



EagleVision
Productions, Inc.



Webisode 10

Living History/ Reenactments

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Authored by Joseph "Joe" Refinski

With special thanks to the following sponsors for their generous support of this education project that enables teachers and the general public to learn more about the formative years of the American Revolution:

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EAGLEVISION PRODUCTIONS, INC. PRESENTS TEACHER'S GUIDES FOR TEN EDUCATIONAL WEBISODES

INTRODUCTION TO TEN EDUCATIONAL WEBISODES

Welcome to the formative years of the American Revolution 1775 – 1777. Based on the documentary ***Road to Liberty Through Their Eyes***, the producers have developed Ten (10) Educational Webisodes with a Teacher's Guide for teachers to use in their History and Social Studies lesson plans designed to be **rigorous, adaptable, and fun!** Each of the webisodes has its own specific activities tied to the theme of the five to eight-minute webisodes and cover a variety of topics, including how the American Revolution impacted the lives of Colonists, enslaved and free Blacks, and Indigenous Peoples.

CURRICULUM WRITER: JOSEPH "JOE" REFINSKI

Now retired, Joe served as a history teacher for 48 years. During his tenure, Joe won numerous teaching awards, recognitions and Fellowships, as well as several Teacher of the Year Awards, including the 2023 Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and he was named the 2025 NJ Council for the Social Studies Lifetime Educator Award for contributions to the study of history, civics and professional development. Joe has participated in several Teaching American History Grants. He is a Case Method Instructor (Harvard Business School) and is listed in the *Who's Who In Education*.

WEBISODE TITLES

Webisode 1 – Integrated Continental Army

Webisode 2 – Fortifications + Addendum

Webisode 3 – Divided Country + Addendum

Webisode 4 – Militias vs Standing Army

Webisode 5 – Camp Followers

Webisode 6 – Impact of War

Webisode 7 – Spies and Informants

Webisode 8 – Washington Crossing Logistics + Addendum

Webisode 9 – Winter Encampment/Forage Wars

Webisode 10 – Living History/Reenactments + Addendum

EAGLEVISION PRODUCTIONS, INC. PRESENTS
WEBISODE 10 – LIVING HISTORY/REENACTMENTS TEACHER’S GUIDE

NATIONAL HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

Webisode 10 fulfills several National History Standards and Social Studies Themes including: NCSS Themes 2: Time, Continuity, and Change; 3: People, Places, and Environments; 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; 6: Power, Authority, and Governance; Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices; United States History Content Standards for Grades 5 -12 – Era 3 – Standard 1: The causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory. Era 3 – Standard 2: The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society; and The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies for Grades 6-8, 9-10, and 11-12.

WEBISODE 10 SUMMARY: *LIVING HISTORY/REENACTMENTS*

In the one-hour documentary, *Road to Liberty Through Their Eyes*, which is airing on public television stations nationwide, the audience learns of the many battles that took place in Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey, during the formative years of the American Revolution from 1775 to 1777. Many of these historic sites hold annual reenactments and are represented in this webisode. We hear from reenactors and learn from them why they give of their time throughout the year to impart their knowledge about the regiment they serve in. Some reenactors are historical interpreters who learn all there is to know about the life of the person they are portraying so that they can impart this knowledge to the general public. Many of the Revolutionary historic sites are located in the original thirteen colonies and most of them have visitor centers that house exhibits and hold events. Historic sites also employ interpretive specialists who provide educational programs and tours for schools and civic groups. Visiting a historic site close to home or when you are on vacation makes for an interesting day out that’s fun for the whole family. You’ll learn all about what life was like in colonial times and the sacrifices made by the Patriots for “The Glorious Cause” that founded this great nation based on “certain unalienable rights...Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

HOW TO USE EACH WEBISODE AND TEACHER’S GUIDE

Webisode 10 would be useful for middle school and high school students (K6-12) studying United States History, Military History, European History, and Colonial History. Teachers may want to use all or some of the webisodes in the series over several days of history and/or social study classes to introduce their students to a variety of topics experienced during the formative years of the American Revolution. Each webisode has an individual Teacher’s Guide that provides a lesson plan with suggested classroom activities and/or applicable homework assignments. Alternatively, teachers may choose an individual webisode from this series as an overview to highlight a particular topic that occurred in the Revolutionary era for one lesson plan as outlined in that webisode’s Teacher’s Guide.

