

OBJECT OBSERVATION: PURPOSE ON A POWDER HORN?



This lesson will introduce students to the skills of object analysis and interpretation while asking them to consider one man's motivation for supporting the Revolutionary cause.

This activity is excerpted from Unit 2 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

Many people fought in the Revolutionary War, or found other ways to support the Revolution, for a variety of reasons. One of the ways historians learn about these people and their motivations is by closely examining primary sources created by people during the Revolutionary Era. This often includes documents like letters and journals, as well as objects like this featured powder horn.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Observe and analyze a primary source historical object
- Define and debate meanings of the words "liberty," "freedom," and "independence"

MATERIALS

Primary Sources:

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

Other Resources:

Student Response Worksheet

PROCEDURES

- First, have students examine the photograph of the William Waller powder horn, paying careful attention to its imagery and inscriptions. The additional page of text accompanying the powder horn image provides context as to what powder horns are and how they were used during the Revolutionary era. Ask students to list their observations on the accompanying Student Response Worksheet. The many different potential observations make this exercise ideal for collaborative discussion. To learn more about the William Waller Powder Horn, explore the Museum of the American Revolution's [Multimedia Timeline](#) or [Digital Museum Collection](#).
- Next, have students consider the meaning of the following words: liberty, freedom, independence. How are these words similar, how are they different, and how are they related to one another? Students can record their thoughts on this topic on their worksheet, defending their reasoning to an adult or classmate where possible. Encourage them to reference a dictionary to enhance their discussion about these terms.
- Finally, ask students to consider their responses to the previous questions to determine what may have motivated William Waller to fight in the Revolutionary War. This is a good opportunity for students to share and defend their inferences and conclusions.
- Students should submit their worksheet once all sections are complete.

ART EXTENSION

Students can decorate a powder horn with illustrations and phrases that are meaningful to them using the Museum's [Etch Your Own Powder Horn Craft](#).