



A
TEACHING
AMERICAN
HISTORY
GRANT PROGRAM

PROJECT TITLE:

***Woodsrunner* and 1776: Connecting Literature and History**

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SUBJECT & GRADE LEVEL

**Library Media Specialist,
Grade 4**

CLASSROOM PRACTICE (DOCUMENT #2)

HI Overview/Teaching Thesis

Everyone loves a good story and using a story with a central character to whom children can relate enhances their experience by engaging them emotionally. Integrating the study of literature and history enriches both resources by adding life and depth to the subject, making history relevant and interesting for children. *Woods Runner* by Gary Paulsen is an excellent children's novel to launch the study of the American Revolution. When I first read *Woods Runner*, I was excited because this book touches on so many aspects of the Revolutionary War, but not the information that is traditionally taught in school – the Tea Party, Lexington and Concord, the big battles, the Founding Fathers, etc. Instead, it looks at the War from the perspective of a thirteen-year-old. Family, friendship, growing into an adult –these are the things that are important to children. It takes place in the year 1776. The main character, Samuel, is a thirteen-year-old boy who lives on the frontier in the Ohio Valley with his parents. *Woods Runner* is a good platform for looking at frontier life, the mix of players (Hessian, British, Iroquois, Americans all figure in the book), as well as the experience of the common soldier, what the world was like then, and why he fought. Seeking the answers to these questions gives students enough information to start seeing the big picture, to understand that answers depend on circumstances. It can be hard to tell the good guy from the bad guy.

Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities

Fourth grade, combining reading and content.

Lesson 1: 40 minutes

Lesson 2: 40 minutes

Lesson 3: 30 minutes

Lesson 4: 45 minutes

Significance & Relevance:

Virginia Standards of Learning

VS.1 The student will develop skills for historical and geographical analysis including the ability to:

- a) identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents
- to understand events in history;
- g) interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives;
- h) evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing;
- i) analyze and interpret maps to explain relationships among landforms, water features, climatic characteristics, and historical events.

VS.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of life in the Virginia colony by describing how European (English, Scotch-Irish, German) immigrants, Africans, and American Indians (First Americans) influenced the cultural landscape and changed the relationship between the Virginia colony and England;

OA Historical Inquiry Skills

Chronological thinking:

Students will become familiar with the Declaration of Independence and its role in the colonies going to war with England.

Historical Maps:

Students will look at maps related to the Colonial era to interpret and analyze the importance of geographic features in understanding the war and frontier life.

Historical Analysis and Interpretation:

Students will evaluate and discuss differing viewpoints of Revolutionary War participants by looking at portraits, accounts, and primary source documents.

Historical Research Capabilities:

Students will read primary source accounts of participation in the war—who was involved, what happened, etc.—to answer the understand the experience of the common soldier in the Revolutionary War.

Historical Issues Analysis and Decision Making:

Students will interpret the War from different perspectives of those who fought and why they fought by reading actual accounts from the participants.

Lesson Objectives

In order to avoid repetition, the objectives are stated with each individual lesson plan.

Lesson Plans or Instructional Activities

This unit combines the studies of history and language arts. Reading a historical fiction novel creates an affective interest for the students, allowing them insight into the era through the eyes of the characters in the book. The lessons are organized around the literary devices of setting, character, and conflict. Using Gary Paulsen's *Woods Runner* as the bridge to our study of the Revolutionary War, we will look at primary source documents, including first hand accounts of people who were actually there, to determine the reasons for engaging in conflict at the national and the individual level. We will make literary connections from the novel to the historical content to ground the student and keep the text-to-self connection strong.

Lesson 1

Correlates with Part 1 of the novel. Emphasizes the **setting** of both the novel and the Revolution, ie., time and place. Uses map studies and guided questions to promote student learning. Answers what was the world like then.

Lesson 2

Correlates with Part 2 of the novel. Focuses on **character**, in this case Hessians, British, American, and Iroquois soldiers/warriors, and to discuss good versus bad. Uses portraits and art and historical background information to acquaint students with the different factions who fought in the Revolutionary War. Brings attention to the global aspect. Answers who fought in the Revolutionary War and what motivated them (at a group level).

Lesson 3

Correlates with Part 3, the final and longest section of the novel. Uses first-hand accounts of participants to enrich the students' knowledge about the common soldier's experience during the War. Emphasizes **external conflict**, things outside the soldier that affect him. Answers what motivated them to choose to fight despite the hardships they faced?

Lesson 4

Correlates with Part 3 of *Woods Runner*. Uses first-hand accounts of participants in the war stating their reasons for choosing to fight or their view on the rightness of their decision. Encourages students to put themselves in the soldier's place and think about the choices they were faced with. Emphasizes **internal conflict**, things inside the soldier that motivate his actions. Answers what motivated them (at an individual level)?

Please see the lessons attached in the appendices for more detailed information.

9. Technology (if applicable) –

The teacher will need:

a computer with Microsoft Word and Powerpoint software, and

a projector and screen to display the maps, portraits, and quotes (optional)

an on-line encyclopedia database such as Grolier online

optional: laptops for individual students with Word and Powerpoint and internet access

10. Modifications, Differentiation, and Extensions –

In order to avoid repetition, the objectives are stated with each individual lesson plan.

11. Annotated list of supplemental resources

The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence. New York, N.Y.: Library of America, 2001. Print.

Summary: A compilation of more than 120 primary source documents from the years 1775 to 1783. Included are writings from both loyalist and colonist perspectives, from various founding fathers, officers and soldiers, men and women, European and American. Perusing the table of contents alone is a start to broadening one's perspective on the Revolutionary War.