LESSON PLAN FOR WEBISODE 10 – *LIVING HISTORY/REENACTMENTS*

(Total Lesson Plan Times – combine Webisode with #1 + #2 = 58:02 or #3 = 58:02.)

(5 minutes) Screen Webisode Students are introduced to the topic by posing the following questions to the class and asking them to take notes that address these questions as they watch Webisode 10 – *Living History/Reenactments* (**Running Time: 7:02**):

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO COMPREHEND

- How important are reenactments to keep the nation's history alive for the next generation to learn about the founding of the United States of America?
- What American Revolution historic sites have you visited with your family or school field trip and have you attended or participated in reenactments held at these sites?
- If you live in states outside the original thirteen colonies and were vacationing in one of them, do you think it would be a fun activity to visit a historic site with your family, such as Washington Crossing State Park, NJ and Colonial Williamsburg, VA?
- Why do people join American regiments and British regiments, as well as women and children, and Patriot and Loyalist colonists who participate in reenactments held annually at historic sites throughout the original thirteen states?

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. **(5 minutes) Discussion** Following the screening of the webisode, students are asked whether they think reenactments are an important part of understanding the sacrifices made by the Patriots in founding the United States of America. Those who've visited historic sites or attended American Revolution reenactments in the original thirteen colonies are asked to share their experiences. Then students are provided with background for the following Student Activity #2, which centers on the lives of people who lived through the formative years of the Revolution. News of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, General Washington ending the Siege of Boston, and the British Navy arriving in Manhattan to crush the rebellion, leads up to the 2nd Continental Congress signing the Declaration of Independence. While all this is happening, not all people sided with the Patriots, many wanted to remain British citizens and sided with the Crown, others chose to remain neutral. There were still others who were excluded from participation in any decisions Congress made including free and enslaved Blacks, women, the poor, and indigenous people.
2. **a) (35 minutes) Profiling Through Research** Using the Online Resource list, each student is asked to research many of the real people who lived through these times

of upheaval and pick either a Patriot, Loyalist, Neutral, or part of the minority or excluded population to reenact. Their character can be a British or American General, an enlisted soldier on either side, a member of Congress, a woman – camp follower or wife guarding the home, a free or enslaved Black on either side, or a Native American who lived through the turmoil from spring 1775 to spring 1777. Once students have chosen the person they want to represent, they will focus their research on reading contemporary writings from that person’s letters, journals, General Orders, and articles the person may have read in a newspaper or pamphlet to help the students understand why their character is a Patriot, Loyalist, or Neutral. Did they stay true to their support or switch sides? What personality traits does the person exhibit? Each student should use the distributed ADAPT form to make notes listing the documents they’ve researched that they will cite when describing the character they’ve chosen to portray.

b) (6 minutes) Homework Assignment and Assessment As a homework assignment, students are instructed to review their research and write a two-page profile about the character they have chosen to portray as a reenactor. Where did they live? What was their occupation? What side were they on? What specific events were they involved in? How did they get their news? As part of the profile, it’s important that the students cite the resources they found online including contemporary quotes from letters, journals, and memoirs; news articles; General Orders; and any pertinent information they learned about their character, which they will hand in at the next class for the teacher’s assessment.

3. **a) (5 minutes) Discussion** Following the screening of Webisode 10 *Living History/ Reenactments*, students are asked whether they think reenactments are an important part of understanding the sacrifices made by the Patriots in founding the United States of America. Students are encouraged to share their experiences if they have visited historic sites or attended American Revolution reenactments in the original thirteen colonies even if they live in other parts of the country.

b) (35 minutes) Research American Revolution Historic Sites. The class is divided into four groups, and each group is assigned to represent different historic sites and research the battle(s) that occurred at that site in the Revolutionary War.

