

**American Revolution  
by  
Alison Baker**



**FEATURED SELECTION:**

- **Forbes, E. (1943). *Johnny Tremain*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.**
- This 1944 Newbery Award winning book tells the story of a young boy, Johnny Tremain, who becomes an apprentice for Mr. Lapham. The other apprentices that work with Johnny envy him because of his abilities in silversmith and because of his apparent self-pride. During his work, a broken crucible maims Johnny's hand. After his dreams of becoming a silversmith for Paul Revere are ruined, he gets involved in a spy network alongside men in the American Revolution. In doing so, Johnny turns into a major player in the creation of a new America.

**RELATED MATERIALS:**

- **Benchley, N. (1977). *George the drummer boy*. New York: Harper Collins.**
  - George, in the service of a British general, finds himself at scenes that lead to the beginning of the American Revolution, a different perspective than Johnny had. They crossed the river and headed toward Concord, which becomes the beginning of the War.
- **Benchley, N. (1969). *Sam the minuteman*. New York: Harper Collins.**
  - This book tells of the same events that occurred in *George the Drummer Boy*, except from the other side yet still playing a different role in the war than Johnny. Sam lives on a farm in Lexington, Kentucky and gets awoken by his father who informs him that the "British are coming!"
- **Stein, C. R. (1773). *The boston tea party*. New York: Children's Press.**
  - This book describes the night of December 16, 1773—also known as the night of the Boston Tea Party. It talks about the people behind the event, especially Samuel Adams and his actions against the British tea ships—a different side of Samuel Adams than seen in *Johnny Tremain*.

- **Murphy, F. (2002). *George Washington and the general's dog*. New York: Random House.**
  - This story pegs into the softer side of the first president George Washington, whom does not have a very prominent role in *Johnny Tremain*. When in battle, Mr. Washington comes across a dog in the battle field that he names "Sweetlips."
- **Gregory, K. (2001). *Five smooth stones: Hope's Revolutionary War*. New York: Scholastic.**
  - Hope has begun a diary to write down her worries about her father, a patriot, whose return is much overdue. Because of the intense political developments, she and her family flee to Philadelphia in hope of avoiding the war—just like many others talked about in *Johnny Tremain*, but appealing to girls.

### Goals:

- I will incorporate every other main subject area into this unit so the students realize that the American Revolution is more than just about social studies.
- The students will find a book about events or people related to the American Revolution that they really enjoy.
- The students will learn new vocabulary words associated with the Revolutionary War.
- The students will realize how the American Revolution affected Indiana.
- The students will learn the School House Rock song about the preamble to the Constitution.

### Specific Skills and Strategies:

- The students will use a map to estimate the distances between two places.
- The students will compare and contrast two historical fiction books.
- The students will write down the preamble of the Constitution.
- The students will make text to text, text to self, or text to world connections throughout their reading.
- The students will learn cause and effect of inventions leading to other inventions.

### Indiana Academic Standards:

- **Social Studies 4.1.3:** The American Revolution and the Indiana Territory: 1770s to 1816. Explain the importance of the Revolutionary War and other key events and people that influenced Indiana's development.
- **Social Studies 4.1.4:** The American Revolution and the Indiana Territory: 1770s to 1816. Summarize and explain the significance of key documents in Indiana's development from a United States territory to statehood.
- **Social Studies 4.3.9:** Human Systems: Explain the importance of major transportation routes, including rivers, in the exploration, settlement, and growth of Indiana and in the state's location as a crossroad of America.
- **Social Studies 4.3.2:** The World in Spatial Terms: Estimate distances between two places on a map, using scale of miles, and use cardinal and intermediate directions when referring to a relative location.
- **Science 4.1.8:** Recognize and explain that any invention may lead to other inventions.
- **Science 4.2.4:** Use numerical data to describe and compare objects and events.
- **Mathematics 4.1.1:** Read and write whole numbers up to 1,000,000.