Brennerman, Ralph. "Physical Map of the USA." Map. *Maps of the World*. Web. 7 May 2010. <mapsof.net>.

Colbeck, C. "History World Map 1772." Map. *Public Schools Historical Atlas. University of Texas at Austin*. Print.

Crevecoeur, J.Hector St. John. "J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur: Narrative of the Wyoming Massacre." *The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence*. New York, N.Y.: Library of America, 2001. 476-86. Print.

Summary: From the pen of a man born in France who immigrated to America and became a citizen, this narrative presents a balanced report of the massacre. Indians are portrayed as savage warriors and as merciful victors. In addition to the actual events, Crevecoeur's writings examine the feelings of all of those involved--Indians/colonists, warriors/soldiers/innocents--using empathy to move the reader and to broaden our understanding.

Döhla, Johann Conrad, and Bruce E. Burgoyne. *A Hessian Diary of the American Revolution*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1990. Print.

Summary: Johann Conrad Döhla was a Hessian soldier who arrived in the Colonies in 1777 and stayed until 1783. A common soldier, this is a complete and informative primary account describing not just military activities but also customs, cities he visited, his thoughts on various military commanders, and incidents in other parts of the world that affected the war. Very accessible to the historian and lay reader alike.

Draffin, George. "Loss of Old Growth Forest in the United States. Today Map." *The Big Outside: A Descriptive Inventory of the Big Wilderness Areas of the United States, by Dave Foreman and Howie Wolke*. Harmony, 1992. Print.

French, Daniel Chester. The Minute Man. 1875. Sculpture Located in Concord, Massachusetts. Image Accessed via Wikipedia, 6 May 2010.

Greeley, William B. "Loss of Old Growth Forest in the United States. 1620, 1850, and 1920 Maps." Map. *The Relation of Geography to Timber Supply, Economic Geography*. Vol. 1. 1925. 1-11. Print.

Lowell, Edward J. "Chapter 4: The Soldiers." *The Hessians: and the Other German Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1975. Print.

Posted on the web by www.americanrevolution.org, much of the irreplaceable source material that the author consulted was destroyed by Allied bombs during World War Two. Perfect for gathering the numbers and basics of Hessian participation in the Revolutionary War.

Mackenzie, Frederick. *Diary of Frederick Mackenzie, Giving a Daily Narrative of His Military Service as an Officer of the Regiment of Royal Welch Fusiliers during the Years 1775-1781 in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York ...* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1930. Print.

Summary: Welsh-born fusillier Lieutenant Frederick Mackenzie faithfully kept a diary from 1748 to 1791. Although parts have been lost, this volume gathers Mackenzie's entries during the American Revolution. Many note only the date and weather but others show his keenness as an observer. His reports are candid, founded on actual observation, and concern events that mattered to him as a soldier.

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Martin, Joseph Plumb, and George F. Scheer. *Private Yankee Doodle; Being a Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1962. Print.

Summary: One of the best surviving first-person accounts of the life and times of a private soldier of the Revolution, Martin's memoir shows the human side of soldiering : the fright, pain, deprivation, loneliness, and boredom but also the diversions, celebrations, odd good meal and billet, even tyrsts with the odd saucy miss. Martin was there at Valley Forge and even meets the great Washington himself. A wonderful, readable work to pique the interest of a nascent historian.

Morse, Jedidiah. "A New Map of North America 1797." Map. *Archiving Early America*. Web. 6 May 2010.

Ogden, Henry Alexander, 1856-1936, Artist. Infantry: Continental Army, 1779-1783, IV / H.A. Ogden ; Lith. by G.H. Buek & Co., N.Y., Ca. 1897.

Print. Lithograph. Color. Illustration depicts uniforms and weapons used during the 1779 to 1783 period of the American Revolution by showing four soldiers standing in an informal group.

Reynolds, Joshua. *General John Burgoyne*. 1766. Oil. Frick Museum. *John Burgoyne*. Wikipedia. Web. 7 May 2010.

Romney, George. *Joseph Brant*. 1776. Oil. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. *Wikipedia*. Web. 6 May 2010.

Six Nations Survivors of War of 1812. 1882. Photograph. Library and Archives of Canada.

Studio portrait of the surviving Six Nations warriors who fought with the British in the War of 1812. (Right to left:) Sakawaraton a.k.a. John Smoke Johnson (born ca. 1792); John Tutela (born ca. 1797) and Young Warner (born ca. 1794). Taken in Brantford, Ontario.

Unknown. *Friedrich Adolf Riedesel*. Ca. 1790. Portrait., Public Domain.

Unknown. *Two Hessian Soldiers*. Digital image. *Wikipedia*.

[Http://www.battleofgrotonheights.com/images/hessian_yager.jpg](http://www.battleofgrotonheights.com/images/hessian_yager.jpg). Web. 6 May 2010.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hessian_jager.jpg>.

Wasmus, J. F., Helga Doblin, and Mary C. Lynn. *An Eyewitness Account of the American Revolution and New England Life: the Journal of J.F. Wasmus, German Company Surgeon, 1776-1783*. New York: Greenwood, 1990. Print.

An absolutely fascinating account of a German Company Surgeon covering the years 1776-1783. Wasmus had an eye for detail and a broad interest in life. He read multiple newspapers, kept up with the course of the war throughout its theater, made observations in natural history, cultural anthropology, local life and customs. A very, very rich resource for looking at life in the 18th century and the war in particular. Its arrangement in day-by-day format makes it easy to pick and choose passages for children to read. I love it!

13. Related Materials & Resources

APPENDIX (FOLDER)