Group 1: Battles of Lexington and Concord, MA Using the Online Resources and the group’s own online research, students should find out as much as they can about these Battles through online articles and quotes from soldiers’ contemporary writings on both sides of the conflict. What caused the “shot heard around the world?” What happened in Lexington and what was the result in Concord? What was the aftermath as the British Army had to run the Patriots’ gauntlet on their way back to the safety of Boston? What were the casualty statistics? What was the aftermath of these battles? Make sure all the students in your group take notes as they will need to cite these online articles and quotes for a homework assignment.

Group 2: Battle of Brooklyn, NY (AKA Battle of Long Island) Using the Online Resources and the group's own online research, find out as much as you can about the Battle of Brooklyn through online articles and quotes from Generals and enlisted soldiers' contemporary writings on both sides of the conflict. How well fortified was Brooklyn prior to the battle? What pass leading from Long Island to Brooklyn did Washington leave unguarded and why was this a mistake? Why did Washington think General William Howe was creating a feint when he landed his troops at Gravesend Bay? How did this impact the battle? What were the casualty statistics? General Howe made a mistake, too. How did that impact the aftermath of this battle? Make sure all the students in your group take notes as they will need to cite these online articles and quotes for a homework assignment.

Group 3: Washington Crossing the Delaware, PA and NJ, and the Battle of Trenton I and II, NJ Using the Online Resources and the group's own online research, describe the preparations leading up to Washington crossing the Delaware. What happened when Washington learned the three-pronged attack had failed? Through online articles and Patriot soldiers' contemporary quotes, what did they experience during the crossing and the 9-mile march to Trenton? What was the outcome of the attack on the Hessian Garrison in Trenton? What were the casualty statistics? Washington makes a plea to soldiers whose enlistments have expired to stay on for six weeks and help set up defenses for the 2nd Battle of Trenton. What was the outcome? Make sure all the students in your group take notes as they will need to cite these online articles and quotes for a homework assignment.

Group 4: Battle of Princeton, NJ Using the Online Resources and the group's own online research, students should find out all about the Battle of Princeton through online articles and quotes from soldiers' contemporary writings on both sides of the conflict. Why did Washington decide to leave Trenton overnight and march to Princeton? What happened when the Patriots neared Princeton? When the Patriots saw the British charge them with fixed bayonets, they ran for cover. How did Washington stop the rout? What was the outcome of the battle? What were the casualty statistics? Known as the "Ten Crucial Days," these victories were a major turning point of the American Revolution. Why? Make sure all the students in your group take notes as they will need to cite these online articles and quotes for a homework assignment.

c) (6 minutes) Homework Assignment Using the notes they took during the research session, the students are asked to continue to research the battle their group was investigating and write a two-page essay detailing every aspect of the battle for the teacher's assessment. Where and when did it take place? Who were the Generals involved? Did the Generals on both sides make some decisions that may have changed the outcome of the battle? What were the casualty statistics? Find quotes from the Generals on either side when making reports to their superiors, as well as the enlisted soldiers who participated in the battle.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS LINKS

[National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Introduction | Social Studies](#)

[United States History Content Standards | Public History Initiative](#)

[English Language Arts Standards | Common Core State Standards Initiative](#) Click on History/Social Studies for the drop down menu. Then click on the Grade level.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR *LIVING HISTORY/REENACTMENTS*

[Revolutionary War Reenactment Groups - AmericanRevolution.org](#) Useful document to research with a focus on events that took place in NJ during the retreat, victories in 1776 and forage wars in 1777 (Note: January – March 1777 Forage Wars not mentioned in Timeline.)

[Revolutionary War Reenactments Directory | Schedule, Locations & Highlights](#) Useful research tool, but not all reenactments are listed here such as December 25, 2026 Washington Crossing the Delaware in PA, and Patriot Week in Trenton, NJ held at the end of December.

