

COLONIAL VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT: PATRIOTS, LOYALISTS, AND OTHERS

SS.8.CG.1.1 Compare the views of Patriots, Loyalists and other colonists on limits of government authority, inalienable rights, and resistance to tyranny.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.8.C.1.2
 - Changed from “Compare the views of ~~self-government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens held by~~ Patriots, Loyalists, and other colonists” to “Compare the views of Patriots, Loyalists, and other colonists on limits of government authority, inalienable rights, and resistance to tyranny”.
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
 - No changes
- Benchmark Clarification Changes
 - Benchmark clarifications are an addition to the 2023-2024 middle school civics and government benchmarks. Benchmark clarifications are listed in the lesson summary below.
- Vocabulary Changes
 - No changes

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. Viewpoints on Government Held by Self-Described Patriots, Loyalists, and Others Before and During the American Revolution
2. Ideas of Inalienable Rights and Limited Government
3. Timeline of Key Events in Late Colonial History

1. Viewpoints on Government Held by Self-Described Patriots, Loyalists, and Others Before and During the American Revolution

Support for the American Revolution was by no means unanimous and may not have even been held by a majority of the population. Rather, historians believe that at any one time, support was split roughly in thirds, with one portion strongly supporting independence from the British Crown (Patriots), another portion remaining attached in varying levels to their identity as British subjects (“Loyalists”), and the final portion like many people who stay out of politics today- perhaps preoccupied with living their lives or perhaps feeling both sides have merits, unsure quite where they fall between the two, and fearful of how the conflict was tearing communities and families apart.

Loyalists themselves were by no means a homogenous unit, with some thinking that the various Acts of Parliament were reasonable, within its rights, and that the problem lay with their fellow colonists who had provoked the Crown- others perhaps angry about the Acts but believing that revolution was a bridge too far.

All of these viewpoints are important to understand as you scaffold students into understanding the various viewpoints of Patriots, Loyalists, and others.

2. Ideas of Inalienable Rights and Limited Government

Unlike many of its European rivals, the Kingdom of England (to 1707), and later Great Britain (after 1707) had a long history of limited government stretching back hundreds of years, at least to Magna Carta (1215). This document first limited the power of the English King and very soon led to the calling of Parliaments for the purposes of consenting to Royal taxation, establishing the theoretical concept of authority being derived from the consent of the governed. Over the next several hundred years, the power of the monarch slowly but reliably decreased, with the English Civil War (1642-1651), Glorious Revolution (1688-1689), and English Bill of Rights (1689) ultimately and decisively establishing the supremacy of Parliament over the monarch.

The idea that certain rights were natural and inalienable to each person simply by nature of being human had likewise developed slowly over the centuries. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), in *Leviathan* (1651), argued that the essential natural (human) right was "to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life...", with Enlightenment philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) describing this as the (natural) rights to “life, liberty, and property,” and Thomas Paine (1731-1809) expanding still further, emphasizing that rights cannot be granted by any charter because being ‘natural’ meant they could not be revoked.

3. Timeline of Key Events in Late Colonial History

1754-1763- French and Indian War takes place. During the war, George III ascended the British throne.

1764-1773- Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Quartering Act, Townshend Act, and Tea Act all passed

March 5, 1770- the Boston Massacre takes place.

December 16, 1773- The Boston Tea Party. Colonists led by the Sons of Liberty boarded British East India Company ships in Boston Harbor and destroyed 340 chests (92,000 pounds) of tea worth £9,659 (or \$1,700,000 in modern currency).

1774- Parliament adopts the *Coercive Acts* in response to Colonial unrest generally, and the Boston Tea Party Specifically. Colonists quickly take to calling them a different name: “The Intolerable Acts” and called for a meeting of the colonies at a “Continental Congress” in response.

September 5-October 26, 1774- First Continental Congress meets. Although there was no consensus on a response, the First Congress adopted the Suffolk Resolves as a statement of colonial rights, agreed to a boycott of all British goods, urged each colony to raise a defensive militia, and agreed to meet the following year if their grievances hadn’t been resolved satisfactorily.

April 19, 1775- Battles of Lexington and Concord (The Shot Heard Round the World).

May 10, 1775- The Second Continental Congress convenes. They had hoped that by now the grievances surrounding the *Intolerable Acts* would be resolved, but by the time it comes together nearly a month after Lexington and Concord, the Second Congress will have a war on its hands. The Second Congress will last throughout the war and will gradually but steadily take on the role of a national government for the Colonies to oversee the war effort and, eventually, declare independence from Great Britain.

July 3, 1775- Virginian George Washington assumes command of the newly created Continental Army, formed initially from the militia units fighting around Boston.

July 1-4, 1776- Congress debates, revises, and adopts the Declaration of Independence.

September 28-October 19, 1781- The Siege of Yorktown takes place, culminating in the British surrender and the opening of negotiations between the United States and Great Britain.

1783- The Treaty of Paris between the United States and Great Britain recognizes US independence.

