

PUTTING UP RESISTANCE

LEVEL:

High School

TIMEFRAME:

Two class periods or less, depending on if assigned as an individual or group project

OBJECTIVES:

Students will analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources in order to recognize change over time

Students will respond to a writing prompt in a clear, thesis-driven essay that uses evidence from the provided sources

STANDARDS:

- Primary Source Analysis
 - Writing Standards
 - Reading Standards
 - Qualities of Leadership
 - Politics and Power
 - Civic Value and Social Norms
 - Contextualization and Comparison
 - American and National Identity
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PROCEDURE:

1. Distribute the handout *Putting Up Resistance Source Set* (included in ZIP file download). Ask students to evaluate the following statement using the documents.

Americans utilized various means of resistance to oppression and injustice. Non-violent opposition, however, proved to be the most productive method of effecting change during the Revolutionary Era in America.

- A. Excerpt: *Slavery*, 2017, Mary V. Thompson, Research Historian, George Washington's Mount Vernon
- B. Excerpt: George Washington to William Pearce, January 12, 1794
- C. Excerpt: Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768
- D. Excerpt: *As If In Enemy's Country*, Richard Archer, 2010
- E. Excerpt: *Ties That Bound: Founding First Ladies and Slaves*, Marie Jenkins Schwartz, 2017
- F. Excerpt: *An Address to Negroes of the State of New York* by Jupiter Hammon, September 24, 1786

- G. *The Destruction of the Tea in Boston Harbor* by Nathaniel Currier, 1846
 - H. Excerpt: *American Revolution as Black Declaration of Independence*, Benjamin Quarles, 1983
 - I. *Peace, Liberty, and Independence* printed by Eleazer Oswald, March 24, 1783
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OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. Read Frederick Douglass' speech *What to the Slave is the 4th of July?* and Martin Luther King's speech *I Have a Dream*. Hold a class discussion evaluating how both speeches reference the Declaration of Independence. How do they suggest we live up to the principles espoused in that document? Are these speeches still relevant today? Do they reflect our present society? What has changed? What has not?

Source A – Excerpt: *Slavery, 2017*, Mary V. Thompson, Research Historian, George Washington’s Mount Vernon

Source Type: Article

1 The enslaved population at Mount Vernon did not meekly accept their bonded lot in life. Many
2 resisted slavery in a variety of ways, differing in intensity and methodology. Among the less
3 obvious methods of resistance were actions such as feigning illness, working slowly, producing
4 shoddy work, and misplacing or damaging tools and equipment. The major advantage of these
5 seemingly "passive" tactics was that they were often difficult for George Washington and his
6 managers to observe and prove. Further, almost any slave regardless of age or physical prowess
7 could utilize these methods of protest...On the opposite end of the resistance spectrum were more
8 active and noticeable actions such as theft, arson, sabotage of crops, and running away.

Source B – Excerpt: George Washington to William Pearce, January 12, 1794

Source Type: Letter

9 I wish I could say that he governs his temper. He is subject to attacks of anger on provocation,
10 sometimes without just cause. Charlotte at the Mansion house has been reported sick for several
11 weeks—Mrs Washington desire you will examine her case, and if it appears necessary to request
12 Doctor Craik to attend, & prescribe for her. A fellow Sam also, who under prete(nse) (for I
13 believe this is the greatest part of his complaint) of an Asthmatical complaint never could be got
14 to work more than half his time, has not done a days work since I left Mount Vernon in October.
15 examine his case also, but not by the Doctor, for he has had Doctors enough already, of all
16 colours & sexes, and to no effect. Laziness Is I believe his principal ailment.

Source C – Excerpt: Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768

Source Type: Public Document

17 The merchants and traders in the town of Boston, having taken into consideration the deplorable
18 situation of the trade and the many difficulties it at present labours under on account of the
19 scarcity of money, which is daily decreasing for want of the other remittances to discharge our
20 debts in Great Britain, and the large sums collected by the officers of the customs for duties on
21 goods imported; the heavy taxes levied to discharge the debts contracted by the government in the
22 late war; the embarrassments and restrictions laid on the trade by the several late Acts of
23 Parliament; together with the bad success of our cod fishery this season, and the discouraging
24 prospect of the whale fishery, by which our principal sources of remittances are like to be greatly
25 diminished, and we thereby rendered unable to pay the debts we owe the merchants in Great
26 Britain, and to continue the importation of goods from thence:

27 We, the subscribers, in order to relieve the trade under those discouragements, to promote
28 industry, frugality, and economy, and to discourage luxury and every kind of extravagance, do
29 promise and engage to and with each other as follows:

30 That we will not send or import from Great Britain this fall, either on our own account, or on
31 commission, any other goods than what are already ordered for the fall supply.

