardships sufficient to kill half a dozen horses. Let the reader only consider for a moment and he will still be satisfied if not sickened. In the cold month of November without provisions, without clothing, not a scrap of either shoes or stockings to my feet or legs, and in this condition to endure a siege in such a place as that was appalling in the highest degree."

→ Can have students speculate why. May not be able to afford feeding horses/ need food to eat

→ Think about how these conditions may impact the soliders' ability to fight.