



## **Bringing *Life* to History**

Study & Resource Guide

*Our Revolution*

### **ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

[Living Voices](#) combines live performance with archival film to authentically represent diverse perspectives from the past that resonate today.

In 12 different dynamic, original programs, the unique Living Voices signature technique synchronizes historical film footage and photographs with a single live performer. Based on real people and events, each production gives the audience a chance to experience how the world looked, sounded, and felt during a significant time in history, highlighting lesser-known points of view. Pre and post show visual aids and discussion extend the learning. All programs are available either in-person and online.

Our mission is to bring life to history: educating and inspiring youth and communities to promote justice, stand up against intolerance, empathize with people different from themselves, understand history through a personal, inclusive lens, and see themselves as part of it.

### **Story Synopsis**

[Our Revolution](#) looks at the experience of being a Patriot and a soldier in the Continental Army from a rarely considered point of view: a young free Black colonist. In 1775, Peter and his father enlist in the Concord patriot militia during the colonial rebellion. While his brother joins the Loyalists serving the British, Peter chooses to fight for freedom for himself and his land, participating in the birth of a new country and a new people: the first generation of African Americans.

**GRADE LEVEL:** 4<sup>th</sup> and up

### **Common Core English Language Arts Standards**

#### **Speaking & Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#): Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2](#): Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3](#): Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### **Reading: Key Ideas and Details**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3](#): Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

**Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#): Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9](#): Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Washington State Social Studies Standards**

Social Studies 1: Uses critical reasoning skills to analyze and evaluate claims.

Social Studies 3: Deliberates public issues.

Civics 2: Understands the purposes, organization, and function of governments, laws, and political systems.

Civics 4: Understands civic involvement.

History 2: Understands and analyzes causal factors that have shaped major events in history

History 3: Understands that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events.

History 4: Understands how historical events inform analysis of contemporary issues and events.

**National Core Arts Standards**

Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- What was the Black experience in the colonies and American Revolution?
- What was the experience of an individual Continental soldier during the war?
- How do the events and ideals of the Revolutionary War era relate to past or current events and issues?

**Peter's Timeline****1765****March**: Stamp Act**1770****February**: Christopher Seider killed**March**: Boston Massacre**1773****December**: Boston Tea Party**1774****May**: Massachusetts Government Act

**August-October:** Common citizens in every Massachusetts county seat outside Boston take over local government.

### 1775

**April:** Battles at Lexington & Concord

**June:** Battle at Breed's (Bunker) Hill

**November:** Lord Dunmore's Proclamation offering freedom to slaves

### 1776

**January:** Common Sense published

**July:** Declaration of Independence

**September:** NYC fire

**November:** capture of Fort Washington—Father captured

**December:** crossing of the Delaware & battle at Trenton

### 1777

**September-October:** Battle of Saratoga (Battle of Freeman's Farm & Battle of Bemis Heights)

**December:** winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

### 1778

Winter at Valley Forge continues

**June:** Battle of Monmouth

**July:** France declares war against Britain

**December:** winter at Providence, Rhode Island

### 1779

Southern campaign

Indian/Western campaign

**December:** winter at Morristown, New Jersey

### 1780

Winter at Morristown continues

Southern/Indian campaigns continue

**August:** Benedict Arnold appointed commander of West Point

**September:** Benedict Arnold flees to the British

### 1781

**January:** Pennsylvania & New Jersey troops mutiny while in winter quarters in New Jersey

Southern/Indian campaigns continue

**August-September:** March to Yorktown via Philadelphia

**September-October:** Battle/siege of Yorktown

### 1782

Southern/Indian campaigns continue

Loyalists begin leaving for Canada

**April:** Peace talks begin in Paris

**November:** Preliminary peace contract signed

### 1783

**February:** England declares end of war

**April:** Congress declares end of war

**June:** Continental Army disbands

Loyalists continue leaving for Canada

**November:** Washington enters New York as last British troops leave

## Glossary

Sources: <http://www.wikipedia.org/>, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

**Alexander Hamilton:** Lieutenant Colonel and aide-de-camp to General George Washington in the Continental Army.

**Apprentice:** A laborer bound by legal agreement to an employer for a specified period of time in exchange for training in a trade, craft, or business.

