

THE ONGOING REVOLUTION



This lesson will introduce students to the legacy and ongoing relevance of the American Revolution.

This activity is excerpted from Unit 7 of the *Through Their Eyes: Major Causes and Events of the American Revolution Teacher Resource Guide*. To see the full lesson and all supporting materials, visit: www.amrevmuseum.org/teacher-resource-guides

CONTEXT

Historians study the past to help humanity understand the present. Events that happened long ago can have lasting repercussions, making them relevant to our understanding of the world. Learning about the Revolution and the possibilities it suggested for all people better prepares us to measure our progress and make those possibilities a reality.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Identify or debate the critical ideas of the American Revolution
- Identify or debate ways in which the Revolution may still be in progress

MATERIALS

Primary Sources:

Photograph: William Waller Powder Horn
(Museum of the American Revolution)

Text: Declaration of Independence

www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript

Text: Charleston Non-Importation Agreement, July 22, 1769
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/charleston_non_impotation_1769.asp

PROCEDURES

- First, share the primary sources listed above with students. Ask students to examine each source and record what they think each says about the ideals and hopes of the Revolution, sharing/discussing with others where possible.
- Next, have students identify which ideals they believe were the most important ones to Americans who were rebelling against Britain and why they believe those are most important, recording their responses on their worksheet.
- Finally, ask students to answer the following question: What role do you think you can play in helping the country either live up to its ideals, or help it continue to?
- Students should submit their worksheets for review once they are complete.

EXTENSION

- Ask students to consider the following questions: Is the Revolution ongoing? If so, where and how do you see it happening today? If not, when do you think it ended and why?
- Afterward, ask students to read and reflect on Dr. Benjamin Rush's 1787 quote: "There is nothing more common than to confound the terms of the American revolution with those of the late American war. The American war is over; but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed." What do you think he would say about the state of the American Revolution today? Do you think the United States of America has lived up to its founding ideals? Why or why not?

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- Finally, have students read and reflect on the following excerpt from President Barack Obama’s Second Inaugural Address, delivered January 21, 2013: “What makes us exceptional — what makes us American — is our allegiance to an idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they

are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ Today we continue a never-ending journey to bridge the meaning of those words with the realities of our time.” What do you think he is saying here? Why might his statement be important in your lifetime?