

Section I: War of Independence



“The best Patriot [will be the one] who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his Station or from whatever part of the Continent he may come.”

—George Washington, 1776

Title: Who’s in Camp?

Grade Level: Elementary School

Objectives: Understand who fought the War of Independence and how their lives and the lives of their families were affected by the war.

National History Standards:

Standard 2: Student comprehends historical sources; Standard 5: Student engages in historical issues—analysis and decision-making; Era 3: Revolution and the new nation (1754–1820s), Standard 1C: Compare and explain the people’s different roles and perspectives in the war.

Time: 45 minutes

Background:

In June of 1775, the Continental Congress united the troops of the several colonies into a single Continental army “for the Defense of American Liberty” under the command of General George Washington. The men of Washington’s army were young and mostly poor farmers, fishermen, and artisans; some were Africans. All were volunteers (although many joined for a cash award). They gathered in camps, joined by local militia units and civilians in every imaginable capacity.

Soldiers rose early each day—and went to bed early each night: Washington ordered that “all lights must be put out at 9 o’clock in the evening, and every man to his tent.” Each day they drilled in the “manual exercise,” the precise sequence of steps involved in loading and firing their muskets. They marched and maneuvered in long linear formations, learning to move and fight as one. Each day, they were supposed to receive rations and supplies: a pound of beef or pork, peas and beans, a pound of flour, a quart of cider, milk, a half-cup of rum; every week they were supposed to receive a pound of salted fish, two cups of vinegar (to prevent scurvy), candles, soap, fresh straw for their beds. But rations were often spoiled and supplies inadequate; many foraged for food in local fields and orchards. Thousands—malnourished and exhausted—died when diseases like “putrid diarrhea” ravaged the camps. In fact, more soldiers died from disease than were killed by musket fire, rolling and bouncing cannonballs, or bayonet charges.

Who's in Camp?



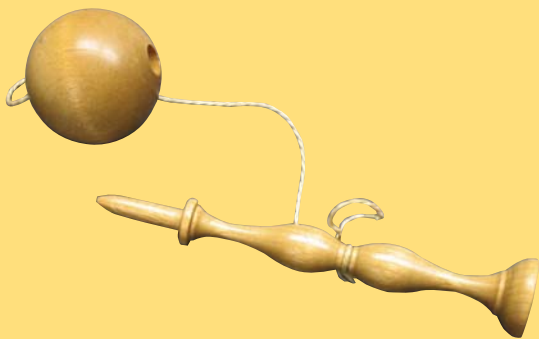
Who used lots of lye soap?
Hint: They did piles of laundry.

Who's in Camp?



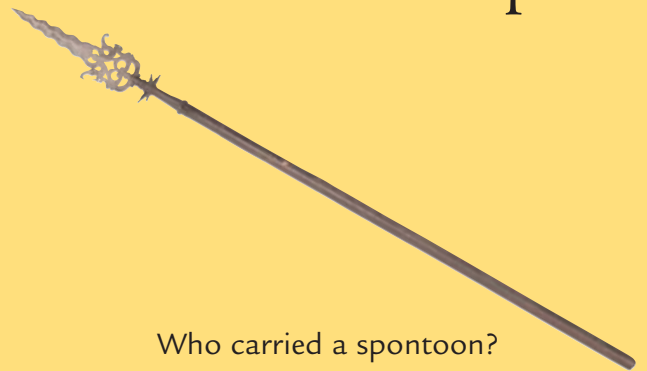
Who wore their own hats?
Hint: They were not part of the regular army.

Who's in Camp?



Who played with toys?
Hint: They received a half-ration of food.

Who's in Camp?



Who carried a spontoon?
Hint: They told recruits to "mind the music and the step."

Who's in Camp?



Who carried a camp pot?
Hint: They ate together.

Who's in Camp?



Who kept bloodsucking leeches in a jar?
Hint: They used them to treat illnesses.

Who's in Camp?

Militiamen were citizen soldiers who wore regular clothes and carried their own equipment. They were local white men, and sometimes free black men, between the ages of sixteen and sixty. They were called out only as needed, elected their own officers, and decided where and when to fight.

Who's in Camp?

Women—usually the wives or relatives of soldiers—followed the army wherever it went. Most washed and mended clothes; some cooked or took care of the sick and wounded.