**Artillery:** Large-caliber weapons, such as cannons and missile launchers, operated by crews.

**Bayonet:** A blade which fits the muzzle end of a rifle and is used as a weapon in close combat.

**Benedict Arnold:** General of the American Continental Army who later defected to the British.

**Blockade:** A strategic act of war preventing entry to or departure from an enemy area, often a coast.

**Bomb batteries:** Groups of guns or missile launchers operated together at one place.

**Book of Negroes:** A historical document which recorded descriptions and information on 3000 African Americans who fought for the British and were evacuated to colonies in British North America (Canada) after the American Revolution.

**Boston Massacre:** A street conflict between British troops and Boston citizens in 1770 that led to the deaths of five civilians, the legal aftermath of which helped spark further rebellion in the colonies.

**Boston Tea Party:** A protest against British taxes in 1773, when a group of colonists destroyed three shiploads of taxed tea by throwing it into Boston Harbor after officials refused to return the tea to Britain.

**Bounty:** A reward or payment given by a government for acts that are beneficial to the state, such as enlisting for military service.

**Charles Cornwallis:** British General involved in the Battles of Long Island, Monmouth and Yorktown.

**Christopher Seider (Snider/Snyder):** Boy accidentally killed in a political fight in Boston, 11 days before the Boston Massacre in 1770.

**Crispus Attucks:** Mixed heritage (Native and African descent) former slave, the first rebel killed during the Boston Massacre in 1770.

**Colonel Tye (Titus Cornelius):** Former slave, commander of the Loyalist Black Brigade.

**Colony:** A dependent region politically controlled by a distant country.

**Continental Army:** American colonial army.

**Declaration of Independence:** A statement adopted by the Continental Congress in 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies at war with Great Britain were now independent states, and no longer part of the British Empire.

**Enlistment:** A period of time spent in military service.

**Ethiopian Regiment:** British colonial military unit composed of slaves who had escaped from Patriot masters and led by British Army officers.

**Fort:** A secured enclosure, building, or position able to be defended against an enemy in war.

**George Washington:** Virginia delegate to the First and Second Continental Congress, Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.

**Hessians:** German military regiments hired through their rulers to fight with the British.

**Horatio Gates:** American Major General, nicknamed “Granny Gates,” commander of the Northern and then Southern departments of the Continental Army.

**HMS Jersey:** British prison ship for captured Continental Army soldiers, also known as Old Jersey, made infamous and nicknamed "Hell" for its harsh conditions and the high death rate of its prisoners.

**Indentured servant:** A laborer bound by legal agreement to an employer for a specified period of time in exchange for emigration passage, food, clothing, lodging and other necessities.

**John Burgoyne:** British General, nicknamed “Gentleman Johnny,” involved in the Battles of Freeman’s Farm and Bemis Heights at Saratoga, New York.

**John Hancock:** Boston merchant and prominent Patriot, President of the Second Continental Congress, Governor of Massachusetts.

**Lord Dunmore:** Royal Colonial Governor of Virginia who issued a proclamation in 1775 offering emancipation to slaves who abandoned their Patriot masters to join the British.

**Massachusetts Government Act:** One of the Coercive or Intolerable Acts passed by the British Parliament in 1774, which repealed the colony's charter, forbid town meetings, and gave the King or Royal Governor sole power to appoint many civil offices that had previously been chosen by local election.

**Militia:** A group of volunteer, part-time, non-professional soldiers who fought in times of emergency.

**Musket:** A muzzle-loading shoulder gun with a long barrel.

**Patriot, Rebel:** A colonist who supported American independence.

**Privateer:** Crew member of an armed, privately owned vessel commissioned for war service by a government.

**Quaker:** Member of the Society of Friends religion who chose to remain neutral during the American Revolution.

**Redcoat/Lobsterback/Bloodyback:** derogatory nicknames for the British soldiers stationed in the American colonies.

**Regiment:** A military unit of ground troops, usually commanded by a colonel.

**Regular:** A paid, full time, professional soldier.

**Samuel Fraunces:** Owner of **Fraunces Tavern** in New York City, most likely of mixed heritage (French and West Indian descent). Throughout the Revolution, Fraunces Tavern was used as a meeting place of the Sons of Liberty, as well as both the Continental and British Armies.

