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## INTRODUCTION

### APPROACH AND RATIONALE

*The Revolutionary Experience: Focus on Philadelphia*, is the result of a collaborative effort between the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) at the University of California, Los Angeles and *Lights of Liberty* in Philadelphia. The lessons in the unit are inspired by the *Lights of Liberty Show*, an immersing nighttime “edutainment” experience that takes place throughout the Independence National Historic Park. The show, along with daytime tours to colonial Philadelphia historical sites, as outlined in the “Walking Tour Activities” described after each lesson, can be used in conjunction with a visit to that exhibit or used as a stand-alone lesson set for the classroom.

*The Lights of Liberty Show* is the new sound and light show that opened July 9, 1999 in Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, home to Independence Hall, The Liberty Bell, and many other sites that tell the spectacular story of America’s journey to freedom. It is the world’s first sound and light show of its kind that guides visitors through events in the American Revolution, as it happened, where it happened, through five dramatic acts which use five-story projections and 3-D sound.

The National Center for History in the Schools has published over sixty teaching units that are the fruits of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. The units represent specific issues and dramatic episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying crucial turning points in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected issues and dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow’s history.

This unit follows the format of other teaching units published by NCHS. These units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers, magazines, literature, contemporary photographs, paintings, and other art from the period under study. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in the lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of “being there,” a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian’s craft, discovering for themselves how to weigh evidence, establish a valid interpretation, and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

### CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: Teaching Background Materials (Unit Overview, Unit Context, Correlation to the National Standards for History, and Unit Objectives), a “Dramatic Moment,” and Lesson Plans with primary sources for student use. This unit should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for use by 7–12, they can be adapted for other grade levels.

The “Teacher Background Materials” will provide you with an overview of the unit as well as the context necessary to link the specific “Dramatic Moment” to the larger historical narrative. The Lesson Plans include a variety of ideas and approaches which the teacher can elaborate upon or cut as needed. Each lesson plan contains student resources consisting of primary source documents, handouts, and background materials. An annotated bibliography can be found at the end of the unit.

This teaching unit can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at various grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.



## TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

### I. UNIT OVERVIEW

This teaching unit, using Philadelphia and Pennsylvania as a case study, gives students the opportunity to examine critical events leading to the outbreak of the American Revolution, the political maneuvers resulting in Pennsylvania's support of a declaration of independence, the revolutionary goals of different groups, and the economic issues confronting Revolutionary America. Students explore revolutionary government-making at the state level focusing on the "radical" Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776 and comparing it to the more conservative Virginia Constitution of the same year. The unit also examines several reform movements, including the abolition of slavery, education, religious liberty, and penal reform that stemmed from the ideals of Pennsylvania's reformers of the revolutionary era. In addition, students examine the Pennsylvania debate over the ratification of the United States Constitution and the ultimate rejection of the radical state constitution of 1776 in a new state constitution passed in 1790.

### II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit, as a whole, may be used to enrich the study of the Revolutionary Era or individual lessons can be employed to supplement the study of the pivotal events of the period and major issues confronting the nation during and immediately following the Revolution. *Lights of Liberty: Philadelphia's Revolutionary Experience* may be used to prepare students for field trips that bring thousands of young people from across the nation to Philadelphia each year as part of an educational study program. The unit includes suggested activities associated with walking tours of Philadelphia that will extend the classroom to incorporate the rich history of the largest and most important city in America during the Revolutionary era.

### III. CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

*Lights of Liberty: Philadelphia's Revolutionary Experience* provides teaching materials that directly correlate to the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996) addressing elements of **Standards 1–3 of Era 3**, "Revolution and the New Nation." This unit likewise addresses learning skills outlined in the five Historical Thinking Standards in Part 2, Chapter 2 of the National Standards for History. The five lessons of this teaching unit provide primary source materials which challenge students to explain historical change and continuity, consider multiple perspectives, compare and contrast differing set of ideas and values, analyze interests of people involved in decision making, and marshal knowledge and logic to reach a conclusion.

#### IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To analyze a variety of primary source materials representing the differing perspectives held by revolutionary era Pennsylvanians.
- ◆ To examine the issues that led to the Revolution.
- ◆ To explore revolutionary government-making at the state level.
- ◆ To explain the goals and interests of different groups as they confronted political and economic issues during the Revolutionary War.
- ◆ To assess the effectiveness of various reform movement in the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary eras.
- ◆ To analyze issues involved in the debate over ratification of the U. S. Constitution

#### V. LESSON PLANS

1. Pennsylvania's Road to Revolution
2. Writing a Constitution for Pennsylvania
3. Philadelphia: A City at War
4. The Inner Revolution
5. Pennsylvania Debates Ratification of the Constitution of the United States