32 That we will not send for or import any kind of goods or merchandise from Great Britain, either
33 on our own account, or on commissions, or any otherwise, from January 1, 1769, to January 1,
34 1770, except salt, coals, fish-hooks and lines, hemp, duck, bar lead and shot, wool-cards, and
35 card-wire.

36 That we will not purchase of any factors, or others, any kind of goods imported from Great

37 Britain from January 1, 1769, to January 1, 1770. That we will not import on our own account, or
38 on commission, or Purchase from any Who shall import from any other colony in America, from
39 January 1, 1769, to January 1, 1770, any tea, glass, paper, or other goods commonly imported
40 from Great Britain.

41 That we will not, from and after January 1, 1769, import into the province any tea, paper, glass, or
42 painters' colours, until the Acts imposing duties on these articles have been repealed.

Source D – Excerpt: *As If In Enemy's Country*, Richard Archer, 2010

Source Type: Book

Background Information: As a result of the “Boston Massacre,” an event instigated by a violent mob of Bostonians, British soldiers are withdrawn from the city

43 The placing of four regiments in Boston as a police force to support British officials rather than as
44 an army to protect the population certified that the town was being occupied as a hostile country
45 and that Bostonians were viewed as an enemy people. That certainly was the impression of the
46 citizens of Boston. The townspeople could not escape checkpoints, drills, thrust bayonets, angry
47 and profane words, whippings on the Common, scuffles, competing laborers, assaults by drunken
48 officers...and ultimately musket balls and death. They were hardly innocent themselves, often
49 provoking the soldiers. They had not, however, invited the regiments. Just like a bayonet, the
50 standing army was thrust at them. In their minds, they became not a subordinate but a separate
51 people...With the departure of the troops, the town largely autonomous of British authority, and
52 the Massachusetts countryside and other colonies less inclined to act, thoughts of separation were
53 on hold.

Source E – Excerpt: *Ties That Bound: Founding First Ladies and Slaves*, Marie Jenkins Schwartz, 2017

Source Type: Book

54 Over time slaves developed strategies that played upon the slaveholders' fears and consciences.
55 For example, a slave's public display of grief at sale might be orchestrated to evoke pity for the
56 slave and condemnation of the seller. This is not to imply that the grief was not real; it was. But
57 especially dramatic displays of emotional agony by parents or spouses being parted from loved
58 ones could make an owner think twice about completing the transaction. At Mount Vernon, Bett
59 and her mother were able to thwart Bett's sale by begging long and loud not to be separated.

Source F – Excerpt: *An Address to Negroes of the State of New York* by Jupiter Hammon, September 24, 1786

Source Type: Speech

60 Oh how glorious is an eternal life of happiness! And how dreadful, an eternity of misery...If any
61 of us, who have wicked and profane masters should become religious, how will our estates be
62 changed in another world. Oh my friends, let me intreat of you to think on these things, and to
63 live as if you believed them to be true. If you become Christians you will have reason to bless
64 God forever, that you have been brought into a land where you have heard the gospel, though you
65 have been slaves. If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being
66 black, or for being slaves. Let me beg of you my dear African brethren, to think very little of your
67 bondage in this life, for your thinking of it will do no good. If God designs to set us free, he will
68 do it, in his own time, and way; but think of you bondage to sin and Satan, and do not rest, until
69 you are delivered from it.

