

Leading Up to Revolution

Independence Hall

Educators Guide and Lesson Plan created by Victoria Trevino, Brownwood ISD



Grade Level

4th and 5th Grade

Time Required

3.5 hours

Pre-Visit – 1 hour

Museum Visit – 1.5 hour

Post-Visit – 1 hour

Supplies/Materials Needed

- Worksheet: Video Graphic Organizer
- Print and cut Timeline Event Strips
- Boston Tea Party Script
- Museum Exit Ticket
- Station Detective Case File
- Station 1 – 4
- Supplied by Museum: gold coins, velvet bag, king's crown and robe, wax seal and parchment paper

Standards

4th Grade English TEKS

4.1(A), 4.1(C), 4.3(B), 4.7(D), 4.9(D)

4th Grade SS TEKS

4.21(B), 4.21(C), 4.22(A), 4.22(C)

5th Grade ELA TEKS

Essential Question(s)

- How do words and unfair actions drive people to stand up, unite, and demand freedom?
 - Pre-Visit Connection: Students explore how Great Britain's war debts led to unfair taxes and how early events inspired colonists to start speaking out.
 - Museum Visit Connection: Students physically experience unfair taxation during the King's simulation and write their own persuasive pamphlets to rally others.
 - Post-Visit Connection: Students analyze how Thomas Paine's persuasive pamphlet (*Common Sense*) spread through the colonies and inspired Thomas Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence.
- What is the difference between being ruled by a tyrant and being represented in a fair government?
 - Pre-Visit Connection: Students learn key terms like independence and militia while examining why colonists began resisting the King's rule.
 - Museum Visit Connection: Students debate King George III directly, confronting the frustration of having no voice or vote in the laws that govern them.
 - Post-Visit Connection: Students investigate primary sources to understand how the Declaration of Independence officially replaced a monarchy with a government based on the consent of the people.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the major causes of the American Revolution and sequence five pivotal timeline events using text-dependent evidence.
- analyze how unfair taxation and lack of representation influenced colonial support for independence by role-playing as colonists, participating in a secret debate, and

5.1(A), 5.1(C), 5.3(B),
5.7(D), 5.9(D)(ii)

5th Grade SS TEKS
5.2(A), 5.2(B), 5.14(A),
5.23(B), 5.24(C),
5.25(A)

Key Vocabulary

militia – a group of everyday citizens trained to fight as soldiers in an emergency

Minutemen – colonial militia soldiers who volunteered to be ready at a minute's notice

Independence – total freedom from being ruled or controlled by another country

Retreat – to move back or away from danger or attack

Casualty – a person killed or injured during battle

Fortify – to make a place safe from attack by building defenses (walls, trenches, etc.)

Ambassador – a person who represents the government of their country in another country

Declaration – an official statement of something

publishing a persuasive pamphlet inspired by Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.

Pre-Visit

[Google Slides that Guide this Lesson](#)

Hook: Write the word **revolution** on the board. Explain that a revolution is a complete change in government, often using force.

Key terms to pre-teach: Read the core academic vocabulary words aloud. Have students repeat them to build immediate oral language fluency.

- Militia, a group of everyday citizens trained to fight as soldiers in an emergency.
- Minutemen, colonial militia soldiers who volunteered to be ready at a minute's notice.
- Independence, total freedom from being ruled or controlled by another country.
- Retreat, to move back or away from danger or attack (retreated)
- Casualty, a person killed or injured during battle (casualties)
- Ammunition, bullets, shells, and other objects used as weapons shot from guns
- Fortify, to make a place safe from attack by building defenses (walls, trenches, etc.) (fortified)
- Ambassador, a person who represents the government of their country in another country (ambassadors)
- Declaration, an official statement of something
- Abstain, to choose not to vote (abstained)

Get the Interactive Video Graphic Organizer out and hand one to teach student. As you pass the organizer out, **say:** We are about to watch a short video discussing the causes and facts about the American Revolution. As we watch, be sure that you are listening for specific reasons why colonists great angry with Great Britain. As we watch, be sure you complete this graphic organizer with information from the video.

The American Revolution for Kids | Learn the Causes and Facts About the American Revolution

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXE1L_7ytG8&t=10s

Focus Questions (Ask during viewing pauses):

- *Pause at 01:04:* What expensive conflict did Great Britain need to pay off? (Answer: The French and Indian War)

Abstain – to choose not to vote

- *Pause at 02:00:* How did colonists protest the tax laws in Boston Harbor? (Answer: By throwing British tea into the ocean)

Student Action: Students read the following primary narrative summary independently or as a choral reading group.

