



## Patriots v. Loyalists Debate Activity

Grade Level: 3, 4, 8

Standards Addressed: 3-3.2, 4-3.1, 8-2.4

Students will be assigned to defend either the side of the patriots or the loyalists during the American Revolution. Go over some of the major political and economic factors leading up to the Revolution such as the French and Indian War, all of the taxation acts, influence the presence of the British was having, American acts of resistance, and debates during the Continental Congress. Split the students into the two groups and have them work together to come up with an opening argument, rebuttals, and closing argument for why America should either break away or stay loyal to England. This can be turned into a research project where the students must find supporting evidence before they have the debate. Helpful resources are linked to the bottom of this worksheet.

### **Debate Outline:**

- Opening Statements
- Topic 1: Why go to war with England? Why should or should not the colonies be under the king's rule?
- Topic 2: What is your position on the taxes that England has imposed on the colonies?
- Topic 3: Convince the other side that war is/is not necessary.
- Pop question: each side choose a question to ask the other side
- Closing Statements

For younger grades, this activity can be amended to just opening statement, rebuttal, and closing statement. Show them the School House Rock videos listed at the bottom for age-level information about the events leading up to the Revolutionary War.

### *Information for students:*

#### **Timeline of Events**

- 1754-1763- French and Indian War
- 1764-1773- Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Quartering Act, Townshend Act, Tea Act
- 1770- March 5 Boston Massacre
- 1773- December 16 Boston Tea Party
- 1774- Intolerable Acts
- 1774- September 5-October 26 First Continental Congress meets
- 1775- April 19<sup>th</sup> Lexington and Concord (The Shot Heard Round the World)
- 1775- May 10<sup>th</sup> Second Continental Congress meets
- 1775- July 3<sup>rd</sup> Washington assumes command of Continental Army
- 1776- June 28<sup>th</sup> British fail to take Charleston, SC harbor
- 1776- July 1<sup>st</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> Congress debates, revises, and adopts the Declaration of Independence

## **Patriots**

- Patriots were people who thought America should declare its freedom from Britain.
- They believed that people have certain rights that the government cannot take away such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which would include right to property.
- They thought that taxation without representation was wrong because the colonies did not have a voice in Parliament and therefore no say over what was taken from them.
- British militants were causing violence, riots, and death in the colonies and the patriots wanted them out.
- Points to bring up in argument:
  - Boston Massacre
  - Patrick Henry
  - Intolerable Acts
  - King George III
  - No taxation without representation

## **Loyalists**

- Loyalists were colonists who felt that a strong British Empire was good for all and that as British subjects they should obey laws.
- They thought that the taxes would have positive benefits like increased protection and profit through trade.
- They felt that America was not strong enough on its own and would not be able to self-govern like Britain.
- Points to bring up in argument:
  - The French and Indian War
  - Treason and inflation
  - Cost of fighting a war
  - British troop protection and resources/cannot beat the British
  - Income from tax acts

Resources:

<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/revwartimeline.html>

<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/index.html>

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/teachers/lesson\\_plans/pdfs/unit1\\_7.pdf](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/teachers/lesson_plans/pdfs/unit1_7.pdf)

<http://www.historytoday.com/ian-r-christie/american-revolution-1783> (8th grade reading level)

School House Rock Videos on the American Revolution:

*The Preamble, No More Kings, The Shot Heard Round the World, Fireworks*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHp7sMqPL0g&list=PLrOSRJRFre\\_qj2ord4x3xgFHZzrhWy-d5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHp7sMqPL0g&list=PLrOSRJRFre_qj2ord4x3xgFHZzrhWy-d5)