

## Lesson 7: The War in the South

### Big Ideas of the Lesson

- After their defeat at Saratoga, the British decided to shift their attention to the Southern Colonies. This was partly due to their hope of gaining more loyalist support in the South.
- George Washington, with the help of French troops, moved south also.
- The last major battle took place at Yorktown. There, the French blockaded the harbor and cut off supplies to the British.
- Washington began a siege of Yorktown and eventually the British surrendered.

### Lesson Abstract:

In this lesson, students continue to explore the American Revolution as the focus of the conflict moves to the South. Activities include analyzing maps, interpreting primary sources, such as a coded letter from Benedict Arnold, and exploring timelines.

### Content Expectations

- 5 – U3.1.6: Identify the role that key individuals played in leading the colonists to revolution, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Thomas Paine.
- 5 – U3.2.1: Describe the advantages and disadvantages of each side during the American Revolution with respect to military leadership, geography, types of resources, and incentives.
- 5 – U3.2.2: Describe the importance of Valley Forge, Battle of Saratoga, and Battle of Yorktown in the American Revolution.
- 5 – U3.2.3: Compare the role of women, African Americans, American Indians, and France in helping shape the outcome of the war.

### Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:

- RI.5.3: Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

### Key Concepts

military advantages and disadvantages  
Patriot / Loyalist  
turning point

## **Instructional Resources**

### Equipment/Manipulative

Overhead projector or document camera/projector

### Student Resource

Bower, Burt, et al. *America's Past*, Social Studies Alive Program. Palo Alto, CA: Teacher's Curriculum Institute, 2010 or a similar fifth grade social studies textbook. Pp. 178-181.

### Teacher Resource

Egbo, Carol. *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*. Teacher-made material. Michigan Citizenship Collaborative, 2012.

*Map of the Battle of Yorktown*. British Battles.com. 29 February 2012  
<<http://www.britishbattles.com/battle-yorktown.htm>>.

*Southern Campaign*. National Parks Service. 29 February 2012  
<<http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/socamp.htm>>.

*Spy Letters of the American Revolution*. Collections at the Clements Library. University of Michigan. 29 February 2012 <<http://www2.si.umich.edu/spies/>>.

*Surrender Letters of Yorktown*. 29 February 2012  
<[http://www.laughtergenealogy.com/bin/histprof/misc/yorktown\\_ltrs.html](http://www.laughtergenealogy.com/bin/histprof/misc/yorktown_ltrs.html)>.

*Surrender of Cornwallis*. National Archives. 29 February 2012  
<<http://archives.gov/education/lessons/revolution-images/images/cornwallis-surrender.gif>>.

## **Lesson Sequence**

1. As a way of engaging students in this lesson, give each student a copy of the "Analyzing an Illustration" located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*. Have students examine the illustration and then answer the question in the section marked "Before the Lesson". When students have completed the activity, briefly discuss their answer to the question and then collect the sheets which will be used again at the end of the lesson.
2. Display the following question: "If you had been the British, what would you have done after your embarrassing defeat at Saratoga?" Instruct students to answer it in their social studies journals. After providing a few minutes for students to write, have them share their writing with a partner. Then, briefly discuss ideas in the large group.
3. Display the "Map" located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*. Explain that this map shows major battles of the Revolution beginning in 1779. Ask students to identify the states shown on the map. Then, have them infer what the British did following the Battle of Saratoga based on the map and their prior knowledge. Discuss student inferences. Then, guide them to the idea that the British decided to shift their attention to the south following the Battle of Saratoga. Ask students why they think this was the case. Discuss student responses and then explain that the British hoped to find more loyalist support in the south.

