

Alyssa N. Bullerman
18 April 2006
Lit Block
Prof. Schilling

Literature Focus Unit: 5th grade
My Brother Sam is Dead
A study of the Revolutionary War.

Featured Selection:

- My Brother Sam is Dead
- Author: James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier
- Publisher: Scholastic Inc., Copyright year: 1974
- Reading Level: 5th grade
- Summary of story: The British are still in control of the colonies in America. Tim Meeker is a young boy who admires his older brother, Sam. Sam is smart and brave and always knows the right thing to do. Everyone in town likes him until Sam makes a choice. Sam decides to join the new American Revolutionary Army. Most of the people in town, including Tim and Sam's father, are loyal supporters of the English king. Tim has to choose between fighting his father or his brother depending on the side he supports.

Related Books:

- Victory or Death: Stories of the American Revolution
 - By: Doreen Rappaport and Joan Verniero
 - Publisher: Scholastic Inc., Copyright year: 2003
 - Reading Level: 5th grade
 - This book is a collection of stories that portray the big heroes from the Revolutionary War. It offers stories from multiple viewpoints such as, women and men.
- Valley Forge
 - By: Richard Ammon
 - Publisher: Scholastic Inc., Copyright year: 2004
 - Reading Level: 4th grade
 - This book explains the causes of the war and how the Patriot army survived the winter at Valley Forge. It talks about the military aspects to the Revolutionary War.
- The Boston Tea Party
 - By: Steven Kroll
 - Publisher: Holiday House, Copyright year: 1998
 - Reading Level: 4th grade
 - This book tells what led up to the war, explaining the taxes, Thomas Paine, and the Boston tea party. It explains the reactions of the people,

both Loyalists and Patriots, and tells what happened after the rebellion in Boston.

- The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson
 - By: Ann McGovern
 - Publisher: Scholastic Inc., Copyright year: 1975
 - Reading Level: 3rd grade
 - This book offers a different perspective of a Patriot soldier. Deborah Sampson was a woman who disguised herself as a man so she could fight in the Revolutionary War.

- If You Lived at the Time of the American Revolution
 - By: Kay Moore
 - Publisher: Scholastic Inc., Copyright year: 2000
 - Reading Level: 3rd grade
 - This book is set up in a question and answer format. It gives students the chance to find out what life would be like during the war. It gives comparisons between the daily lives of Loyalists and Patriots. It also discusses the roles of children during the war.

Goals

- The students will understand the reasons why the colonists fought for their freedom during the Revolutionary War.
- The students will be able to identify with colonial life through the time capsule and colonial games.
- The students will understand and be able to recognize who were important people during the Revolutionary War.
- The students are able to analyze different quotes from the book and also make text – to – self connections.

State Standards

- Social Studies
 - 5.1.11 Analyze the causes of the Revolution, such as colonial resistance to British imperial policies, the denial of traditional rights of Englishmen to American colonists, and taxation without representation.
 - 5.1.12 Identify major British and American leaders and describe their roles in key events, such as the First and Second Continental Congresses, drafting and approval of the Declaration of Independence (1776), publication of *Common Sense*, and major battles of the Revolutionary War.
 - 5.1.14 Identify and evaluate contributions of women during the American Revolution, including Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, Mercy Otis Warren, and Molly Pitcher.
- Language Arts
 - Writing Applications
 - 5.5.2 Write responses to literature that:

- demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
- support judgments through references to the text and to prior knowledge.
- develop interpretations that exhibit careful reading and understanding.

Speaking Applications

5.7.10 Deliver informative presentations about an important idea, issue, or event by the following means:

- frame questions to direct the investigation.
- establish a controlling idea or topic.
- develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.

Activities for Reading Process

- Prereading
 - Activity one – Have the students work as a class and fill out a K-W-L chart. They can list what they already know about the Revolutionary War and what they want to know. After reading the book, fill in what they learned as a class to complete the chart. Use it as a closure activity to the reading.
 - Whole-class activity
 - Activity two – One day in class tell the students that you have a new set of rules. Do things such as charge a fee for using any of your things such as they have to give a pencil to you in order to use the stapler and so on. Designate how they can do things and what times they can do certain activities even in free time. Then before starting the book explain how the settlers felt and relate the way they were treated to the way you were treating the students.
 - Whole-class activity
- Reading
 - Activity one – Have the students read a chapter a day. Allow some days to be used for individual reading and others to be used for partner reading. This will allow the students to discuss what they read with another classmate.
 - Partner and individual activities
 - Accommodations – Partner up struggling readers with more advanced readers. Also give struggling readers or ESL students a summary of the chapter for them to read at the end of the chapter to offer another source for comprehension.
 - Activity two -
- Responding
 - Activity One – Have the students write in a journal each day. Give a question for them to respond to for each chapter they read.

Chapter 1

Explain Mr. Meeker's statement, "You may know principle, Sam, but I know war."

Chapter 2

Explain the statements that Mr. Meeker makes, "But you never get rid of injustices by fighting" and Sam makes, "Either we're going to be free or we're not." How is Mr. Meeker's comment an argument against war? How is Sam's comment an argument for war? Which one do you agree with? Why?

Chapter 3

How would you explain Tim's statement, "It made me wonder how the war was going to make us freer if you couldn't read any paper you wanted any more." What does this tell you about war and revolution in general?