**Six Nations:** Also known as the Iroquois League or Iroquois Confederacy, an association of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora nations. During the Revolution, many Tuscarora and the Oneida sided with the colonists, while the Mohawk, Seneca, Onondaga and Cayuga remained loyal to Great Britain.

**Slave:** A laborer who is treated as the lifetime property of another person, deprived of personal freedom and compelled to work.

**Smallpox:** A highly infectious and often fatal disease characterized by fever, headache, and skin sores that result in extensive scarring. Once a dreaded killer, smallpox was eradicated in 1980 following a worldwide vaccination campaign.

**Sons of Liberty:** Political groups made up of Patriot colonists who organized themselves to protest against British authority and power.

**Stamp Act:** A law passed by the British Parliament in 1765 requiring colonists to pay a tax on all newspapers, pamphlets, and legal documents, in order to cover a portion of the costs of maintaining an army in the colonies.

**Thomas Jefferson:** Virginia delegate to the First and Second Continental Congress, primary author of the Declaration of Independence, Governor of Virginia.

**Thomas Paine:** Author of two widely-read pamphlets in support of colonial independence: *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis*.

**Timothy Bigelow:** Delegate to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress and Committee of Correspondence, Colonel of the 15th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Army.

**Tory, Loyalist:** A colonist who supported British rule.

**Trench:** A long narrow ditch used for concealment and protection in warfare.

## African Americans in the Revolutionary Period

Source: [http://www.nps.gov/revwar/about\\_the\\_revolution/african\\_americans.html](http://www.nps.gov/revwar/about_the_revolution/african_americans.html)

"How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?" Samuel Johnson, the great English writer and dictionary maker, posed this question in 1775. He was among the first, but certainly not the last, to contrast the noble aims of the American Revolution with the presence of 450,000 enslaved African Americans in the 13 colonies.

Slavery was practiced in every colony in 1775, but it was crucial to the economy and social structure from the Chesapeake region south to Georgia. Slave labor produced the great export crops of the South—tobacco, rice, indigo, and naval stores. Bringing slaves from Africa and the West Indies had made settlement of the New World possible and highly profitable. Who could predict what breaking away from the British Empire might mean for black people in America?

The British governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, quickly saw the vulnerability of the South's slaveholders. In November 1775, he issued a proclamation promising freedom to any slave of a rebel who could make it to the British lines. Dunmore organized an "Ethiopian" brigade of about 300 African Americans. Dunmore and the British were soon expelled from Virginia, but the prospect of armed former slaves fighting alongside the British must have struck fear into plantation masters across the South.

African Americans in New England rallied to the patriot cause and were part of the militia forces that were organized into the new Continental Army. Approximately 5 percent of the American soldiers at the Battle of Bunker Hill were black. New England blacks mostly served in integrated units and received the same pay as whites, although no African American is known to have held a rank higher than corporal.

It has been estimated that at least 5,000 black soldiers fought on the patriot side during the Revolutionary War. The exact number will never be known because eighteenth century muster rolls usually did not indicate race. Careful comparisons between muster rolls and church, census, and other records have recently helped identify many black soldiers. Additionally, various eyewitness accounts provide some indication of the level of African Americans' participation during the war.

The use of African Americans as soldiers, whether freemen or slaves, was avoided by Congress and General Washington early in the war. The prospect of armed slave revolts proved more threatening to white society than British redcoats. General Washington allowed the enlistment of free blacks with "prior military experience" in January 1776, and extended the enlistment terms to all free blacks in January 1777 in order to help fill the depleted ranks of the Continental Army. Because the states constantly failed to meet their quotas of manpower for the army, Congress authorized the enlistment of all blacks, free and slave, in 1777. Of the southern states, only Maryland permitted African Americans to enlist. In 1779, Congress offered slave masters in South Carolina and Georgia \$1,000 for each slave they provided to the army, but the legislatures of both states refused the offer. Thus, the greatest number of African American soldiers in the American army came from the North.

Although most Continental regiments were integrated, a notable exception was the elite First Rhode Island. Mustered into service in July 1778, the First Rhode Island numbered 197 black enlisted men commanded by white officers. Other notable black regiments include the Bucks of America from Massachusetts, and a unit recruited in the French colony of St. Domingue (present-day Haiti).