- **Mathematics 4.1.4:** Order and compare whole numbers using symbols for “less than” (<), “equal to” (=), and “greater than” (>).
- **Language Arts 4.1.1:** Decoding and Word Recognition: Read aloud grade-level-appropriate literary and informational texts with fluency and accuracy and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.
- **Language Arts 4.5.2:** Write responses to literature that:
  - Demonstrate an understanding of a literary work
  - Support statements with evidence from the text
- **Language Art 4.6.2:** Use simple sentences and compound sentences in writing.
- **Music: 4.8.4:** Sing songs to support learning in another discipline outside the arts such creating new verses for “Weevily Wheat” using additional multiplication tables, or reading *The Drinking Gourd* by F.N. Monjo and learning the song, “Follow the Drinkin’ Gourd.”
- **Art 4.6.6:** Demonstrate respect for personal work and the work of others.

### Unit Plan:

#### Pre-reading:

- Activity: Students will quickwrite about a time/event that they felt proud, noting the positive and negative effects of their pride and then sharing it with a partner.
- Teacher will introduce book, giving somewhat of a book talk about the book.
- Teacher will show the opening clip from the movie *Johnny Tremain*.
- Teacher will introduce vocabulary words for each chapter grouping (Forbes)
  - Chapters 1-5—belligerent, chagrin, enigmatical, exuberant, fatuous, flaccid
  - Chapters 6-8—commandeer, divulge, dun, gesticulate, inundate, inflammatory
  - Chapters 9-12—converge, dilapidated, dilatory, lassitude, maudlin, sedition
- Grouping: whole group, partners

#### Reading:

- Teacher will read first chapter aloud, stopping periodically to check for understanding and for the students to predict what may happen next.
- Students will be assigned one chapter each day and given 30 minutes each day to read in class with a partner
- Activity: Students will be given post-it notes and be required to have at least one in each chapter, either making a connection to the text, making a prediction, or asking a question
- Activity:
  - Chapters 1-5: Students will each fill out a chart comparing Johnny’s life before and after the accident (Forbes).
  - Chapters 6-8: Students will be give events in the book in which they are to summarize, then they must explain how each event affects Johnny on a personal level and on the political level (Forbes).
    - Events: Boston Tea Party, Closing of Boston Harbor, Rebellious Acts of Sons of Liberty and Observers
  - Chapters 9-12: Follow the progress of events leading the British and Patriots closer to war by noting the main actions of the following characters (Forbes):

- Paul Revere, Sam Adams and John Hancock, Johnny, Rab, Dove, Mr. Warren, Colonel Smith, and General Gage
- Grouping: whole group, buddy reading, independent

### Responding:

- Activity: The students will write in their journals at least twice a week responding to at least two questions from the following groups of questions (Forbes):
  - Chapters 1-5:
    - What is your opinion of Johnny before the accident? Does it change afterwards?
    - How do you think you would react in Johnny's situation?
    - How has Johnny's position in the household changed? How does Johnny react to Dove's new role?
    - What obstacles does Johnny face as he tries to redirect his life?
  - Chapters 6-8:
    - What aspects of Johnny's involvement of historical events make the strongest impression on you? Explain.
    - Does the idea of playing a personal role in historical events appeal to you? Why or why not?
    - Explain the British tax on colonial tea. What response is planned by Sam Adams and the other Observers?
    - What positions in favor of revolution are argued by Sam Adams and James Otis? How does Johnny react to Otis's words?
    - In your opinion, is Rab a good friend to Johnny? Give reasons for your answer.
  - Chapters 9-12:
    - What are some ways the Patriots prepare for war?
    - Explain how the Minute Men learn of the British army's actual battle plans. What do these reveal about the Patriot's commitment to independence?
    - Summarize what happens after Johnny finds Rab at Lexington.
    - At the end of the book, what decision does Johnny make about his future? What does that reveal about his values and character?
    - How does the author create suspense in the final chapters of the book?
- Grand discussion after each chapter to clarify any misunderstandings
- Grouping: Individual, whole group

### Exploring:

- Word wall—all vocabulary words from the beginning of each chapter grouping will be added to the unit word wall
  - Activity: Each student will create a word map for one vocabulary word from the unit.
- Mini-lessons on:
  - How Indiana was connected in the American Revolution
    - How key people and events affected our history
    - Development of Indiana from a United States territory into a statehood
  - Number of people in battle for each side and casualties
    - Activity: Students will compare/contrast the numbers of troops and casualties for each side

