

Spies of the Revolutionary War
Writing Unit Lesson Plans
By
Jan May

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Revolutionary War Spies

Introduction



How to Use This Curriculum

There are six unit lessons in this curriculum developing creative writing skills and enhancing history education. These lessons were designed to use once or twice a week as little or much as the teacher desires. Each lesson includes educational, writing, and motivational writing activities such as keeping a journal as your spy and roll playing. Roll playing is a huge part for this age group in discovering material to write about, especially boys. Make or buy a special folder to put all the completed writing sheets in for the student. Put the lapbook together a little at a time during each lesson or at all at once at the end of the unit.

American Revolutionary War History is rich with stories of bravery and sacrifice by men and women who loved freedom. There is an ocean of colorful characters and fun learning opportunities around every corner in this book. Most educational experts agree that sensory learning becomes a part of the child forever. This is why we have added not only visual projects, but auditory and kinesthetic projects as well. We have especially designed them for the boy-factor-the need to use large motor skills as they learn. These fun projects and activities will engage boys to roll play creating loads of ideas for stories.

Years ago when I began to teach creative writing I found that to correct spelling and grammar during creative writing times actually hindered the student from creative flow. I cannot count the number of

children who began in my class without a thought of how to begin writing and ended up writing pages upon pages. Parents began to comment that they would find their children writing at all times of the day like a fountain had opened up and was spilling forth. My rule of success is this: Keep spelling and grammar during spelling and grammar times and let creative writing flow freely without making those corrections. Good spelling will trickle down and the student will feel free to write and create without fear of their inner thoughts being criticized. Introduce corrections gently after a good long period of creative flow.



A trip to the library is a great place to spark interest when doing a unit lesson. Two favorite resources on this topic are: Easy Reader, *Sam the Minute Man* and the Disney movie, *Johnny Tremain*. Check out books with colorful illustrations the students can absorb visually and share with younger siblings and craft and projects for this time period.

Enjoy the Adventure!

Ian



Spies Week One Getting Started



Introduction to the American Revolutionary War

Ever since the Pilgrims landed on American soil in 1620, the struggle for freedom burned in the hearts and minds of the people. Many of them escaped the tyrannical rule of England and resolved that this New World would lose those shackles. However it was clear that King George wanted to keep his hand in the affairs of the New World. His desire to tax the people began as a spark but over the years grew into a raging flame. British tyranny escalated as early as 1764 and throughout the next decade the Sugar Act, the Currency Act, the Stamp Act, and the Tea Act made it crystal clear that British rule was not something that would go away, but only get worse.

American patriot groups, such as the Son's of Liberty sprang up to resist them. One of the most violent events was the Boston Massacre in 1770 where a mob of patriots took to the streets and threw snowballs, stones, and sticks at British soldiers. The tension against British rule grew and in 1772 the Sons of Liberty attacked one of Her Majesty's Ship's, *Gaspee*, known at the "Gaspee Affair." Lieutenant William Duddington was in charge of the waters off Rhode Island. Duddington had earned a nasty reputation for being an overzealous enforcer. He would board and detain vessels and confiscate cargo without charge. On June 9, 1772, a local vessel out of Newport and its captain lured the British ship *Gaspee* into shallow waters. The *Gaspee*

ran aground at a place that is now known as Gaspee Point. All were captured aboard the *Gaspee* and saw the ship looted and burned.



The struggle for freedom came to a boiling point on April 17, 1775 with the famous, "shot that was heard around the world," at the Battle of Lexington and Concord and lasted for eight years. This was the battle that began after Paul Revere's famous "midnight ride." The British, learning that the patriots were storing up gunpowder near Lexington and Concord, knew rebellion was at hand, so they decided to march and take it away. But the countrymen and minutemen were alerted by Revere and others. The minutemen pummeled the British soldiers for miles chasing them off. It was a great victory for American patriots.

The war lasted for eight years and was fought by thousands of brave men and women. Many times seeming to be defeated, shoeless, bleeding and freezing at Valley Forge. But Providence was on our side! General George Washington humbly sought the help of heaven and thus helped to birth our nation. The Revolutionary War would prove the first great stepping stone into establishing the United States of America into a free nation of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Lesson Time

Explain the idea of going on an adventure by each student becoming a Revolutionary War Spy and creating a character to write about. This works great for multiple age levels and the projects can include younger children as well.



Explain what Historical Fiction is:

- Writing a made up story about an actual time in history.
- By using historical props in your story it makes the story believable, like your character really lived in that time period. Props might be the clothes people wore, their mode of transportation or items they used in their everyday life.

