

Gr. 6-8—African Americans and the American Revolution—English Language Arts/Social Studies

Texts can be used for Social Studies Scope & Sequence, Grade 7, Unit 2: Colonial America and the American Revolution

Focus Question(s)

- *What issues did the Declaration of Independence fail to resolve?*
- *What are some of the ways in which African Americans participated in America’s fight for independence?*
- *How did African Americans advocate for their freedom during the American Revolution?*

Text (1)	Massachusetts Slaves’ Petition (1777)
Quantitative (Lexile)	N/A
Qualitative Evaluated using terms: Simple, Somewhat Complex, Complex, Very Complex	Lexile is an inadequate measure of the difficulty of the text (Lexile too high)
Purpose/Structure	Simple
Knowledge Demands	Somewhat Complex
Language	Complex
Reader and Task	Requires specific knowledge about slavery during the American Revolution. The vocabulary is challenging and teachers should provide students with some definitions before reading.
Text Dependent Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Explain the author’s purpose in the text (to inform, persuade, or entertain). Use at least two details from the passage to support your answer.</i> 2. <i>Describe how Africa is portrayed in the text. Use at least two details from the passage to support your answer.</i> 3. <i>Contrast the slaves’ description of Africa with the common view of Africa during the American Revolution.</i> 4. <i>How does the quote “. . . A life of slavery . . . is far worse than nonexistence.” support the central idea of the text?</i>

--	--

Text (2)	“On Being Brought from Africa to America” by Phillis Wheatley (1773)
Quantitative (Lexile)	1330L
Qualitative Evaluated using terms: Simple, Somewhat Complex, Complex, Very Complex	Complex
Purpose/Structure	Somewhat Complex
Knowledge Demands	<i>Somewhat Complex</i>
Language	<i>Complex</i>
Reader and Task	Requires specific knowledge about slavery and religion. Challenging vocabulary should be defined before reading. Knowledge of iambic pentameter is also important in analyzing the poem’s structure.
Text Dependent Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Does Phillis Wheatley believe that being brought to America as a slave was the worst thing that happened to her? Use details from the poem to support your answer.</i> 2. <i>According to lines 5-6 “Some view our sable race with scornful eye,/ “Their colour is a diabolic die,” how are African Americans viewed by whites during the American Revolution?</i> 3. <i>How does Wheatley use religion in the final lines of her poem to challenge the way whites viewed African Americans during this era?</i> 4. <i>What is Phillis Wheatley’s personal conflict in this poem? Use your answers from questions 1-3 to support your answer.</i>

Text (3)	“America” by James M. Whitfield (1853)
Quantitative (Lexile)	1440 L
Qualitative Evaluated using terms: Simple,	Complex

Somewhat Complex, Complex, Very Complex	
Purpose/Structure	<i>Simple</i>
Knowledge Demands	<i>Somewhat Complex</i>
Language	<i>Somewhat Complex</i>
Reader and Task	Requires specific knowledge about slavery, African American participation in the Revolutionary War, and poetic devices such as anaphora, tone, imagery, and rhyme. <i>*The poem is lengthy so if time is an issue, students can analyze lines 1-61 and 111-129 instead of the entire poem.</i>
Text Dependent Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the tone of the poem? Identify four words used in the text to support your answer. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What does the tone reveal about the poet’s view on the way African Americans were treated during the American Revolution? 2. What message does the poet convey by repeating the phrase “Was it for this” in lines 15-19? (analyzing an author’s use of anaphora) 3. Read lines 1-4. Underline the words that describe America. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the speaker’s view of America? Use the words you underlined to support your answer. b. How does the speaker’s view of America contrast with the idea of Democracy? 4. Compare the poem “America” to the Massachusetts’ Slave Petition. How is the message and purpose in each text similar? Use details from each text to support your answer.