Source G – *The Destruction of the Tea in Boston Harbor* by Nathaniel Currier, 1846

Source Type: Lithograph

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Source H – Excerpt: *American Revolution as Black Declaration of Independence*, Benjamin Quarles, 1983

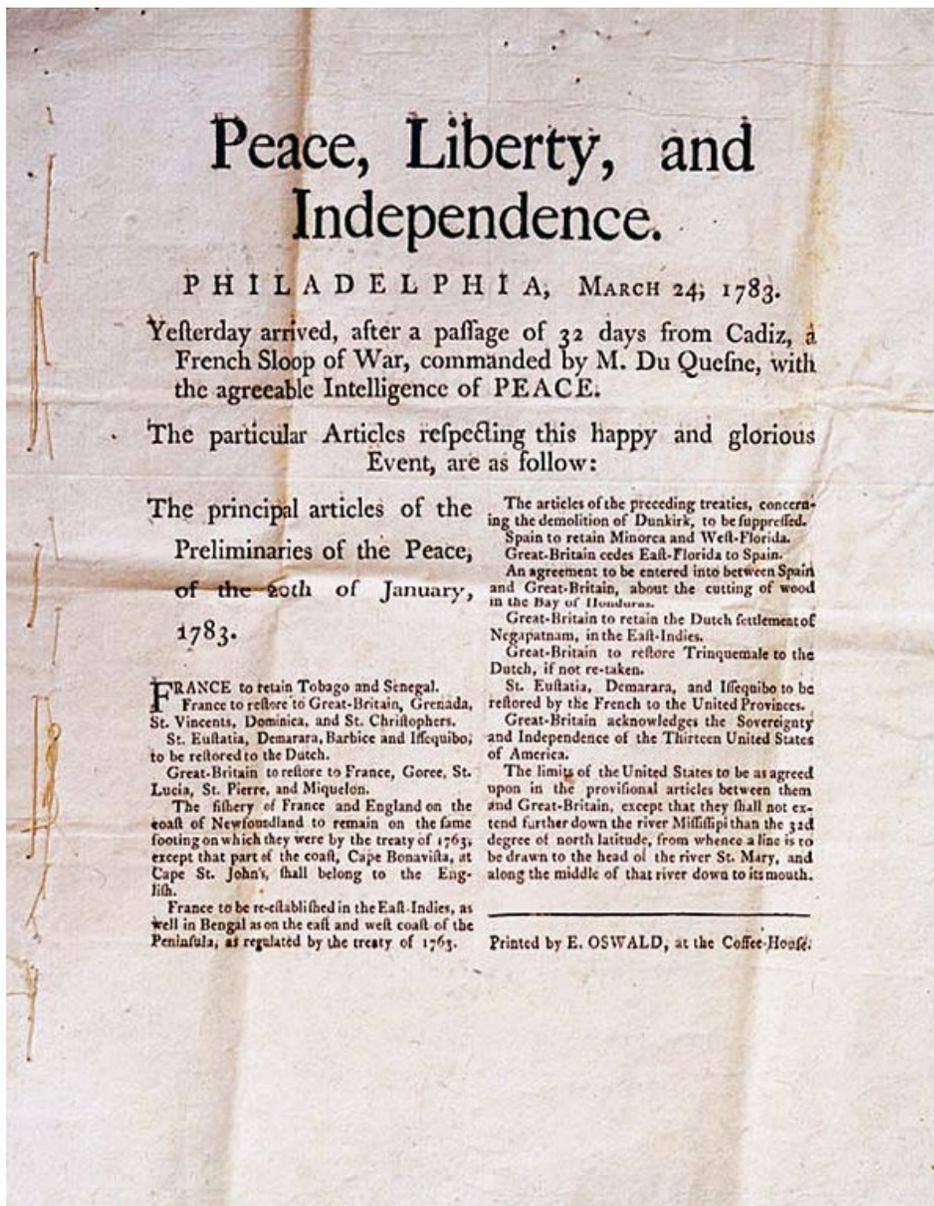
Source Type: Essay

70 The hope of black Americans for a new day of equality was not realized; it was a dream deferred.
71 True, the Revolutionary War had its positive side. It was imbued with a strong moral overtone,
72 leading some whites to question an institution such as slavery, no matter how time-honored. To
73 whites of a reformist turn of mind the war had exposed the inconsistencies and contradictions in
74 American thought about the rights of man, particularly those of the black man. But if heightened
75 sensitivity to the presence of an underprivileged black group characterized by some whites, they
76 were far outnumbered by those who detected no ideological inconsistency...They subscribed to
77 an equation of equality that excluded nonwhites, regarding them as outside the sociopolitical
78 community encompassed by the Revolutionary War tenets of freedom and equality.