Adapted from: [Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention Timeline](#), Library of Congress

Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
How and why did various groups of colonists view the rights of people in relation to the authority of the government?		
BENCHMARK		
SS.8.CG.1.1 Compare the views of Patriots, Loyalists and other colonists on limits of government authority, inalienable rights, and resistance to tyranny.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will compare the various beliefs on government and inherent rights held by different groups of colonists and how these ultimately led to independence from Great Britain.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will describe colonial forms of government prior to the American Revolution. Students will evaluate the Loyalists' and Patriots' arguments for remaining loyal to the British Crown or seeking independence from Britain. 		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Crown, inalienable rights, limited government, Loyalist, neutral, Patriot, Parliament, tyranny 		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of complex text	Collaborative learning	Primary source analysis
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copier paper Art supplies Sticky notes The 13 Colonies Brain Dump slides The 13 Colonies in the Revolutionary War reading What Were The Townshend Acts? video (external link) What Were The Townshend Acts? Video Viewing Guide Life As A British Colonist slides Patriots & Loyalists slides 		

- Loyalist and Patriot Support map (external link)
- Loyalist, Patriot or Neutral? activity sheet
- Big Idea 4: Support for the Revolution reading (external link)
- Big Idea 5: Opposition to Independence reading (external link)
- Big Idea 6: The People and Places In Between reading (external link)
- Patriot or Loyalist? Primary Source activity sheet

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

- ELA.8.R.2.1- Analyze how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose and/or meaning in texts
- ELA.8.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.
- ELA.8.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.
- ELA.K12.EE.1.1- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<p>Planning Note: Prior to this lesson, students should have learned about the founding of the colonies, the regions of the Thirteen Colonies (New England, Middle, and Southern), and the colonial relationship with the British Crown.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To begin the lesson, have students complete a brain dump exercise (write down everything they know, or that comes to mind) on a sheet of paper or in a notebook, responding to questions on “The 13 Colonies Brain Dump” slides: What were the characteristics of the Thirteen Colonies? What were the regions of the colonies? What kinds of people went to the colonies? What were the colonists' feelings on being British and towards the King? What were their lives like? 2. Have students share some of their responses. 3. Explain to students that over the next few days, they will be using some of their prior knowledge of American History to more closely examine governments in the colonies. Specifically, how the colonists' views on government changed over the course of time. 4. As a class, complete “The 13 Colonies in the Revolutionary War” reading adapted from the History of Massachusetts Blog. While reading, have students pause and circle words/vocabulary they find important and summarize sections off to the side. 5. After the reading, students will answer the three questions at the bottom on separate paper or in a notebook. 6. Once the students complete the questions, check for understanding with a whole-class discussion, calling on students to share answers. Students should add to their responses as appropriate to further their understanding and build on their thoughts. Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide the discussion. 7. Now that students have a firm understanding of colonial governments, explain to students that they are going to review (or learn) why the relationship between the colonists and the British government began to change. 8. Watch "What Were The Townshend Acts?" video from the History Channel that briefly introduces the various acts of Parliament in the aftermath of the French and Indian War and have students complete the “What Were The Townshend Acts? Video Viewing Guide”.