Chapter 4

Tim said, "... anybody who joined the army to fight couldn't be a coward." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Chapter 5

Why do you think men like Tom Warrups could work for both the Patriots and the Tories? What is your opinion of people who take both sides of a dispute?

Chapter 6

What was the message in the letter? Why was Mr. Heron sending it? What does this tell you about communication during this time period?

Chapter 7

How did the war affect Tim's family (think beyond physical affects)?

Chapter 8

What did Tim really think about the war? Had he made up his mind which side he was on?

Chapter 9

What do you think happened to Mr. Meeker? What impact will it have on Tim?

Chapter 10

Explain Tim's statement, "I still hadn't figured out what he was fighting for. It seemed to me that we'd been free all along."

Chapter 11

Mrs. Meeker begs Sam to come home after his father's death. Sam refuses. Tim says that he realizes that his brother will never leave the army because

he thinks he is part of something big. Explain what Tim means by “something big.”

Chapter 12

Explain the statement, “In war the dead pay the debts for the living.”

Chapter 13

Patrick Henry, a famous Patriot, said, “Give me liberty or give me death!” How might his words have inspired soldiers like Sam?

Chapter 14

What was the irony of Sam’s pending execution? How is this similar to the irony of what happened to Mr. Meeker?

Epilogue

What is your reaction to the statement, “But somehow, even fifty years later, I keep thinking that there might have been another way, besides war, to achieve the same end.” Do you think the United States could have become a nation without the Revolutionary War?

- Individual activity
 - Accommodations – Allow students who struggle with writing to type out their journal entries on the computer.
- Exploring
 - Activity one – Have the students make a list of important people that influenced the Revolutionary War or played a major role. Then have the students break in to groups and do research on the person. Each group will develop a presentation to share with the class on their person.
 - Whole class and small group activity
 - Activity two – Have the students compare themselves to the main character. Would they have done the same thing or what would they have done differently?
 - Individual activity
- Applying
 - Activity one – Your team will be creating a time capsule filled with documents, artifacts, and personal effects from the Meeker family's experience of the conflicts from the American Revolutionary War. This time capsule will be stored in the library for future students to learn from. Items that will need to go into the time capsule:
 1. Four Family Letters
 2. Four Diary Entries of Family Members
 3. Four Newspaper "Clippings"
 4. Four Artifacts from the Novel

- Small-group activity
- Activity two - The early settlers had little time for games or amusements. Nevertheless young people did spend some time at play. There were few items of luxury so the activities were simple with little or no equipment. Listed below are a few games played during the 17th century.
- **Blind Man's Bluff (4-12 PLAYERS)**
One player is blindfolded. The other players form a circle around the blindfolded person within a confined area. One of the players turns the blindfolded person around three times, then takes a position within the circle. The blindfolded person moves about to catch one of the players (who are not allowed to move). **The first person caught by the blindfolded person becomes the next blindfolded person.**
- **Hunt the Slipper (6-18 PLAYERS)**
Players sit in a circle. One player (the hunter) leaves while the others hide a slipper or other object. When the hunter returns, the other players pass the object around secretly while the hunter is not looking. The hunter is allowed to ask questions and has three guesses on the whereabouts of the object. **When the slipper is located, the hunter exchanges places with the player who has the object and the game starts over.**
- **Blow-Out (2 PLAYERS)**
This is **one of the oldest marble games** known where two players try to win marbles from each other. The first player tosses a marble on a smooth surface. The second player tries to hit the marble by tossing another marble at it. If successful, the second player wins the marble. If not, the first player has a turn to hit the second player's marble.
- **Ring Taw (4-6 PLAYERS)**
Two circles are drawn on the ground. The inner circle is about two feet in diameter. Each player places four to six marbles in the inner circle. Then the outer circle, called the "taw," is drawn about seven feet in diameter. The players take turns to roll their marble from the outer circle (taw) into the inner circle. **The object is to touch one of the marbles in the inner circle.** If the player is successful, he or she wins the marble and has a chance to win another one. However, the player may not hit the same player's marble twice in a row. If the player is unsuccessful, the next player gets a turn.
- **Sports**
Native Americans enjoyed competitions of all kinds. One particular favorite was **lacrosse**. The lacrosse stick is long with a net at the end. The net is used to catch then fling the ball into a specified goal. The New England settlers learned this game from the American Indians. It is still popular today, especially in Canada.
 - Whole class or small group activity

Time Schedule

Day 1 Chap. 1 K-W-L chart New rules lesson journal	Day 2 Chap. 2 journal	Day 3 Chap. 3 Have students start to gather items for time capsule. journal	Day 4 Chap. 4 Play colonial games in gym class. journal	Day 5 Chap. 5 journal
Day 6 Chap. 6 journal	Day 7 Chap. 7 Start group presentations on person. journal	Day 8 Chap 8. journal	Day 9 Chap. 9 Make time capsule. journal	Day 10 Chap. 10 journal
Day 11 Chap. 11 Present group projects. journal	Day 12 Chap. 12 Present group projects. journal	Day 13 Chap. 13 journal	Day 14 Chap. 14 Students compare themselves to main character. journal	Day 15 Epilogue and How much of this book is true? journal

Student Checklist

_____ journal entries

_____ time capsule item

_____ important person presentation

_____ comparison to main character

Websites used

<http://www.mrburnett.net/mbisdquestions.html>

<http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/ofarrell/mybrosam/index.html>

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/history/sports/5772.html>