

The Old Barracks Museum

Pre- and Post-Visit Activities Handbook High School



The Old Barracks Museum is not only a State and National Historic Landmark but is a center for education in the field of colonial and early American history. Thousands of students pass through the museum annually, and each one receives a top-rated first-person introduction to Revolutionary War military life.

The Old Barracks Museum
101 Barrack Street Trenton, NJ 08608
1-888-BARRACK | www.barracks.org



This information has been designed to supplement programs at the Old Barracks Museum, Trenton, NJ, and is not intended for any other use.

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Pre-Visit Classroom Suggested Activities for High School

1. Tell the students to create a chart that will allow them to compare and contrast Washington's experience during the French & Indian War and the Revolutionary War. Then have the students think critically about the following questions: How did Washington's experiences during the French & Indian War prepare him for his military leadership role during the Revolutionary War? How did Washington's experiences during the French & Indian War not prepare him for his military leadership role during the Revolutionary War? Finally, have the students compose a letter to the Continental Congress stating why Washington would serve as a strong military leader of the Continental Army or why Washington would not serve as a strong military leader of the Continental Army. Tell the students to provide information pertaining to Washington's experience during the French & Indian War as support for the argument in their letter.
2. Divide the class into the following three groups: Britain, France, and Iroquois Confederation. Tell the students to research their empire's point of view on the French & Indian War. Have the students create a poster that includes the following information about their empire's point of view on the French & Indian War: plan for the war, positive outcomes for the war, negative outcomes for the war, desired territories/land for after the war, military strategy/tactics for the war, allies for the war, and enemies for the war. Then have each group present their empire's poster to the class. Finally, have the students research and list the effects (both positive and negative) the French & Indian War had on their empire.
3. The relationships between the French and the Native Americans and the English and the Native Americans altered due to the course of the French & Indian War. Have the students create a chart that highlights how the war changed these relationships. Students should be sure to include information on how the groups interacted before the war, right after the war had begun, and after the war had ended. Finally, have the students discuss how the Native Americans' changing relationships with the English and French would influence or would not influence the Native Americans' involvement in the Revolutionary War.
4. During the Revolutionary War, several military engagements occurred. Have the students identify what they consider to be the three most important military engagements of the war and have the students explain why they think these military engagements are important. Then have the students debate their opinions in class and rank the most important battles in the Revolutionary War. Finally, have a class discussion about the characteristics/standards a battle must have in order to be considered an important military engagement.
 - 4a. A variation on this question that would make it more New Jersey specific: Have the students identify what they consider to be the three most important military engagements of the Revolutionary War in New Jersey and have the students explain why they think these military engagements are important. Then have the students debate their opinions in class and rank the most important battles in New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. Finally, have a class discussion about the characteristics/standards a battle must have in order to be considered an important military engagement. Refer to Crossroads of the American Revolution website: www.revolutionarynj.org.
5. Have the students explore the inclusion of African Americans in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. This can be done through the use of primary and secondary documents. For example, Adjutant General Alexander Scammel made a report on African Americans in the Continental Army in the 1778 for General Washington. This report can be found at: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/amrev/homefrnt/scammel.html>

6. During the Revolutionary War period, some colonists were in favor of the cause of American independence while other colonists were in favor of staying connected to Great Britain. Have the students read the following two documents in order to understand some of the arguments for independence and some of the arguments against independence: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) and Charles Inglis's *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated* (1776). For Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, have the students create a three column chart with the following three headings: Short Biography, Arguments for Independence, and Reasons that Support the Arguments. For Charles Inglis's *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated*, have the students create a three column chart with the following three headings: Short Biography, Arguments Against Independence, and Reasons that Support the Arguments. Have a student-led class discussion that analyzes the two viewpoints.

Post-Visit Classroom Suggested Activities for High School

1. During the French & Indian War there were more than 80 military and settler forts. Have the students analyze the necessity for forts during the French & Indian War by listing the following: purposes forts serve militarily, purposes forts serve geographically, and purposes forts serve economically. Then have the students research a fort during the French & Indian War and list the following: when the fort was built, how the fort was built (materials), and why the fort was built. Finally, have the students investigate and answer the following questions in a written manner: 1. How is the French & Indian War fort you chose currently used? 2. Is it a historic site? 3. If the fort was still operating today, how might it be utilized? (Examples of forts during the French & Indian War: Fort Duquesne, Fort Necessity, Fort Pitt, Fort Stanwix, Fort Ticonderoga, etc.)
2. In the 18th century, women had a wide variety of responsibilities and some women ran family businesses, shops, and farms. However, wartime conditions during the Revolutionary War placed new responsibilities upon American women. Have the students read the correspondence between Lucy Knox and her husband Henry, one of Washington's leading generals, an artillery expert, and his future Secretary of War. This correspondence can be found on the following website: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=140. Then have the students discuss the effects of the Revolutionary War on women's lives: What were some of the roles women took on during the Revolutionary War? What impact did women have on the Revolutionary War? How did women contribute to the war effort? What are the names of some significant women during the Revolutionary War?
3. On February 6, 1778 the Treaty of Alliance with France was signed. This treaty created a military alliance between the United States and France against Great Britain during the Revolutionary War. Have the students read the Treaty of Alliance with France. This treaty can be found on the following website: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3887. Then have the students critically analyze the effects of the Treaty of Alliance with France: How does this treaty benefit the United States? How does this treaty hinder the United States? What are the strengths and weakness of France's military power? Finally, in a written manner, have the students answer the following question: If the alliance with France did not occur, how would the outcome of the Revolutionary War be affected? Make sure the students provide sufficient evidence to support their argument.
4. Have the students analyze the causes of the Revolutionary War and examine the causes from various perspectives. Perspectives can include the Sons of Liberty, loyalists living in the colonies, patriots, and British citizens living in England. This analysis can be performed through the examination of various primary and secondary documents. This analysis can also be performed through the interpretation of the information provided by the historical interpreters on the "Meet the Past" Tours.

5. Have the students discuss the use of political cartoons in the 18th century, how political cartoons were shared, and why they were so popular by examining a few. Then have the students answer questions about the political cartoons they examine. For example, for Ben Franklin's "Join or Die" cartoon the students can answer the following questions: 1. What does each segment of the snake represent? 2. What does the order of the segments illustrate? 3. What does the entire snake represent? 4. What does the caption mean? 5. What is the overall message of the political cartoon? Finally, have the students develop a more in depth written response to the following question: How were political cartoons used to stir up anti-British sentiment among the colonists?



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To book a tour,
call 609-396-1776 or
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