DAY 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin the lesson with a discussion of the “What Were The Townshend Acts? Video Viewing Guide” from the previous day. Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide the discussion. 2. Be sure students have time to complete each section of the viewing guide; students should add to their own answers based on the class discussion. 3. Ask students: Why do you think this changing relationship bothered many of the colonists so much? 4. Have students take out paper or a notebook to take notes on the “Life As A British Colonist” slides. 5. As the teacher walks through the slides and notes, remind students they are to be summarizing bullets and not copying word for word. 6. Students will then spend time processing the notes they took by drawing a picture to summarize/represent each slide (3 slides = 3 pictures).
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> As students draw/process, circulate the classroom to monitor for engagement and understanding. Students will then take turns sharing their images with a shoulder partner, including why they chose the drawing they chose. As students leave class for the day, have them answer the following question on a sticky note: Citing specific evidence, what do you think was the biggest concern for colonists in their relationship with the British Crown?
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DAY 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To begin this lesson, have students brainstorm and respond to the questions: Why would rebelling against Great Britain be a good idea? Why might it be a bad idea? What could the consequences be? Have students share out. Explain to students that the question of how to handle the changing relationship between the colonies and the British government divided the colonists as they all did not agree on topics such as government authority, inalienable rights, and resistance to tyranny. Project the “Patriots and Loyalists” slides and explain the meaning of the two terms. Display the “Loyalist and Patriot Support” map from Infobase Publishing. Ask students to do a quick-write response to the following questions: Which parts of the colonies showed more Loyalist support? Which areas showed more Patriot support? How might this differing support complicate the war effort for each side? Explain to students while they look at the map that one of the disadvantages of the colonial war effort also turned out to be an advantage: the decentralization of the colonies. Without a central city to capture, the British faced the difficult task of holding and pacifying large stretches of the colonies at any time. Assign students to pairs or small groups. Teacher Note: However you size groups, you will want an equal number of groups for each reading below. Pass out “Loyalist, Patriots, or Neutrals?” activity sheets to all students. Pass out to each pair/group <u>one</u> of the <i>Museum of the American Revolution</i>’s essays: “Big Idea 4: Support for the Revolution”, “Big Idea 5: Opposition to Independence”, or “Big Idea 6: The People and Places In Between”. Teacher Note: Essays vary in size and difficulty so assign according to student needs. Explain to students that they will closely read one assigned essay as a pair to dive deep into support for one assigned viewpoint Students will label the top of their activity sheet as ‘4’, ‘5’, or ‘6’, for which Big Idea essay they are deep diving into. Have each pair/group take turns in their small groups/pairs reading and marking the text. While they read, students will highlight what they judge to be the most important reasons for that viewpoint on the essay. As students read, circulate the classroom to monitor for engagement and understanding. As pairs/groups finish their assigned essay, they will fill out the activity sheet column for their document. Once finished filling out the first part of their activity sheet, pairs will move desks or otherwise move around the classroom to form a larger group with two other pairs, for three total. The larger group will now include students who have read essays 4, 5, and 6. Teacher Note: The teacher will need to be heavily engaged in being sure groups are
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	<p>correctly formed/distributed at the start of this portion.</p> <p>18. Inside the larger group, pairs/groups for each essay 4, 5, and 6 will now take turns presenting to each other the central ideas of their essay. As each pair/group presents, the other members of the larger group continue to fill out their activity sheets.</p> <p>19. By the end of the activity, all students should have central ideas filled out on their activity sheet for all 3 Big Idea essays.</p> <p>20. Before class ends, call on students to share something they found surprising, something they related to, and something they want to know more about.</p>
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DAY 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to think of a time that they took a big risk and what made it risky or scary. 2. Depending on response length, ask 1 to 3 students to share what the risk was, what they had to gain, and why they hesitated. For the purpose here, students don't need to share how it turned out. 3. Have students take out their "Loyalist, Patriots, or Neutrals?" activity sheets; if you collected them the day before, pass them back out. 4. Review with students the viewpoints from the day before. Ensure students have a firm understanding of the viewpoints and as they share. 5. Explain that today the lesson will end by evaluating the colonial arguments by reading the words of a Patriot and a Loyalist. 6. Pass out the "Patriot or Loyalist? Primary Source" activity sheet. Place students into pairs. 7. For each paragraph/quote, students will decide whether they think the excerpt represents a Patriot viewpoint or a Loyalist viewpoint. Depending on their choice, they will place either a 'P' or 'L' next to the quote. They must also underline/highlight evidence from the text to support their opinion. Teacher Note: Depending on copies and class counts, students can mark the text on the handout or use the paragraph number and write on separate paper or in a notebook. 8. Once students have completed marking the text, discuss it as a whole class, having students call out their responses and cite specific evidence for why they think each excerpt belongs to a Patriot or a Loyalist. You should guide students by building on each others' responses. Teacher Note: If you prefer that students move around, designate one side of the room as P for Patriot and the other L for Loyalist; as you lead the discussion, students can move to either side in response to the quote, then cite specific evidence for why each quote belongs to one or the other. 9. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment): Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response to the following prompt: Using what you have learned during this lesson and citing specific examples from the readings and activities, summarize why Patriots felt the risk of war with Britain was worth it or just, and why Loyalists felt it was not worth it or unjust.
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Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
British Crown	the British monarchy, in the Revolutionary Era led by King George III
inalienable rights	also called a “natural right”, a right that can’t be restricted or taken away by human laws
limited government	the concept that the power of government is not unlimited
Loyalist	a colonist who remained loyal to Great Britain
neutral	a colonist who did not come down strongly in favor of or against independence
Patriot	a colonist who supported independence
Parliament	the legislature of the British government, in the Revolutionary Era divided between the elected House of Commons and the House of Lords, composed of hereditary notability and the clergy
tyranny	cruel and oppressive government or rule.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- *The Rights of the Colonists* by Samuel Adams
- *Letters from an American Farmer* by J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: The 13 Colonies in the Revolutionary War reading

Sample Answers: What Were The Townsend Acts? Video Viewing Guide

Sample Answers: Loyalists, Patriots, or Neutrals? activity sheet

Sample Answers: Patriot or Loyalist? Primary Source activity sheet

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

Timeline from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention from Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/continental-congress-and-constitutional-convention-from-1774-to-1789/articles-and-essays/timeline/1775/>

“The 13 Colonies in the Revolutionary War” from History of Massachusetts Blog:

<https://historyofmassachusetts.org/13-colonies-revolutionary-war/>

What Were the Townshend Acts? from the History Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKGSda3sEVU>

Loyalist and Patriot Support Map from Infobase:

<http://www.fofweb.com/Electronic/Images/Maps/EAH3-19-LoyalistPats.pdf>

Museum of the American Revolution Season of Independence Big Ideas:

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/season-of-independence-big-ideas>

Patrick Henry: Speech to the Second Virginia Delegation:

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/patrick.asp

Charles Inglis: The True Interest of America Impartially Stated:

<https://shcp.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1128>