- Activity: Each student will choose their favorite passage from the book and read it aloud to the class.
- Activity: Students will choose another book pertaining to the American Revolution, read at least one chapter, and do a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the information in that book to *Johnny Tremain*.
- Activity: Students will choose an invention from the book (such as a crucible or lantern) and research its beginning and what other inventions it might have led to.
- Activity: Students will learn the preamble to the constitution by listening to School House Rock and be able to transfer that song into written form.
- Grouping: whole group, independent

### Applying:

- Activity: Students will be given a map of the United States and estimate and measure the distance that each troop had to travel. They will also point out major waterways and transportation routes that were used.
- Activity: Students will be grouped and given a scene from the book to act out/perform a skit or do a reader's theater.
  - Each student will be expected to clap for each other after the presentations.
- Grouping: partner, small group

### TIME SCHEDULE:

Week 1					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45	-Quickwrite	-Grand discussion Ch. 2	-Grand discussion Ch. 3	-Grand discussion Ch. 5	-Grand discussion Ch. 6
9:00	-Vocab intro -word wall	-Choose vocab word, work on word map	-School House Rock	-Vocab intro -word wall	-School House Rock
9:30	-Ch. 1 aloud -Discuss Ch. 1	-Intro to Constitution -Intro to School House Rock	-Ch. 4 aloud -Discuss Ch. 4	-School House Rock	-Ch. 7 aloud -Discuss Ch. 7
10:00	-Ch. 2 reading time	-Ch. 3 reading time	-Ch. 5 reading time	-Ch. 6 reading time	Ch. 8 reading time

Week 2					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45	-Grand discussion Ch. 8	-Grand discussion Ch.10	-Grand discussion Ch.11	-Grand discussion other selections	-Reader's Theater/skit practice
9:00	-Vocab intro -word wall	-Troop's travels to battle -Indiana's connection to war	-Ch. 12 aloud -Discuss Ch. 12	-Number of troops/causalities	-Reader's Theater/skit presentations
9:30	-Ch. 9 aloud -Discuss Ch. 9	-School House Rock/preamble pre-quiz	-Read favorite passage from book -School House Rock	-School House Rock	-School House Rock quick Practice then quiz
10:00	-Ch. 10 reading time	-Ch. 11 reading time	-Choose chapter from another book to read	-Reader's Theater/skit practice	-Closing—Grand Discussion

**ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Quickwrite about a proud moment in your life
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least one post-it note per chapter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 1-5 chart
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 1-5 response questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 6-8 event summarization
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 6-8 response questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ch. 9-12 main characters' actions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ch 9-12 response questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Word map
- \_\_\_\_\_ Troops and Casualties comparison
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read aloud favorite passage from *Johnny Tremain*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Venn diagram—*Johnny Tremain* and another self-selected reading
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research an invention from *Johnny Tremain*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write preamble to the Constitution
- \_\_\_\_\_ Routes/distances of troops' travels
- \_\_\_\_\_ Skit or Reader's Theater

## References

Forbes, E. *Study Guide for Johnny Tremain*. New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill.

Name Alison Baker American Revolution

Literature Focus Unit Grade Sheet

Score 50 / 50

2 Typed (2 points)

5 Featured selection – title, author, publishing information, reading level, 4-7 sentence summary (5 points)

5 Related material – five additional sources listed, including titles, authors, publishing information, and reading levels, 2 sentences describing relationship to feature selection (5 points)

**Next year, make sure you identify the reading level of your books**

5 Goals and Indiana Academic Standards identified (5 points)

5 Unit plan includes five stages of reading, identify the activities, indicating how the activities will be monitored and how they will be assessed; includes indication of grouping (15 points)

3 Time schedule (3 points)

5 Checklist of activities (5 points) – indicate the criteria by which you will assess or what will you consider excellent

5 Engaging (5 points)

5 Grammar/spelling/punctuation (5 points)

COMMENTS:

**Alison,**

**Your dedication to excellence really sets your work apart. I know you put many more hours into projects than expected, but that distinguishes you as a top-notch student who engages in the learning process. This characteristic, I believe, helps make you an excellent teacher. I hope you eventually get to turn this into a real unit that you teach.**