Who's in Camp?

Officers carried spontoons, pole arms that signaled their rank. Each day they drilled their men in the sequence of steps involved in loading and firing their muskets. They practiced their troops in marching and maneuvering in long, shoulder-to-shoulder lines. Because officers carried no firearms, the spontoon's sharpened iron blade was their only weapon.

Who's in Camp?

Children lived in camp with their fathers and mothers. Although they were an accepted presence in camp, George Washington once complained that “the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement.”

Who's in Camp?

Doctors believed that many illnesses were caused by an imbalance in the body's fluids, known as “humors.” They used leeches to remove “excess” blood in an effort to restore the balance of bodily fluids. In reality, bleeding resulted in lowered blood pressure, dehydration, infection—and often death.

Image courtesy of National Library of Medicine

Who's in Camp?

Soldiers in the army were divided into groups of six to eight men, called a mess. Each group was issued a camp pot and did its own cooking. They carried the heavy iron pot wherever they went. Because the meat they received as rations was often of poor quality—even infested with maggots—they had to boil it.



Artist's rendering of Continental army camp on Long Island, July 1776

- Materials:**
- Six sets of the six object cards
 - *The Fighting Ground* by Avi
 - *The American Revolution: A History in Their Own Words* by Milton Meltzer
 - *The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America* by R. Buel
 - *Black Heroes of the American Revolution* by Burke Davis
 - *If You Were There in 1776* by Barbara Brenner
 - *The Minute Men: The First Fight—Myths and Realities of the American Revolution* by John Galvin

Lesson:

As pre-lesson homework, have students read one of the six books about life during the War of Independence.

In class, divide the students into six groups and give each group a set of object cards. Have them analyze the object on the image side of the card and write answers to the following questions: Can you identify this object? What is its function? Who might have needed such an object in a soldiers' encampment? Have them assign a type of person who might have used the artifact for each object they have. Then ask the students to turn the cards over to learn the identity of the person.

Finally, ask each student to choose one of the six people. In the voice of the character, have students write a letter home about their experiences during the war. This will allow them to use their research from the reading assignment and their investigation of the object cards.

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General

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Section III: Civil War

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Section IV: World War II

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The Price of Freedom: Americans at War Teacher's Manual DVD Menu

***Americans at War*, produced by The History Channel**

An introduction to the themes of the exhibition

War of Independence

First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:

- Lydia Minturn Post, Long Island housewife, 1776
- James Collins, teenage soldier, no date
- Doonyontat, Wyandot chief, 1779
- Elijah Churchill, recipient of the first Purple Heart, 1783

Mexican War

First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:

- José María Tornel y Mendivil, Mexican secretary of war, 1837
- George Ballentine, English volunteer for the United States, 1853
- Juan Bautista Vigil y Alarid, acting governor of New Mexico, 1846
- Ulysses S. Grant, American soldier, 1885

Civil War

First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:

- Louis Myers, Third West Virginia Infantry, 1862
- William G. Christie, Minnesota soldier, 1863
- Eugenia Phillips, spy for the South in Washington D.C., 1861
- Spottswood Rice, African American Union soldier, 1864

World War I

World War I Overview, produced by The History Channel

World War II

World War II Cartoons, produced by The History Channel

**World War II Overviews in the Newsreel format,
produced by The History Channel**

- From World War I to World War II
- The North Atlantic and North African Theater
- The European Theater
- The Pacific Theater

The USO in World War II, produced by The History Channel

First-Person Accounts, produced by Pyramid Studios:

- George Hynes, U.S. Army, a last letter home, 1942
- Robert Morris, U.S. Coast Guard, fighting in Italy, 1943
- Robert Sherrod, journalist, the beach at Tarawa, 1943
- Ann Darr, Women Airforce Service Pilots, 1997
- Daniel Inouye, Medal of Honor recipient, 2000

Vietnam

**Excerpt from *Huey Helicopter—Air Armada*, The History Channel
documentary, 2002**

First-Person Accounts, produced by Arrowhead Film & Video:

- Hal Moore, commander of a Seventh Cavalry Regiment battalion, 2003
- Fred Castleberry, veteran of the Twenty-fifth Infantry Division, 2002
- Clarence Sasser, recipient of the Medal of Honor, 2004,
(produced by Pyramid Studios)



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