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Webisode 3

Divided Country

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Authored by Joseph "Joe" Refinski

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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 3 – DIVIDED COUNTRY* TEACHER’S GUIDE**

NATIONAL HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

Webisode 3 fulfills several National History Standards and Social Studies Themes including: NCSS Themes 2: Time, Continuity, and Change; 6: Power, Authority, and Governance; and 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 3 SUMMARY: *DIVIDED COUNTRY*

The American Revolution was far more than a conflict between thirteen colonies and a distant king. It was a complex web of alliances, betrayals, and survival for those whose land and lives were caught in the crossfire. The Colonists were divided against each other between the Patriots seeking liberty and self-rule from the British Crown and Loyalists who supported the Crown. The children of Patriot families, who were caught in the crossfire, experienced the most upheaval in their lives. As the war progressed, a normal childhood was replaced when they had to take on more chores either at home to help their mothers when their fathers enlisted in the army or as camp followers because their mothers had to follow their husbands as they had no means to support the family without him. Loyalist children also suffered because their parents were often displaced by marauding Patriot soldiers who forced them to leave their homes to find protection with the British. Native Americans were divided, too. The Stockbridge Indian Company consisting of Mohicans, Shawnees and other Native American tribes living in Massachusetts joined forces with the Patriots during the Siege of Boston in 1775. However, the Iroquois Confederacy, consisting of six tribes who had lived together in peace for hundreds of years, was fractured by the war. The Oneida and Tuscarora sided with the Continental Army, while the Mohawk and the Seneca fought with the British who they believed would protect their ancestral lands within the thirteen colonies from colonial encroachment and prevent western expansion.

HOW TO USE EACH WEBISODE AND THE TEACHER’S GUIDES

Webisode 3 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 3 – *DIVIDED COUNTRY*

(Total Lesson Plan Times – combine Webisode with #1 + #2 = 57:41 or #1 + #3 = 57:41.)

(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 3 – *Divided Country* (**Running Time: 7:41**):

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO COMPREHEND

- What are some of the reasons colonists decided to remain Loyal to the British Crown or join the Patriots' cause leading up to the American Revolution?
- How does the American Revolution impact communities when neighbors and family members are split between supporting the Crown or fighting for Independence?
- As the Continental Army experienced devastating defeats against the Crown's Ministerial Army in the New York/New Jersey Campaign of 1776, how did this change the daily life of communities when the conflict came to their doorstep?
- Who are fence sitters, and how did they prove their loyalty to one side or the other when both armies demanded their allegiance?
- As the Revolutionary War progressed, did the violence between the various communities who took different sides of the conflict turn into a civil war?

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. **(5 minutes) Discussion** Following the screening of the webisode, students initiate a brief discussion about their reactions to what caused the divisions between Colonists loyal to the Crown and Patriots seeking Independence. How did these divisions impact communities throughout the colonies and what were the difficult choices colonists, Native Americans, and African Americans had to make? (Note: African American and Native American choices are also addressed in Webisode 1 – *Integrated Continental Army* and Webisode 6 – *Impact of War*.)
2. **a) (20 minutes) Research Session** Class is divided into seven small groups and assigned a person listed below. Each group receives a handout that briefly describes the person's profile. Using the online resources for research, each group discusses whether to side with the Loyalists, Patriots, or Neutrals and why.
 - **The New England Shipowner:** Your business and livelihood have been impacted by the **Stamp Act**, **Tea Act** and "**Intolerable Acts**" that have imposed

British taxes without representation and denied your ships access to fishing the Grand Banks. Will you stay true to your British roots or join the Patriots' uprising?

