

PATH TO PATRIOT

LEVEL:

Upper Elementary – Middle School

TIMEFRAME:

Approximately one class session

STANDARDS:

- Early American History
- Civics
- Civic Agency
- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Primary Source Analysis
- Technology Integration
- Social Emotional Learning

EAD THEME:

Civic Participation (Theme 1)

INTEGRATION POINTS:

- Civics
- Social Studies
- Reading
- Writing
- Listening and Speaking
- SEL
- Technology

QUESTIONS:

- Why do people take action?
- Why did George Washington take action and change from serving the British military in the French and Indian War to fighting against them in the Revolutionary War?
- Why would I take action?

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to read and respond to primary sources in order to understand civic agency in Washington's life.

Students will be able to record a 1-minute documentary explaining why Washington changed from serving the British military in the French and Indian War to fighting against them in the Revolutionary War.

Students will be able to apply civic agency to their own lives and write a journal response on why they might take action and make changes.

PLAN:**Engage:**

1. Engage students with a relevant example of change and problem-solving, such as creating rules that are fair for a recess game, starting a club to meet specific needs on campus, or switching from one local school to another. Ask why someone might make that change. Discuss.
2. Introduce the compelling question: Why do people take action?
3. Display the [two portraits](#) showing Washington serving the British and fighting against the British (as seen in Worksheet 1 in the PDF). Ask students what they see, think, and wonder.
4. Give students some context using the [timeline](#) and talk about the change Washington made.

Explore:

1. Provide the three primary source excerpts and summaries for students (Worksheet 2 in PDF).
2. Read excerpts and source summaries as a class and use appropriate scaffolds for the grade level.
3. Have students respond after each one using the worksheet provided or on a separate paper by writing key words, drawing pictures, or writing a sentence summary.

Explain/Evaluate:

1. Ask the compelling question relating to George Washington: Why did George Washington change from serving the British military in the French and Indian War to fighting against them in the Revolutionary War?
2. Have students use their notes and computer camera app to record a 1-minute documentary (as described in Worksheet 3 in the PDF). In this video, they will answer the compelling question in their own words and play the role of historian. Videos can be used as a formative assessment.
3. Ask the compelling question related to the individual: Why would I take action?
4. Have students write a journal response⁵ to the question. Other guiding questions to use are:
 - a. When is it a good idea to change my mind?
 - b. Why might I question decisions that are made for me in my school and community?
 - c. What problems can I be a part of solving?
 - d. How do I learn more about the problem I want to help solve?

Extend:

- Have students consider the larger context that Washington fits into and that they fit into. Ask:
 - How did George Washington's actions relate to his community and others?
 - How do my actions relate to my community and others?
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OTHER RESOURCES

1. [Portraits of Washington](#)
 2. [See, Think, Wonder Strategy](#)
 3. [Teaching with Documents](#)
 4. [Teaching with Images](#)
 5. [Why did George Washington join the Revolution?](#)
 6. [Washington and the French and Indian War](#)
 7. [Robert Dinwiddie](#)
 8. [Imperial Trade in British North America](#)
 9. [Robert Cary and Company](#)
 10. [18th Century Farming](#)
 11. [Fairfax Family](#)
 12. [Lesson on Washington becoming Commander in Chief](#)
 13. [Educating for American Democracy Civics Framework](#)
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Compelling Question: Why do people take action?

See - Think – Wonder

Look at these portraits and study the change between the two. What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?



[Portrait](#) painted by Charles Willson Peale in 1772



[Portrait](#) painted by Charles Willson Peale in 1779

Read the summaries of sources to help you understand the meaning, and respond to each excerpt with words or pictures.

“We cant conceive, that being Americans shoud deprive us of the benefits of British Subjects nor lessen our claim to preferment: and we are very certain, that no Body of regular Troops ever before Servd 3 Bloody Campaigns without attracting Royal Notice.” – [George Washington to Robert Dinwiddie 1757](#)

Summary of Source: A letter George Washington wrote during the French and Indian War to Robert Dinwiddie, the Governor of the Royal Colony of Virginia, in 1757 that explains his frustrations with the unequal treatment that came with serving the British as a colonist.

“It cannot reasonably be imagined that I felt any pleasing Sensations upon the receipt of your Letter of the 13th of February covering accts of Sales for 153 Hhds [hogsheads – a measure of capacity] of Master Custis’s Tobo [tobacco] and 115 of mine. That the Sales are pitifully low, needs no words to demonstrate—and that they are worse than many of my Acquaintance upon this River—Potomack—have got in the Out Posts, & from Mr Russel and other Merchants of London for common Aronoko Tobo, is a truth equally as certain...” – [George Washington to Robert Cary & Co 1765](#)

Summary of Source: A letter George Washington wrote to Robert Cary & Co, a British merchant that sold his tobacco, in 1765 showing his frustration with the low sales and that his goods were sold for less than others, including those sold in Britain. He could only sell tobacco through Britain by law.

“...in short the Ministry may rely on it that Americans will never be tax’d without their own consent that the cause of Boston the despotick Measures in respect to it I mean now is and ever will be considered as the cause of America (not that we approve their cond[uc]t in destroyg the Tea).” – [George Washington to George William Fairfax 1774](#)

Summary of Source: A letter George Washington wrote to his friend George William Fairfax in 1774 concerning taxation without consent and how the cause (aim or movement) of the Boston Tea Party is the cause of America.

Minute Documentary

Why did George Washington change from serving the British military in the French and Indian War to fighting against them in the Revolutionary War?

You get to play the role of historian! Use your notes from what you just read to record a 1-minute documentary that answers the question above. Open your device and search for the camera app. Press record and begin!

Journal Response

Why would I take action?

Write a journal response to the question above.

Here are some other questions to think about:

When is it a good idea to change my mind?

Why might I question decisions that are made for me in my school and community?

What problems can I be a part of solving?

How do I learn more about the problem I want to solve?

Think About the Big Picture

How did George Washington's actions relate to his community and others?

How do my actions relate to my community and others?