When the British launched their southern campaign in 1780, one of their aims was to scare Americans back to the crown by raising the fear of massive slave revolts. The British encouraged slaves to flee to their strongholds, promising ultimate freedom. The strategy backfired, as slave owners rallied to the patriot cause as the best way to maintain order and the plantation system.

Tens of thousands of African Americans sought refuge with the British, but fewer than 1,000 served as soldiers. The British made heavy use of the escapees as teamsters, cooks, nurses, and laborers. At the war's conclusion, some 20,000 blacks left with the British, preferring an uncertain future elsewhere to a return to their old masters. American blacks ended up in Canada, Britain, the West Indies, and Europe. Some were sold back into slavery. In 1792, 1,200 black loyalists who had settled in Nova Scotia left for Sierra Leone, a colony on the west coast of Africa established by Britain specifically for former slaves.

The Revolution brought change for some American blacks, although nothing approaching full equality. The courageous military service of African Americans and the revolutionary spirit ended slavery in New England almost immediately. The middle states of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey adopted policies of gradual emancipation from 1780 to 1804. Individual manumissions increased following the Revolution. Still, free blacks in both the North and South faced persistent discrimination in virtually every aspect of life, notably employment, housing, and education. Many hoped that slavery would eventually disappear in the American South. When cotton became king in the South after 1800, this hope died. There was just too much profit to be made working slaves on cotton plantations.

The statement of human equality in the Declaration of Independence was never entirely forgotten, however. It remained as an ideal that could be appealed to by civil rights activists through the following decades.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Many websites contain and/or lead to additional links. Please consider this list as a starting point for your own research and exploration.*

### **Museums & organizations**

[American Revolution \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/american-revolution)

[Minute Man National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/minute-man)

[Museum of the American Revolution - Museum of the American Revolution \(amrevmuseum.org\)](https://www.amrevmuseum.org)

[Journal of the American Revolution: History, culture, politics, war. \(allthingsliberty.com\)](https://www.allthingsliberty.com)

[A People's Journey, A Nation's Story | National Museum of African American History and Culture \(si.edu\)](https://www.si.edu)

[Revolutionary War | American Battlefield Trust \(battlefields.org\)](https://www.battlefields.org)

[Massachusetts Historical Society \(masshist.org\)](https://www.masshist.org)

[Project1619](https://www.project1619.com)

[Black Loyalist Heritage Centre | \(novascotia.ca\)](https://www.novascotia.ca)



[OLD BARRACKS MUSEUM - Military Museum, Historical Lectures | Trenton, NJ](#)

### **Teacher Resources**

[America's Homepage and the Virtual Tour of Washington, D.C. \(gatech.edu\)](#)

[We Rule: Civics for All of US | National Archives](#)

[The Unspoken Truths | Seattle, WA](#)

[The Creative Advantage Unspoken Truths “1619” Exhibit Resource Guide \(seattle.gov\)](#)

[Introduction - Bill of Rights: Primary Documents in American History - Research Guides at Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

### **History & research resources**

[AmericanRevolution.ORG Home](#)

[The American Revolution Institute](#)

[EyeWitness To The Eighteenth Century \(eyewitnesstohistory.com\)](#)

[A Struggle from the Start: Exhibit contents \(hartford-hwp.com\)](#)

[Privateers or Merchant Mariners help win the Revolutionary War \(usmm.org\)](#)

[RevWar'75 \(revwar75.com\)](#)

[Slavery in the North \(slavenorth.com\)](#)

[William Cooper Nell. The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution ... \(unc.edu\)](#)

[Sullivan-Clinton Campaign \(sullivanclinton.com\)](#)

[Battle of the Clouds \(ushistory.org\)](#)

[War of the American Revolution 1775 to 1783 \(britishbattles.com\)](#)

[Military Journal written at Valley Forge \(sandcastles.net\)](#)

[Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution, Vol. I., Contents. \(rootsweb.com\)](#)

[Welcome to Blackpast •](#)

### **Film & video**

[LIBERTY! - The American Revolution | PBS](#)

[Africans in America \(pbs.org\)](http://pbs.org)

[For Love of Liberty: The Story of America's Black Patriots \(Historical Documentary\) | Black/Current - YouTube](#)

[Liberty's Kids : American Revolution - Full Series \(40 Episodes - High Quality\) - YouTube](#)

## Books

[Ray Raphael Homepage](#)

## WORKSHOPS

[Book a post-show workshop](#) to supplement your program:

- explore the issues, historical events, and their relevance through interactive drama techniques with a Living Voices performer
- address additional [Arts Standards](#)
- available for groups of 30 or less
- can be scheduled as part of a 3-show day or separately

## EXTENSION & INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

Adaptable for students of all levels, these activities can be used as tools for assessment or reflection, and provide deeper exploration of the essential questions, topics, and themes.