- **The Boston Merchant:** Your business relies on trade with Britain even though you are impacted by the British Acts that have imposed taxes on you and your business, which has reduced your profits. Will you stay true to your British roots or risk your business and join the Sons of Liberty to voice your grievances?
- **The Tax Collector:** You work for the Royal Governor but are afraid to do your job because the Sons of Liberty may consider you a Loyalist and cause you harm. Will you stay loyal to the Crown, choose to join the Patriots, or leave town?
- **The Quaker:** Your religion forbids violence. You have friends on both sides and just want to run your farm in peace, but your friends want you to make a choice. What will you decide to do to keep your family and property safe?
- **The Tenant Farmer:** You don't care much for politics but are worried that if you don't pick your Loyalist landlord's side, he might raise your rent or evict you and your family. Will you side with the British to protect your home and land, or leave the farm with your family and enlist in the Continental Army or a state militia?
- **The Enslaved African American:** Your master has enlisted you in the Continental Army to fight in his stead with the promise of manumission, but will you take the risk and escape to join the British side who has promised you immediate freedom. What will you decide is the best path to choose?
- **Oneida Tribesman:** In 1775, you enlisted in a New England militia that is now part of the Continental Army, but by 1776, as a member of the Iroquois Confederacy, you attended a gathering of the six tribes to discuss whether to side with the British in order to protect their land from western expansion or stay with the Continental Army. Will you desert your militia and follow the majority of the Confederacy to join the British, or continue to fight on the Patriots' side?

b) (10 minutes) Graphic Organizer: Patriot vs Loyalist T-Chart

The groups are called to order and provided with a Patriot vs Loyalist T-Chart handout. Each group will select a fellow group member to fill out the T-Chart, mapping out the incentives for each side based on the group's research, discussion, and choice they make and why they made this choice.

The teacher asks the students who filled out the T-Chart for their group to bring the T-Chart to the front of the class and share the results of their group's research and what pros and cons they considered that led to their choice. Following these reports, the teacher asks them to return to their groups.

c) (10 minutes) Conclusion and Assessment The teacher concludes the lesson by asking the students to respond to the following questions:

- Were the decisions your group made easy?
- Was it always clear who was a Patriot and who was a Loyalist?
- How did fear affect their choices?

3. a) (10 minutes) Rising Tensions The teacher explains to the class that in early 1776, before Congress declared Independence, communities were torn apart as violence erupted between factions that led to assaults like “Riding the Rail” and “Tarring and Feathering.” It was not a clear "good vs evil" scenario, but a dangerous time for choosing sides. The teacher sets the following scenario for the class.

A mob burns an effigy of the tax collector to put the fear of God in the man and then shames him by making him “Ride the Rail” as they drum him out of town, chanting “No taxation without representation.” The students are asked to write down their thoughts on these questions, “What risks did individuals take by choosing a side?” “What causes a community to do harm to someone just because of the choice they made?” “Is it justified?” and the teacher calls on students to share their answers.

b) (10 minutes) Research Debate Roles The teacher explains that talk of rebellion and independence against the Crown has exploded since Thomas Paine published his pamphlet, “Common Sense” on January 10, 1776. To address the issues raised by Paine, the students in the role of colonists will attend a Town Council Meeting to debate whether to support the 2nd Continental Congress, stay loyal to the Crown, or remain neutral. The teacher divides the class into three groups to represent:

- **Patriots (Rebels):** 1/3 of class (Active in protesting British grievances)
- **Loyalists (Tories):** 1/3 of class (Active in maintaining loyalty to the Crown)
- **Neutrals (Fence Sitters):** 1/3 of class (Quakers and those who are undecided)

The teacher directs the students in each group to use the online resources to research and gather information and reasons why Patriots, like the Sons of Liberty, are demanding Independence from Great Britain, while Loyalists are proud to be British subjects and believe the Crown is better able to protect them, and why the Neutrals find it difficult to make a choice for a variety of reasons like religion.

c) (10 minutes) Role Play/Debate Each group picks two students to represent them in the debate to try to persuade members of the other groups to join them.

- **Patriots’ Position:** Focus on "natural rights," the "tyranny" of the King, “no taxation without representation,” and having their livelihoods threatened.
- **Loyalists’ Position:** Focus on the "blessings of the British Constitution" and the "madness" of rebellion. Wants to remain a British subject not an American.