[Internet Archive: Digital Library of Free & Borrowable Texts, Movies, Music & Wayback Machine](#) Students can search for soldiers' memoirs like Alexander Graydon p 131 describes the New England militias, Joseph Plumb Martin's Memoirs, and John Greenwood's Diary pp 80-86 describing before, during and after the Battle of Trenton.

[A Connecticut Soldier Under Washington: Elisha Bostwick's Memoirs of the First Years of the Revolution on JSTOR](#) p.102 describes the March and victory at the Battle of Trenton

[NJ in the American Revolution, 1763-1783 | NJ State Library](#) V. thru X. Easy to find quotes by Patriots and Loyalists from 1775 through June 1777 showing the difficulties the citizens of the Jerseys on both sides experienced during the formative years of the Revolution.

[Meet Your Revolutionary Neighbors - Crossroads of the American Revolution](#) Provides biographies of many Jerseyans who were involved in the American Revolution.

[OFFICIAL REGISTER OF THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF NEW JERSEY Page 1. – Searchable Publications](#) Lists the names of all the officers and soldiers who served in the Revolution.

[“Summer soldiers and Sunshine patriots” - The American Crisis | American Battlefield Trust](#) Shows how this pamphlet motivated the soldiers to go on the offensive even though their enlistments ended on December 31, 1776.

[Supporting the Birthplace of the American Revolution - Friends of Minute Man National Park](#) Reenactments take place on the third Monday of April each year.

[Plan Your Visit - Minute Man National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

[Plan A Visit - Green-Wood](#) This cemetery in Brooklyn was one of the sites of the Battle of Brooklyn where much of the fighting took place. Battle Hill is located in the cemetery.

[Brooklyn 2026 | BAR](#) Reenacted the Battle of Brooklyn in Prospect Park in 2026, not Green-Wood cemetery because this open space could accommodate musket and cannon fire.

[Resources - The Old Stone House in Brooklyn](#) General William Alexander, AKA Lord Stirling, and the Maryland 400 made a stand at the Old Stone House to help some of the Patriots escape back behind the fortifications protecting the village of Brooklyn.

[The American Crisis \(1776-1783\) by Thomas Paine](#) Complete text of “American Crisis.”

[landing — Washington Crossing Park Association, NJ](#) Commemorates Washington Crossing the Delaware in conjunction with the Washington Crossing Historic Park in Pennsylvania during the first crossing in early December open to the public.

[Washington Crossing 2026 Initiatives | Washington Crossing Historic Park](#) Aside from the first crossing annually held in early December, this historic site on the banks of the Delaware, PA, commemorates the actual Crossing annually on December 25th.

[Home - Old Barracks Museum](#) Patriots Week commemorates The Battles of Trenton I and II annually on the last week of December in Trenton, New Jersey.

[Home - Princeton Battlefield Society](#) Princeton Battlefield State Park, NJ commemorates the Battle of Princeton annually on the 1st Sunday in January.

[Search | American Battlefield Trust](#) Excellent resource for articles on all the Battles.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR *LIVING HISTORY/REENACTMENTS*

McCullough, David **1776** (Simon & Schuster, Inc, 2005).

Schechter, Barnet ***The Battle for New York: The City at the Heart of the American Revolution*** (Walker Publishing, 2002).

Lowe, Mifflin ***Forgotten Founders: Black Patriots, Women Soldiers, and Other Thinkers and Heroes Who Shaped Early America*** (Bushel & Peck Books, 2022). Illustrations by William Luong. Provides a variety of Patriots’ biographies for students 7 – 12 years of age.

Kidder, William L. ***Ten Crucial Days: Washington's Vision for Victory*** (Westholme Publishing, 2008). Focuses on the two Battles of Trenton and Battle of Princeton.

A.D.A.P.T Analysis Form

A (Author/artist) – consider position and perspective

D (Date) – Include context (what else is going on at the time that would prompt this document)

A (Audience) – For whom is it written? How do you know?

P (Purpose) – Why was it written?

T (Tone) – What words, symbols, etc. are used to convey the Purpose? Explain with SPECIFIC examples