The Spark of April 1775

The official fighting began unexpectedly on April 19, 1775. British troops wanted to take hidden weapons from the colonists. Paul Revere rode out ahead to warn the towns of Lexington and Concord. The very first shots fired became known as the "shots heard 'round the world". By the following morning, thousands of local militia members formed a circle around Boston to trap the British army inside.

Check for Understanding Question, **say:** Based on the text, what was the primary mission of the British soldiers marching into Lexington and Concord? *Answer: To capture hidden weapons before the colonists could use them.*

Activity: Collaborative Timeline Group

- **Setup:** Divide the classroom into heterogeneous teams of 3 to 4 students.
- **Materials:** Provide each group with a piece of chart paper and a shuffled set of the text-based events listed below.
- **Task:** Students must work together to analyze historical context clues, debate placement, and paste the cards in accurate chronological order

Timeline Event Strips to Distribute

- **Event 1:** The French and Indian War ends, leaving Great Britain with huge financial debts.
- **Event 2:** Angry colonists disguise themselves and dump expensive tea cargo into Boston Harbor.
- **Event 3:** Paul Revere makes his midnight warning ride across Massachusetts.
- **Event 4:** Thomas Jefferson drafts the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia.

Synthesized Exit Ticket and Wrap Up

Use the following questions to play 4 corners in the classroom. Have the students move to the center of the room. Read each question, pointing to a different corner when you read each answer choice. Allow the students time to think of their answer and then go to the corner of the answer choice they say is correct. After each question, have the students move back to the center of

the room. This formative assessment checks understanding of the lesson's target knowledge.

1. Why did King George III pass new tax laws on items like paper and tea?

- A) To fund new exploration voyages
- B) To help pay off expensive war debts
- C) To build bigger schools in Britain
- D) To buy ships for colonial merchants

2. Which group of colonial soldiers promised to be ready to fight at a minute's notice?

- A) Redcoats
- B) British Marines
- C) Minutemen
- D) Royal Governors

3. What historical event happened on the night of the Boston Tea Party?

- A) Colonists signed the Treaty of Paris
- B) British troops captured hidden weapons
- C) Paul Revere finished his final horse ride
- D) Protestors threw expensive tea into the ocean

4. What was an immediate effect of the news from Lexington and Concord on April 20, 1775?

- A) The King canceled all colonial taxes
- B) Thousands of militia members surrounded Boston
- C) Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense*
- D) The Revolutionary War immediately ended

5. How did the pamphlet *Common Sense* change the minds of everyday colonists?

- A) It argued using simple language that America should rule itself
- B) It commanded them to obey the British laws
- C) It listed the secret hiding places for colonial gunpowder
- D) It explained how to join the British Navy

If time allows - Classroom Role-Play Script: The Boston Tea Party
Use this script to engage kinesthetic learners and practice speaking skills.

- **Setting:** A secret meeting room in Boston, December 1773.
- **Characters:**
 - **Narrator:** Explains the historical background.
 - **Samuel Adams:** Leader of the colonial protest group.
 - **Colonist 1 & Colonist 2:** Angry local Boston citizens.

NARRATOR: King George III has placed a strict tax on tea. The colonists refuse to pay it without having a voice in Parliament.

SAMUEL ADAMS: (Pounding fist on table) This tea tax is completely unfair! We have no representation across the ocean!

COLONIST 1: The British ships are sitting right out there in the harbor! They expect us to unload the cargo and pay the tax!

COLONIST 2: We cannot let them land that tea. It is time to make a stand and show the King we are united!

SAMUEL ADAMS: Tonight, we march to the harbor. We will throw their taxed cargo straight into the deep water!

NARRATOR: That night, the men threw 342 chests of tea into the ocean. This bold protest pushed the colonies closer to open revolution.

Museum Visit

Teacher/Museum Docent: Greet students in character as King George III, wearing a royal robe and crown. Hand each student a velvet pouch containing 10 colonial coins.

Setting the Scene: The King stands at an elevated podium/step while students sit on the floor in front of him. Parent chaperones act as "Royal Guards."

- Teacher Tip: Stay fully in character during this opening section! A pompous, dramatic, and slightly bored tone sets an engaging atmosphere for kinesthetic and auditory learners.