Source I – *Peace, Liberty, and Independence* printed by Eleazer Oswald, March 24, 1783

Source Type: Broadside

Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia



Source A – Excerpt: *Slavery, 2017*, Mary V. Thompson, Research Historian, George Washington’s Mount Vernon

Source Type: Article

Background Information: Numerous accounts of the actions described below appear in the correspondence of George Washington.

1 The enslaved population at Mount Vernon did not meekly accept their bonded lot in life. Many
2 resisted slavery in a variety of ways, differing in intensity and methodology. Among the less
3 obvious methods of resistance were actions such as feigning illness, working slowly, producing
4 shoddy work, and misplacing or damaging tools and equipment. The major advantage of these
5 seemingly "passive" tactics was that they were often difficult for George Washington and his
6 managers to observe and prove. Further, almost any slave regardless of age or physical prowess
7 could utilize these methods of protest...On the opposite end of the resistance spectrum were more
8 active and noticeable actions such as theft, arson, sabotage of crops, and running away.

Source B – Excerpt: George Washington to William Pearce, January 12, 1794

Source Type: Letter

Background Information: George Washington was repeatedly frustrated by the sicknesses and poor work ethic of his slaves. What he may not have realized, however, is that these enslaved individuals were actively resisting their enslavement as best they could.

9 I wish I could say that he governs his temper. He is subject to attacks of anger on provocation,
10 sometimes without just cause. Charlotte at the Mansion house has been reported sick for several
11 weeks—Mrs Washington desire you will examine her case, and if it appears necessary to request
12 Doctor Craik to attend, & prescribe for her. A fellow Sam also, who under prete(nse) (for I
13 believe this is the greatest part of his complaint) of an Asthmatical complaint never could be got
14 to work more than half his time, has not done a days work since I left Mount Vernon in October.
15 examine his case also, but not by the Doctor, for he has had Doctors enough already, of all
16 colours & sexes, and to no effect. Laziness Is I believe his principal ailment.

Source C – Excerpt: Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768

Source Type: Public Document

Background Information: Resistance to offensive legislation and actions by the British government was rather widespread and economically based in the decade prior to the American Revolution.

17 The merchants and traders in the town of Boston, having taken into consideration the deplorable
18 situation of the trade and the many difficulties it at present labours under on account of the
19 scarcity of money, which is daily decreasing for want of the other remittances to discharge our
20 debts in Great Britain, and the large sums collected by the officers of the customs for duties on
21 goods imported; the heavy taxes levied to discharge the debts contracted by the government in the
22 late war; the embarrassments and restrictions laid on the trade by the several late Acts of
23 Parliament; together with the bad success of our cod fishery this season, and the discouraging
24 prospect of the whale fishery, by which our principal sources of remittances are like to be greatly
25 diminished, and we thereby rendered unable to pay the debts we owe the merchants in Great
26 Britain, and to continue the importation of goods from thence:

27 We, the subscribers, in order to relieve the trade under those discouragements, to promote
28 industry, frugality, and economy, and to discourage luxury and every kind of extravagance, do
29 promise and engage to and with each other as follows:

30 That we will not send or import from Great Britain this fall, either on our own account, or on
31 commission, any other goods than what are already ordered for the fall supply.

32 That we will not send for or import any kind of goods or merchandise from Great Britain, either
33 on our own account, or on commissions, or any otherwise, from January 1, 1769, to January 1,
34 1770, except salt, coals, fish-hooks and lines, hemp, duck, bar lead and shot, wool-cards, and
35 card-wire.

36 That we will not purchase of any factors, or others, any kind of goods imported from Great

37 Britain from January 1, 1769, to January 1, 1770. That we will not import on our own account, or
38 on commission, or Purchase from any Who shall import from any other colony in America, from
39 January 1, 1769, to January 1, 1770, any tea, glass, paper, or other goods commonly imported
40 from Great Britain.

41 That we will not, from and after January 1, 1769, import into the province any tea, paper, glass, or
42 painters' colours, until the Acts imposing duties on these articles have been repealed.

