



Unit 3 Activities

Timelining Independence

This lesson will introduce students to the events leading up to independence, helping them place the spring and summer of 1776 within a larger context of political/diplomatic and military events that would shape decision-making within the American public and the Continental Congress.

Aims /Objective

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

- Understand the era of protest to restore British liberties in the American colonies and how it transitioned to a movement for independence
- Examine the use of timelines and how they share historical information
- Create a historical timeline using self-developed criteria

Materials

Unit 3 Big Idea: Timelining Independence

Primary Sources:

- Instructions by the Virginia Convention to Their Delegates in Congress (Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society)
- Rhode Island Act Repealing Allegiance to Great Britain ([Rhode Island State Archives](#))
- New Jersey State Constitution (New Jersey State Archives, Department of State)
- Charlestown, South Carolina Grand Jury Presentments (South Carolina Department of Archives & History)

Other Resources:

- *Season of Independence* interactive
- MoAR Virtual “Rule Britannia” through “The Road to Independence” galleries: www.amrevmuseum-virtualtour.org/
- Timeline of Protest and Independence (included)
- Unit 3 Worksheet: Document Deep Dive (included)
- Unit 3 Worksheet: Timeline Topics (included)

Procedures

Engagement 20 – 30 minutes

ZOOM IN, ZOOM OUT

Teacher Preparation: Familiarize yourself with the contents of the Timeline of Protest and Independence and prepare copies of it for students.

Draw two blank timelines in a place where students can see them with five notches on each to be filled in later

with events. Review what a timeline is, how it works, and what they are used for. Next, ask for student assistance in constructing a short timeline of five important events that took place in their country during the last three months, adding several student suggestions as entries. Afterward, ask for their assistance in constructing a new timeline for showing five important events that took place in their country during the last three years.

ADAPT: Students with less grounding in national history can instead choose important local events to add to each blank timeline or can be given time to research events to include.

Ask students how these timelines are similar and how they differ despite having similar topics and possibly containing some of the same information. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a longer/broader timeline vs a shorter/focused one? Point out that timelines are often used to show causation or change over time. But how does someone know the point at which a timeline should begin when creating one? What criteria should be used?

Distribute the Timeline of Protest and Independence to students and ask them to share ideas about what they think this timeline is trying to show. Afterward, display or share the Season of Independence interactive and ask how they think it will be similar or different from the timeline. What length of time is the interactive showing and how does this compare with the Timeline of Protest and Independence? What does the interactive do a better job of showing over a shorter period of time?

Development 50 minutes

DOCUMENT DEEP DIVE

Teacher Preparation: Prepare copies of the Document Deep Dive worksheet. Share hyperlink for the Season of Independence interactive with students

Share the *Season of Independence* interactive with the class, also allowing them time to further investigate it individually or with partners where possible. Point out the primary source documents in the interactive and instruct students to examine the content of each one while also noting when they occurred. Distribute the Document Deep Dive worksheet. Students should complete their worksheet as they conduct their investigation, answering the following questions to be discussed by the class afterward:

- What type of events are being shown by the interactive timeline?
- What type of events might be missing from the interactive timeline?

- Which groups of people are not well-represented by the interactive timeline?
- What kind of changes are being shown by the events in the interactive timeline?
- What can you infer about American support for independence from the primary source documents? From the events included in the interactive timeline?

TIMELINE TOPICS

Teacher Preparation: Prepare copies of the Unit 3 Big Idea essay and Timeline Topics worksheet for students.

Distribute copies of the Timeline Topics worksheet and the Unit 3 Big Idea essay to students. Instruct students to read the essay, then use their worksheet to identify three key events from each section and explain what the big idea is for each section. Students should record their conclusions on their worksheet. After allowing time for students to work on this task, provide them with the opportunity to share their conclusions within groups or with the class.

Development 40 minutes

TIMELINE TAPESTRIES

Teacher Preparation: Read the Unit 3 Big Idea essay and familiarize yourself with the contents of the Timeline of Protest and Independence. Prepare copies of the Timeline of Protest and Independence and Unit 3 Big Idea essay for students. Share hyperlinks for the Season of Independence interactive and the Museum's Virtual Tour.

Divide students into small groups and distribute a large piece of butcher paper, poster, etc. or assign portions of a whiteboard/chalkboard to each group. Make sure that all students have copies of the Unit 3 Big Idea Essay and Timeline of Protest and Independence, distributing them if necessary. Share links to the Season of Independence interactive and the Museum's Virtual Tour as well. After sharing the above resources, assign each group one of the following themes and instruct them to work together to select no more than 10 events (going as far back as 1754, but not further than July 1776) to include on a timeline that helps illustrate that theme or idea.

Timeline Themes

- Timeline demonstrating changes in the relationship between Native American groups and colonists in North America
- Timeline demonstrating a shift from protest over British Liberties to a movement for independence
- Timeline demonstrating a shift from peaceful resistance to destructive and violent resistance
- Timeline showing the push and pull between Parliament and the Continental Congress
- Timeline showing support for independence
- Timeline showing resistance to independence

Once students have completed their timelines, display each one around the classroom and allow time for students to walk around the room to view each other's work. Afterward, have each group briefly share how they chose what events to include when trying to represent their timeline's theme. Alternatively, ask students to try and guess what the theme of each group's timelines were. Discuss how they were similar or how they were different, despite all drawing from the same pool of events.

DEEPEN: Ask students to share what changes over time (if any) were illustrated by the different timelines.

Culmination 40 minutes

CHANGE OF HEART

Teacher Preparation: Prepare copies of the Unit 3 Big Idea essay and Timeline of Protest and Independence for students.

Display the Season of Independence interactive for the class. Ask students how the interactive timeline demonstrates a change over time. Guide students to understanding that the interactive timeline helps show how a series of events caused the protests over restoring British liberties to transform into a movement for independence. Using the Unit 3 Big Idea essay and Timeline of Protest and Independence, instruct students to identify another change over time that they observed within them. Split students into small groups and have each group select 2-3 events from the timeline that caused that change, and 1-2 events that illustrate the outcome of those events. Have each group form several "tableaus" (moments frozen in time) that show each of these events in sequence. (Show students the "A Brawl at Harvard Yard" gallery in our virtual museum as an example) See if students can guess which events are being portrayed and what change is being shown between them all.

ADAPT: If guessing what event each tableau shows is too difficult, you can instead allow a student from each group to function as a narrator to help provide context to each tableau.

Extensions and Adaptations

HUMAN HISTORY

Hang a very long sheet of butcher paper across one wall of the classroom. Split students into groups and have them simultaneously draw their own independent timelines of human history spanning the paper above/below the other groups. Allow students to create their own conventions for how to show this. Afterward, have each group share their timeline and explain what decisions they made to determine how best to reflect the goal of their timeline.

JOURNAL JOURNEY

Assign each student an individual from the *Season of Independence* interactive and have them gather information about them (Where were they from? Were they a revolutionary, loyalist, or neutral? Why did they feel that way? Etc.) using the interactive. Instruct them to select a set number of events from the interactive timeline and write journal entries from that person's perspective that include their reactions to different events from season of independence. Ask students to infer how those individuals and/or the groups they represent would have felt about these events to help them write their journal entries.

PIVOT POINT

Although independence was the eventual outcome, the protests in British North America didn't start out with the goal of creating a new nation. Distribute the Timeline of Protest and Independence, then ask students to identify 2 - 3 points on the timeline where different choices by either protesters or Parliament could have resulted in an outcome other than independence. Have students choose one of these turning points and create an alternative timeline that shows how a different decision could have changed the events that followed.