Teacher Actions: Announce each royal decree, have guards collect coins in a bucket, and pause after each tax to prompt student reactions.

[The King enters, dusting off his royal robe. He looks down his nose at the students.]

KING:

"Order! Silence in the courtroom of King George III! Loyal subjects of the American colonies, look at you. Dusty, tired, and... living in my land."



Let us get straight to business. Running an Empire is very expensive. My royal navy protects you from pirates, and my soldiers protect your borders. Yet, I look at my treasury, and it is empty! Therefore, it is time for you to pay your fair share."

[The King pulls out a large, rolled-up parchment scroll.]

KING:

"By Royal Decree, I am implementing the New World Taxes, effective immediately. Guards, prepare to collect the coins!

First! A tax on comfort. Anyone who is currently sitting, standing, or in my presents owes the Crown one Colonial Coin. Pay up!"

[Guards walk around with a bucket. Students will groan and hand over a coin from their pouch.]

KING:

"Wonderful. Next! A tax on style. Anyone wearing the color blue—the color of the common laborer—owes the Crown two Colonial Coins. Hand them over!"

[More coins are collected. Wait for a student to inevitably yell: "That's not fair!"]

KING:

"Not fair? Who said that? Step forward, peasant! Tell me, why should a subject talk back to their King? I was chosen by God to rule this Empire. My father was King, his father was King, and my children will rule you too. What makes you think you know how to run a country better than royalty?"

[Let 2 or 3 students answer. They will likely say they want to vote or choose their own laws.]

KING:

"Vote? You want ordinary farmers and blacksmiths making laws? Preposterous! You live thousands of miles away across an ocean. You are children; I am the father of this country. You will pay your taxes, you will obey my laws, and you will do so with a smile."

In fact, for your bad attitude, I am raising the tax on your lunch snacks! Three coins from everyone, right now!"

[The King waves his hand dismissively as the kids protest.]

KING:

"Be grateful I don't lock you in the tower! Silence! I am done listening to the complaints of colonists. Guards, clear them out of my sight before I tax the very air they breathe!"

Misconception Alert: Students often assume colonists hated taxes simply because they didn't want to lose money. Clarify during the simulation that colonists were angry because they had no representation in Parliament to vote on or discuss these taxes.

Vocabulary to Reinforce

- **Tax:** Money collected by a government to fund public works/empire costs.
- **Representation:** Having a voice or vote in government decisions.
- **Tyrant:** A ruler who uses power uncomfortably, unfairly, or cruelly.
- **Liberty:** The state of being free within society.

Transition out of character (or step down from the podium) to lead a whole-group reflection. Teacher/Docent Prompts:

1. *"How did it feel when the King took your hard-earned coins without asking?"*
2. *"Why were the colonists so frustrated with Great Britain?"*
3. *"If you wanted to persuade thousands of angry colonists to unite against the King in 1776, how would you do it without the internet or TV?"*

Historical Connection: Explain that Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* in 1776 to explain in simple language why America needed to break away from monarchy and establish a free republic.

Look for: During discussion, listen for students actively using key target vocabulary: unfair, taxes, representation, tyrant, and liberty.

Teacher Action: Transition students into secret revolutionary authors. Provide each student with high-quality aged parchment paper (pre-folded into a 3-part booklet) and calligraphy feather gel pens.

Step-by-Step Directions

1. Title Page: Invent a bold title (e.g., *The Tyranny of King George* or *A Call for Liberty*).
2. Page 1: The Problem (The Tyranny): Describe why King George's taxes and actions are unfair.
3. Page 2: The Idea (Freedom & Republic): Explain why a government should be elected by the people instead of inherited by a King.
4. Page 3: The Call to Action: Write a message urging fellow colonists to stand up and separate from Great Britain.

As the students are working, teacher should walk around and ask the following questions to each group:

- *"What evidence from our tax simulation can you include on Page 1?"*
- *"How does Thomas Paine's idea of representation differ from King George's monarchy?"*

As the students finish, a chaperone/docent sets up a "publishing station" where a low-temperature glue gun filled with wax is ready to seal the students' document.

Once their pamphlet is written, students fold their document shut, bring it to the station, choose their wax color, and press a heavy brass/wooden stamp (e.g., Liberty Bell or Coiled Snake) into the wax pool to "officially publish" their secret pamphlet. *Teacher Tip: For safety and efficiency with 4th and 5th graders, have adults handle the mini glue guns to melt the wax pool onto the seam, then allow the student to press the metal stamp into the wax themselves!*

Gallery Walk: Students display their sealed pamphlets on desks or display tables and walk around to read their peers' title pages and arguments.