- **Neutrals' Position:** Focus on their reservations and reasons like "I'm a Quaker. War is wrong." for not wanting to choose sides. Have the Neutrals throw out questions from the sidelines for the Patriots and Loyalists to address. "If I choose a side, who will protect my property from soldiers if the other side is in control?" "What are the risks to my family?" "Could my home be confiscated if I choose the wrong side?" "I don't want to fight my friends and neighbors?"

d) (10 minutes) The Vote After the debate, the Neutrals must decide who they found was most persuasive and some may walk over to join either the Patriot group or Loyalist group or choose to remain neutral in their own group.

To conclude the debate, the teacher will call on several of the Neutral students who had joined the Patriots' group, the Loyalists' group, or remained with their Neutral group to share with the class what persuaded them to either stay or change groups.

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 levels.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR *DIVIDED COUNTRY*

[Common Sense](#)

[Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals Before the American Revolution](#)

[Loyalists, Fence-sitters, and Patriots \[ushistory.org\]](#)

[NJ in the American Revolution, 1763-1783 | NJ State Library](#) Excellent resource tool with access to of all documents related to New Jersey's involvement in the American Revolution categorized by subject matter, date and year.

[7.2.pdf](#) New Jersey State Library document-John Stevens, initially a Loyalist, wrote to NJ Governor stating that he can no longer support the King over his native country.

[8.1.pdf](#) Wealthy NJ farmer, James Moody, tried to stay neutral but was pressured into making a choice so he escaped behind British lines and became a Loyalist soldier.

[New Acquisition: 1783 Petition of a Revolutionary War Loyalist | Timeless](#) Isaac Low was a prosperous merchant and Loyalist whose property was confiscated when he left America.

[Loyalist Patriot American Revolution](#)

[Choosing sides | The American Revolution Experience](#) Some profiles of colonists.

[How Angry, Out-of-Work Fishermen Saved the Patriots During the American Revolution](#)

[Big Idea 6: Choosing Sides - Museum of the American Revolution](#) Lists some of the Colonists reasons for joining one side or the other with a focus on the choices Enslaved and free Blacks had to consider when choosing a side.

[Patriot \(American Revolution\) - Wikipedia](#)

[Letters from a farmer in Pennsylvania, to the inhabitants of the British colonies ... 1768 : Dickinson, John, President of the State of Delaware and of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#) These letters were in response to the British Parliament passing Tax Acts on the colonists.

[The Stockbridge Company | American Battlefield Trust](#)

[The Stockbridge-Mohican Community, 1775-1783 - Journal of the American Revolution.](#)

[Native Nations Fought in the American Revolution to Protect Their Ancestral Lands. After the War, Settlers Seized Their Territory Anyway](#) Smithsonian Magazine Special Report.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR *DIVIDED COUNTRY*

Offutt, Bill ***Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775-1776*** (The University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

Lurie, Maxine N. ***Taking Sides in Revolutionary New Jersey: Caught in the Crossfire*** (Rutgers University Press, 2022).

Ellis Ph. D., Joseph J. ***The Cause: The American Revolution and its Discontents, 1773-1783*** (Liveright, 2021).

Brands, H. W. ***Our First Civil War: Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution*** (Doubleday, 2021).

Hoock, Holder ***Scars of Independence: America's Violent Birth*** (Crown Publishing Group, A Division of Random Penguin Random House, LLC, 2017).

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

T-Chart: Loyalists vs. Patriots

Based on your assigned role and Washington's letter, what choice will you make right now to keep your family safe? Why?

Incentives & Risks	Patriot (Rebels)	Loyalist (King's Men)
Incentives (Why join?)	[Space for student response]	[Space for student response]
Risks (What is at stake?)	[Space for student response]	[Space for student response]
Family Choice (How to keep them safe?)	[Space for student response]	[Space for student response]

Examples of answers

Category	Patriot (The "Rebels")	Loyalist (King's Men)
Incentives	Promise of "Liberty" and self-governance; freedom from "taxation without representation".	Protection from the British Army; stable currency; traditional law and order.
Safety Risks	Homes burned by British/Hessians; family starvation due to army "requisitions".	Targeted by local committees; property seized by militia; risk of imprisonment.
Family Choice	Fighting now ensures a free future, even if current survival is threatened	Staying "well-affected" to the King ensures safety if the British win..