4. Display “Timeline #1” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*. Discuss the events on the timeline using the following questions:
  - Why do you think Spain declared war on Britain?
  - Why did Spain not sign an alliance treaty with the Americans as the French had done?
  - Why did it take so long for General Clinton’s army to reach South Carolina?
  - What effects do you think the arrival of General Rochambeau and his French soldiers had?
5. Display “Letter to British Major John Andre” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*, or place students in pairs and give each pair a copy of the letter. Ask students to try and “interpret” the letter. Give students a short time and then ask them why it is so difficult to understand the letter. Guide them to the idea that the letter is written in code using a number system. Discuss why the letter may have been written in code.
6. Display “Decoded Letter” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*, and read it out loud to students using a highlighter to mark familiar phrases and words. Ask students what they think is being said in the letter. Then, explain that this letter was from an American general, General Benedict Arnold, to a British officer. He was offering to give up the fort at West Point for a sum of money. Ask students what this tells them about Benedict Arnold. Using Word Card #27, discuss the term “traitor”. Explain that by September of 1780, Americans had learned that Benedict Arnold had become a traitor, or someone who acts against his or her country, in exchange for money and a high rank in the British Army. Explain that he was able to escape and later became a brigadier general in the British Army.
7. Explain that in October of 1780, General Nathaniel Greene had been named the new commander of the southern American Army, replacing General Gates. He led the British under General Cornwallis on a six-month chase through the backwoods of South and North Carolina using guerilla type tactics. Discuss the meaning of this term.
8. Display “Timeline #2” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*. Discuss the events on the timeline using the following questions:
  - Why did General Washington decide not to attack New York City?
  - What effect did the French victory over the British fleet have?
  - What would be some of the problems of trying to coordinate 17,000 soldiers in battle?
  - Who appeared to have the advantage at Yorktown? Why?
9. Display the “Battle of Yorktown Map” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*. Point out the British, American, and French positions on the map. Ask students to answer the following question in their social studies journal: “What options did the British have at Yorktown?” Give students time to write and then have them share ideas in the large group.
10. Display the two “Letters” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*, or place students in pairs and give each pair a copy of the letters. Ask students to interpret what is being said in the two letters. Discuss student ideas and then using Word Card #28, explain that

these letters between General Cornwallis and General Washington were part of a series of letters in which a British surrender at Yorktown was worked out.

11. Pass out “Analyzing an Illustration” used in Step 1 and have students complete the bottom section entitled “After the Lesson”. Have students share what they have written and guide them in understanding that the illustration depicts the surrender of Cornwallis to General Washington.
12. Ask students to write a prediction in their social studies journal as to what happened following the surrender of the British at Yorktown. Give students time to write and then have them share their predictions in the large group. Guide students in understanding that the war was essentially over after the surrender. Skirmishes took place over the next two years, but Yorktown was the last battle of any size.
13. As an optional writing assignment, have students write a short historical narrative about the Battle of Yorktown from the perspective of one of the following:
  - George Washington
  - General Cornwallis
  - Benedict Arnold
  - A French soldier
  - A Continental soldier
  - A loyalist soldier
  - A British soldierHave students exchange their papers with a partner and identify the perspective of the author.
14. Explain to the class that they will now be creating their own timelines of the American Revolution. Encourage them to use their textbook and the resources they have gathered from the lessons in this unit. Offer them the following choices for timelines:
  - A timeline created on three 12” X 18” sheets of paper taped together
  - A timeline created by attaching large index cards to a long piece of string
  - A timeline created in PowerPoint or a Web 2.0 application.
  - A timeline flipbook
15. Provide each student a copy of the “American Revolution Timeline Chart” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*, and review the directions on the chart. Have students choose six events and encourage them to share ideas with a partner or small group. Give students time to work on their timelines in class or assign the project as homework. Note that adding illustrations to the timelines requires additional time so keep this in mind when establishing criteria for the timelines.
16. When the timelines are finished, display them in the room. Then, as a culminating project, give each student a copy of the “Assessment” located in the *Supplemental Materials (Unit 6, Lesson 7)*, and have them complete the chart. When students have completed the assessment, place them in groups of four and have them compare and contrast the events each group member identified on their charts. Finally, discuss the events students identified in the large group

**Assessment**

The timelines and assessment chart from Steps 15 and 16 can be used as assessments.