Extension Challenge: **Ask** advanced learners to compare King George III's system of inherited monarchy with the three branches of the modern United States government. How

does our Constitution prevent one person from becoming a tyrant?

Post-Visit

[Google Slides to Guide This Lesson](#)

Display an image of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* alongside the Declaration of Independence. Ask students to pull out the pamphlets they printed and sealed at the museum.

Say: At the museum, you stood up to King George III and wrote your own revolutionary pamphlets. What was your strongest argument against the King?"

Say: "When Thomas Paine printed his secret pamphlet in January 1776, it sold over 100,000 copies! Why do you think his words spread like wildfire?"

Say: "Just six months after Paine wrote his pamphlet, leaders like Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. How do you think Paine's words helped inspire that famous document?"

Teacher Tip: *Activate prior knowledge by explicitly connecting the museum experience (feeling the injustice of taxation and writing pamphlets) to today's core concept: turning grievances into an official government declaration.*

Student Action: Read the following narrative summary.

"When Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*, he didn't just complain about the King—he gave the colonists a vision of what a fair government could look like. He argued that all people have natural rights, that kings do not rule by divine power, and that a free nation must be built on the consent of the governed. Only six months later, in July 1776, leaders from all thirteen colonies met in Philadelphia. Inspired by the fiery arguments spreading through pamphlets across the colonies, Thomas Jefferson was tasked with writing an official document to break ties with Great Britain once and for all: The Declaration of Independence."

Say: "We will now visit stations to further our understanding of America at the outbreak of the Revolution."



Variations and Extensions

Challenge students to research one Founding Father who signed the Declaration of Independence (such as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, or John Hancock) and write a short paragraph summarizing their contribution to the Revolutionary effort.

4th and 5th Grade

Video Graphic Organizer
Cause and Effects about the American Revolution

Name: _____

Direction: Watch the video. Write down the matching outcome for each cause.

CAUSE	→	EFFECT
Great Britain has huge debts from the French and Indian War.	→	
Parliament passes the Tea Act and taxes colonial items.	→	
The Sons of Liberty dump 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor.	→	

The Spark of April 1775

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NARRATOR: That night, the men threw 342 chests of tea into the ocean. This bold protest pushed the colonies closer to open revolution.

Name: _____

1. What experience during today's field trip helped you understand the American Revolution the most?

2. Which social studies vocabulary word did you use in your pamphlet, and what does it mean?

Name: _____

Group: _____

Station 1: The Taxes

1. King George III taxed the colonies because:

2. Colonists were angry NOT just about money but because they lacked: (circle one)

Stamps

Representation / A Vote

Ships

Station II: The Spark – *Common Sense*

1. Thomas Paine's main claim in *Common Sense* is

2. One supporting evidence he used:

Station 3: Matching the Grievances

- ❖ Grievance A: Taxes without consent matches:

- ❖ Grievance B: Quartering Troops matches:

- ❖ Grievance C: Cutting off Trade matches:

Station 4: The Leaders

1. Who wrote *Common Sense*?

2. Who was the primary author of the *Declaration of Independence*?

3. How did Paine's pamphlet make Jefferson's job easier six months later?



Examine the Tax Stamp and Replica Coin.

Questions to Answer in Case File:

1. Why did Parliament pass taxes on paper, tea, and glass?
2. What important right were the colonists denied? (*Hint: Voice/Vote*)
3. How does this connect to your coin simulation at the museum?

