

Patriot or Tory?

General

Grade Level

Elementary School, Middle School, High School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Challenge

Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Individual

Duration

90-120 minutes

Challenge Question

Were the American colonists justified in resisting British policies and breaking away from the rule of Great Britain? To help you make up your own mind, read selected documents from people on both sides of the issue. If you agree, write a letter to King George III and parliament as an American colonist, supporting your right to break away from Great Britain. If you don't, write a response as a member of parliament opposing the colonists' rebellion.

Rationale

This activity asks students to analyze multiple perspectives regarding American colonists resisting Britain's policies and breaking away from the rule of Great Britain. These activities should be implemented after lessons on the French and Indian War and the impact of taxes on the colonies. Documents can be removed or substituted based on student needs. Student friendly text can also be provided for students who struggle with reading text.

As an accommodation for students who are visual learners, you could offer the option of creating an advertisement that supports their position. They would need to include three quotations and two images that represent their argument, explaining why the selected sources support their position.

As an extension activity, students could read classmate's responses that reflect the opposing argument, then go back to their letter and revise it to include responses to the opposing view's arguments.

Steps

1. Go to My Collection to find quotations about the American rebellion. Some of the quotes support the colonist's opinion, others do not. Use the document analysis questions to help you learn more about each quotation. Be sure to read the quote in its full document. Select the quotes that best support your point of view either in support of or opposition to American independence.
2. When you read the full document, you might find additional quotes that support your point of view. Save at least two new quotes to use in your letter.
3. Go to Create and use the text edit tool to write a letter in support of your position, using at least three quotations (including 1 you selected) to support your point. Be sure to credit the writer of each quote in your letter. For example, "As Richard Henry Lee stated in his Proposed Resolution for Independence...." Explain in your letter why you agree with this position.

If you support independence, use this RAFT:

Role: Colonist;

Audience: George III and parliament;

Format: Letter;

Topic: You cannot treat us this way!

If you do not support independence, use this RAFT:

Role: Member of Parliament;

Audience: Colonists;

Format: Letter;

Topic: Remember, you are British subjects!