Text (4)	<i>The shooting of Major Pitcairn (who had shed the first blood at Lexington) by the colored soldier Salem. by Benson J. Lossing (1855)</i>
Quantitative (Lexile)	N/A
Qualitative Evaluated using terms: Simple, Somewhat Complex, Complex, Very Complex	Simple
Purpose/Structure	<i>Simple</i>

Knowledge Demands	Somewhat Complex
Language	Simple
Reader and Task	Requires specific knowledge about slavery and African American soldiers during the Revolutionary War.
Text Dependent Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe what is happening on the American side of the image (the left). 2. What message does the author convey by depicting the American side in this manner? 3. How would you characterize Peter Salem based on this image? Use details from the text to support your answer. 4. Do you think the artist had a message beyond simply documenting the moment? If so, what do you think the message might be about African American soldiers during the Revolutionary War? Use details from the text, and your answers from question #2 to support your answer.

Text (5)	The Declaration of Independence (1776)
Quantitative (Lexile)	1500L
Qualitative Evaluated using terms: Simple, Somewhat Complex, Complex, Very Complex	Complex
Purpose/Structure	Complex
Knowledge Demands	Somewhat Complex
Language	Complex
Reader and Task	Requires specific knowledge about the American Revolution and Democracy. <i>*This activity only focuses on the Preamble.</i>
Text Dependent Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the tone of the first paragraph. Identify four words that support your answer. 2. Why are the words “human,” “one people,” “the Powers of the Earth” used instead of “Colonies” or “Great Britain”? What message does the author want to convey about freedom and equality through this particular language? 3. Compare the language of the Declaration of Independence to the language in The Massachusetts Slaves’ Petition of 1777. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How did the Declaration of Independence inspire the slaves who lived during the American Revolution? b. According to the Massachusetts Slaves’ Petition, what issues did the Declaration of Independence fail to resolve?

Text (6)	<i>Brave Colored Artillerist</i> -Print
Quantitative (Lexile)	N/A
Qualitative Evaluated using terms: Simple, Somewhat Complex, Complex, Very Complex	Simple
Purpose/Structure	<i>Somewhat Complex</i>
Knowledge Demands	Somewhat Complex
Language	Simple
Reader and Task	Requires specific knowledge about slavery and African American soldiers during the Revolutionary War.
Text Dependent Questions	<p>(Teacher should remove the title from the image for this question.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would be a good title for this image? Use details from the picture to support your answer. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Compare your title to a peer's title. What are the similarities and differences? b. With a peer, read the real title of the picture. How are your titles similar or different? c. Does the real title help you better understand the image? Explain. 2. Do you think the artist had a message beyond simply documenting the moment? If so, what do you think the message might be about African American soldiers during the Revolutionary War? Use details from the passage to support your answer. 3. Compare this image with "The shooting of Major Pictarin." <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does your analysis and comparison of the two images add to your understanding of the role of African Americans during the Revolutionary War?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:	CULMINATING TASK(S):
<p>Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1</u> Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2</u> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.4</u> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.5</u> Analyze how a drama’s or poem’s form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.9</u> Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history. <p>History/Social Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1</u> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2</u> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the poem “America” by James M. Whitfield and underline all of the vivid imagery. Use the imagery in the poem to create a political cartoon. Your political cartoon should critique the American Revolution, or the way African Americans were treated during the 18th and 19th centuries. 2. Write a 3-4 paragraph response paper in which you discuss how Phillis Wheatley and James M. Whitfield use religious rhetoric to critique the way America treated African Americans during the 18th and 19th centuries. In what ways is Whitfield’s “America” a response to Phillis Wheatley’s “On Being Brought from Africa to America”? 3. Write a historical fiction short story about image “The shooting of Major Pictairn” or “Peter Salem, the Colored American, at Bunker Hill.” Your story should include details from the Peter Salem reading passages (texts are on the Bibliocommons list), as well as details from the images. Your story must include all of the elements of a story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, protagonist, antagonist, setting, and conflict). 4. Choose a civil right that is often violated in the 21st century. Write a petition to the government from the point of view of someone whose civil right is being violated. Use the <i>Massachusetts Slaves’ Petition</i> and <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> as models to write your own petition. <p><i>Standards Assessed in this Task:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1</u> Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2</u> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2</u> Determine the central ideas or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6</u> Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts). • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7</u> Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9</u> Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic. 	<p>information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6</u> Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts). • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7</u> Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts. • <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9</u> Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.
---	---