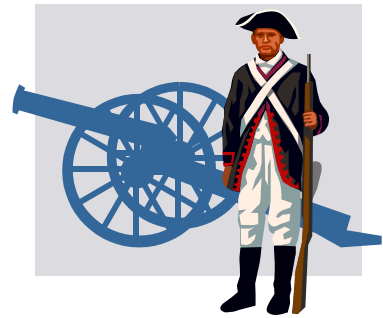
Brainstorm Prop Ideas from Revolutionary War Times with the Students

- **Fashion:** Everyone wanted gray or white hair, since it was a sign of wisdom. Men would shave their own heads just to wear a white wig. Upper class women piled their hair on their head; some even reached three feet high!
- **Clothing:** Average people only had 2-3 sets of clothing and only bathed 2-3 times a year. Men wore knee length pants called breeches and three cornered hats. Women wore dresses and mob caps - a hat made from a circle of cotton that covered her hair.
- **Way of living:** Simply using lamps and candles, riding horses, outhouses, wood burning stoves, growing their own vegetables, hunting their own food, they received their news from newspapers and pamphlets and boys as young as seven years old would join the army as drummers or message carriers

- Actual events: the Boston Tea Party, the Gaspee Affair, or Sons of Liberty meetings
- Everyday Articles: Quill pens, almanacs, wooden nagging bowels for porridge, tinderbox and strikers to start a fires instead of matches
- Key people: like Benjamin Franklin could be their neighbor or Paul Revere gave horse lessons to riders on his horse Brown Beauty to carry secret messages
- Flags: The Sons of Liberty and Culpeper Minutemen flags
- Arms: Smoothbore Flintlock Muskets, Flintlock pistols, rifles, knives, swords, cannons, and bayonets.

Write down 5 props you can use in your story:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Read the handout on the Spy Agents on the following pages. Talk about spy techniques like using a dead drop, sewing information into a button cover, and using invisible ink. (Described in handout)

Pass out Create a Character Handout and walk the student through filling it out. Many times a spy had a number for a name such as Agent 355.

Brainstorm ideas of a situation where the student's character can spy.

Spy Agents of the Revolutionary War

The Sons of Liberty-Pre-War Activists

The Sons of Liberty were a political group of American Patriots supported by mostly mechanics, artisans and laborers. This secret group was founded in 1765 in Boston during the pre-independence days of the United States. The brave patriotic leaders of the Sons of Liberty were Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, John Hancock, John Adams, James Otis, Paul Revere, and Joseph Warren. They were formed to protect the rights of the colonists from British government. Their motto was, "No taxation without representation!" The Sons of Liberty fought with demonstrations, petitions, and published materials opposing the Stamp Act in 1765, which forced colonists to pay taxes on anything that was printed. The Sons of Liberty had their own flag, nine red and white stripes that were known as the "Rebellious Stripes". The stripes in the Sons of Liberty flag represented the nine colonies that participated in protesting the Stamp Act of 1765. When their flag was raised on the Liberty Tree or Liberty Pole, it was a signal for all the group members and other supportive townspeople to meet and discuss their objections about British rule. Their meetings in Boston were held under the "Liberty Tree," in the open space, known as "Liberty Hall" and the New York City chapter met beneath the Liberty Pole for its meetings. They are best known for disguising themselves as Indians to protect their identity and destroying around 342 chests of tea in the Boston Tea Party of 1773. The Sons of Liberty sparked other secret groups lead by their leaders like the "Boston Caucus Club," "Loyal Nine," and "Mechanics." The Sons of Liberty's influences are threaded throughout American History.





Create a Spy Character



1. Name your character:

2. What is their spy name? _____

3. How old? _____ Male or female? _____

4. Describe what they look like. Do they have any special features? Big Eyes, Nose, or Ears, Missing Teeth, Ruby Lips, Squinty Eyes, Cheery Smile, Strong, Hunched Over, Spiked Hair:

5. What is their job? _____

6. What kind of spy gadgets do they use? _____

7. What kinds of things do they like to do? _____

8. Create a Personality: Choose from the list or create some of your own.

Circle the ones you like:

Outgoing	Funny	Serious	Loud	Quiet	Add your own
Smiles	Frowns	Glares	Strong	Weak	_____
Brave	Shy	Afraid	Kind	Helpful	_____
Playful	Silly	Sporty	Generous	Sassy	_____
Spunky	Sneaky	Witty	Mean	Nice	_____
Mysterious	Proud	Wise	Humble	Clumsy	_____

9. What are some things they don't like to do?

Draw a Picture of Your Character Below



Make a Secret Numeric Code for Your Spy Story

Assign a number to people, locations, or battle strategies in your story. Be creative, instead of #1, you could make it #111.

1	25
2	26
3	27
4	28
5	29
6	30
7	31
8	32
9	33
10	34
11	35
12	36
13	37
14	38
15	39
16	40
17	41
18	42
19	43
20	44
21	45
22	46
23	47
24	48

Creating a Plot Worksheet



1. Create a problem that your spy character encounters while they are spying:

2. How will they almost solve it? Will they be in danger? (Roller coaster goes up!)

3. How can you make the problem worse? (Roller coaster crashes down!)

4. How will they try to solve it again? (Roller coaster goes up again!)

5. How can your character finally reach their goal and overcome the problem that you have created? (Thrilling end!)