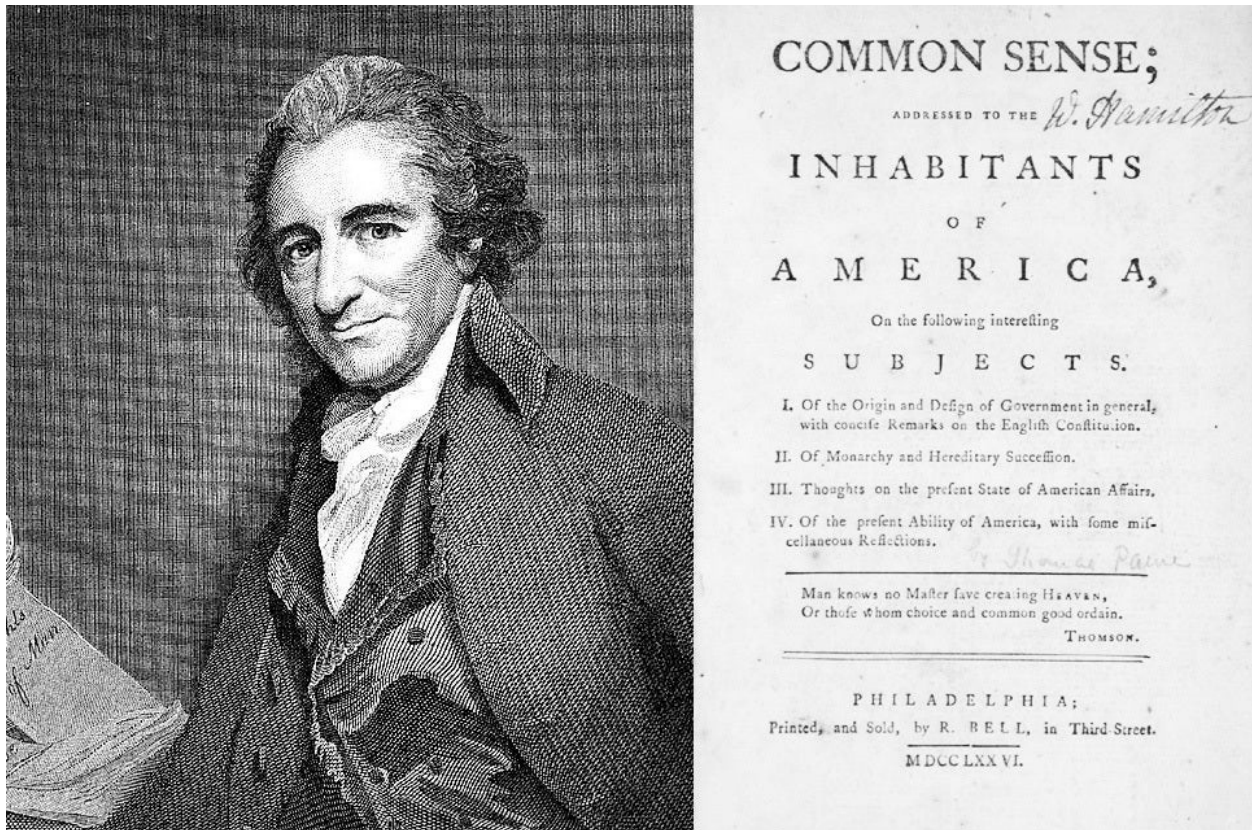


Read the excerpt from Thomas Paine's 1776 pamphlet.

"A government of our own is our natural right... It is absurd to suppose a continent can be perpetually governed by an island. Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something absurd in supposing a continent to be governed by an island."

Questions to Answer in Case File:

1. Main Claim: What does Thomas Paine want America to do?
2. Evidence: What reason does he give to support his claim?
3. Vocabulary: Define *Liberty* using context clues.



The middle section of the *Declaration of Independence* is a list of grievances, or complaints, against King George III. Match each official grievance card to the real-life historical cause.

Match each Grievance Card (from the Declaration) to its historical Cause Card:

<i>Imposing Taxes on us without our Consent</i>	Quartering Act
<i>Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us</i>	Closing Boston Harbor
<i>Cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world</i>	Stamp Act / Tea Act

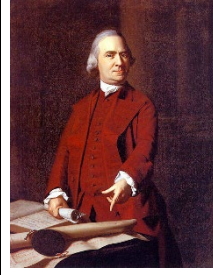
Print on cardstock and cut out or print and laminate.

Examine the four Founding Father profiles at your station.



Thomas Paine

Wrote the persuasive pamphlet *Common Sense* in plain words so everyday people would support independence.



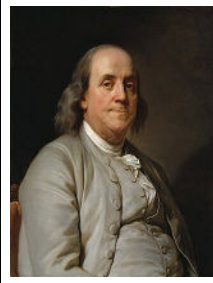
Samuel Adams

Organized the Sons of Liberty and led protests like the Boston Tea Party.



Thomas Jefferson

Wrote the official draft of *Declaration of Independence* in 1776.



Benjamin Franklin

Helped edit the Declaration of Independence and represented the colonies as an ambassador in Europe

TASK: How did Thomas Paine make Thomas Jefferson's job easier six months later? In your Case File, write a 1-sentence summary describing how **Thomas** Paine and **Thomas** Jefferson worked like a “team.”