Students may respond through any artistic medium, such as:

**Writing:** write a story, poem, article, caption, monologue, scene, play, graphic novel, diary, speech

**Media/Visual Arts:** take a photograph; make a video; draw or paint a picture; create a collage, sculpture or comic strip

**Drama/Movement:** create a frozen image or series of images; plan or improvise a monologue, scene or play; choreograph a dance or movement

**Music:** write a song (vocal or instrumental); create a soundtrack

- Supplement a specific scene in the play with work in another medium; for example: illustrate it, act it out, etc.
- Re-create a scene from the play from another character's point of view.
- Imagine you could contact the main character from the play. What would you want to tell or show them about the present?
- What connections can you make between the historical events of the play and what's happening now—in your own life, your community, the country, the world?
- Research historical documents for a real person's first-person account of an event portrayed in the play. How is it similar or different to the perspective in the play?
- Research another event or movement in history or from current events. How is it similar or different to the event or movement in the play?

## Drama Activities

Please click on the hyperlinked text for more information on a specific activity, where available.

**Role-on-the-wall:** a character is represented as an outline of a person on a large piece of paper. On the inside of the figure, write or draw what the character thinks and feels about themselves; on the outside, write or draw how they appear or how others perceive them. This activity can be used or repeated for any character in the play, and/or other fictional or historical figures. Students may work independently or collaboratively. For more information: [Arts-Integration Role-on-the-Wall](#).

**Voices in the Head:** Students form two lines facing each other to make a path for the Living Voices character, representing their journey in the play. As one participant representing the character passes through the created path, other students speak to the character as the character's family & friends, as the character's own inner thoughts and feelings, or as themselves. Students may offer advice, ask questions, or share other perspectives.

**Hot seating:** Interview a character from the play, portrayed by teacher, student, or group.

**Statues/Tableau:** Students work individually, in pairs or small groups to create a frozen picture of a specific place, situation, event, idea or topic related to the play. Each participant uses face and body to create a statue of a character within the picture, working together in pairs or groups to present a cohesive image. A tableau can be literal or symbolic. Extensions:

- [Hot seat](#) characters from the tableau
- [Add voice](#) and/or movement to the tableau
- Create a series of statues or tableaux to present a [story or sequence](#)

**Sculpting:** Brainstorm a list of words in response to the themes and story of the play. Guide students into pairs. One partner starts as the sculptor and the other as clay. For each round of sculpting, prompt sculptors with a word from the brainstorm list. Sculptors show a pose to reflect the given word to their partner, and the clay partner mirrors the statue. Sculptors step away from their frozen partners so the group can view the sculpture gallery. Invite sculptors to describe what they see and make inferences and connections between the sculptures and the word. Repeat the process, with partners switching back and forth between the roles of sculptor and clay. Prompt with a new word for each round.

**Persuasion Improvisation:** Choose a moment from the play in which 2 characters have opposing points of view or objectives. Guide students into pairs. One partner starts as Character 1 and the other as Character 2. Prompt all pairs simultaneously to improvise the conversation between the 2 characters, in which each tries to convince the other to see their point of view. Participants should share their own perspective, listen to their partner, and respond to what they hear as their character. Repeat multiple times by switching partners or changing characters.

**Make your own Living Voices program:** Every Living Voices character shares an important time in history through their own personal experience. They start by introducing themselves, so the audience will understand their point of view. We are living through history right now. What do you want to communicate about your own experience during this time? Create your own short video to introduce yourself. What's important to you in this moment? Who or what makes you who you are? If you want, you may use video or images. Get creative—make your voice a Living Voice, and please share your work with us at [livingvoices@livingvoices.org](mailto:livingvoices@livingvoices.org)!