Source D – Excerpt: *As If In Enemy's Country*, Richard Archer, 2010

Source Type: Book

Background Information: As a result of the “Boston Massacre,” an event instigated by a violent mob of Bostonians, British soldiers are withdrawn from the city

43 The placing of four regiments in Boston as a police force to support British officials rather than as
44 an army to protect the population certified that the town was being occupied as a hostile country
45 and that Bostonians were viewed as an enemy people. That certainly was the impression of the
46 citizens of Boston. The townspeople could not escape checkpoints, drills, thrust bayonets, angry
47 and profane words, whippings on the Common, scuffles, competing laborers, assaults by drunken
48 officers...and ultimately musket balls and death. They were hardly innocent themselves, often
49 provoking the soldiers. They had not, however, invited the regiments. Just like a bayonet, the
50 standing army was thrust at them. In their minds, they became not a subordinate but a separate
51 people...With the departure of the troops, the town largely autonomous of British authority, and
52 the Massachusetts countryside and other colonies less inclined to act, thoughts of separation were
53 on hold.

Source E – Excerpt: *Ties That Bound: Founding First Ladies and Slaves*, Marie Jenkins Schwartz, 2017

Source Type: Book

Background Information: One of the most horrific aspects of the institution of slavery was the break-up of families through sale. Enslaved individuals could, in some instances, have some control over that process.

54 Over time slaves developed strategies that played upon the slaveholders' fears and consciences.
55 For example, a slave's public display of grief at sale might be orchestrated to evoke pity for the
56 slave and condemnation of the seller. This is not to imply that the grief was not real; it was. But
57 especially dramatic displays of emotional agony by parents or spouses being parted from loved
58 ones could make an owner think twice about completing the transaction. At Mount Vernon, Bett
59 and her mother were able to thwart Bett's sale by begging long and loud not to be separated.

Source F – Excerpt: *An Address to Negroes of the State of New York* by Jupiter Hammon, September 24, 1786

Source Type: Speech

Background Information: Jupiter Hammon was enslaved by John Lloyd of Long Island, New York. He was an advocate for a non-violent resistance to the institution of slavery.

60 Oh how glorious is an eternal life of happiness! And how dreadful, an eternity of misery...If any
61 of us, who have wicked and profane masters should become religious, how will our estates be
62 changed in another world. Oh my friends, let me intreat of you to think on these things, and to
63 live as if you believed them to be true. If you become Christians you will have reason to bless
64 God forever, that you have been brought into a land where you have heard the gospel, though you
65 have been slaves. If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being
66 black, or for being slaves. Let me beg of you my dear African brethren, to think very little of your
67 bondage in this life, for your thinking of it will do no good. If God designs to set us free, he will
68 do it, in his own time, and way; but think of you bondage to sin and Satan, and do not rest, until

69 you are delivered from it.

Source G – *The Destruction of the Tea in Boston Harbor* by Nathaniel Currier, 1846

Source Type: Lithograph

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Background Information: Acting in opposition to the Tea Act of 1773, the Sons of Liberty threw 340 crates of tea into Boston Harbor. The British responded with heavy punishments, collectively known as the Coercive Acts, on the city of Boston.



Source H – Excerpt: *American Revolution as Black Declaration of Independence*, Benjamin Quarles, 1983

Source Type: Essay

Background Information: Quarles observes that the promises of the Declaration, in the eyes of the white Revolutionaries, were only applicable to whites. He also argues that the Revolution was important in spurring increased action amongst the African-American community to secure those rights.

70 The hope of black Americans for a new day of equality was not realized; it was a dream deferred.
71 True, the Revolutionary War had its positive side. It was imbued with a strong moral overtone,
72 leading some whites to question an institution such as slavery, no matter how time-honored. To
73 whites of a reformist turn of mind the war had exposed the inconsistencies and contradictions in
74 American thought about the rights of man, particularly those of the black man. But if heightened
75 sensitivity to the presence of an underprivileged black group characterized by some whites, they
76 were far outnumbered by those who detected no ideological inconsistency...They subscribed to
77 an equation of equality that excluded nonwhites, regarding them as outside the sociopolitical
78 community encompassed by the Revolutionary War tenets of freedom and equality.

Source I – *Peace, Liberty, and Independence* printed by Eleazer Oswald, March 24, 1783

Source Type: Broadside

Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia

Background Information: After almost nine years of intense conflict, the war comes to an end, and America gains its independence from Great Britain.

