



## Grade 5 Lesson Plan #10: Patriots, Loyalists, and America's First Big Divide

### Teacher Notes

This lesson builds upon Lessons 8 and 9, where students explored representative government, the Bill of Rights, and the idea that governments must protect citizens' rights. In Lesson 10, students examine why many colonists chose to support independence during the American Revolution while others remained loyal to Britain or tried to stay neutral.

The focus of this lesson is the political philosophy of American Patriots and why those ideas led them to declare independence from the British Empire.

Students learn that:

- Colonists disagreed deeply about independence.
- Patriots believed government power came from the consent of the governed.
- Patriots believed people had natural rights that governments must protect.
- Many Patriots believed Britain had become a tyranny that violated those rights.
- The Revolution was not only about taxes—it was also about ideas, rights, fairness, and self-government.

This lesson is organized into two phases. Phase 1 builds meaning through vocabulary, reading, and text coding. Phase 2 builds argument through gathering evidence and using it to engage in writing. The lesson culminates in a structured Revolutionary Writers essay connected to Samuel Adams and Patriot resistance to British rule.

**Competition Note:** For teachers participating in the FIREWORKS250 year 2 cohort, this essay is one of nine potential essays students may select for the Revolutionary Writers Essay Competition. Each lesson introduces a key Founding Father or revolutionary while integrating civics standards. Teachers will introduce these individuals to students with a biography and video before students write their essay.

## Materials

- Highlighters or pencils for text coding
- Handout #1: Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals—America’s First Big Divide
- Handout #2: Essay Writing Organizer
- Handout #3: Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer
- Handout #4: Video Notes Organizer

*Note:* Students may use any notes from any handout (text coding, video notes, or graphic organizer) when writing their essay. These are not separate tasks but support tools for the final essay.

## Preparation

- Number paragraphs in the reading text.
- Review vocabulary: Patriots, Loyalists, Neutrals, Natural Rights, Consent of the Governed, Tyranny
- Before class, locate and read Samuel Adams’ biography from the White House Freedom 250 Founders Museum: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/freedom250/founders-museum/signers/profiles/#samuel-adams>
- Load the Samuel Adams video before class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrIUKiAoKyk>.
- [Optional—Load the video Road to Liberty: Intolerable Acts, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VKAmX7odTQ>. The use of this video is not explained in this lesson because it is optional. The video features Samuel Adams and can be used as an additional resource to show how the Intolerable Acts motivated the Patriots.]
- Prepare essay writing model. See sample paragraph in Essay Writing section.
- Be prepared to connect this lesson to: Lesson 8 (Representative government and citizen responsibility) and Lesson 9 (Bill of Rights).

## Standards Alignment

Florida Grade 5 Civics Literacy Standard **SS.5.CG.2.1**: Discuss the political ideas of Patriots, Loyalists and other colonists about the American Revolution. *Clarification*: Students will describe the political philosophy of American Patriots and why those ideas led them to declare independence from the British Empire.

## Essential Question

*Why did American Patriots believe independence from Britain was necessary?*

## Phase 1: Make Meaning (Input → Interpretation)

*Purpose: Students understand the political philosophy of American Patriots and why many colonists believed Britain had violated their rights.*

### Hook—Open Response (5 minutes)

- **Teacher prompt:** “What would make people risk everything to break away from their government?” Accept all reasonable responses.
- **Quick pair share:** Students briefly discuss. Do not correct yet. Students will return to these questions at the end of the lesson.
  - What problems become serious enough that people might decide they can no longer trust their government? (Possible student ideas: unfair treatment, lack of freedom, unfair laws, unfair taxes, safety, rights, voice in government.)

### Vocabulary Instruction (10–12 minutes)

- **Introduce and clarify the following terms:**
  - **Patriots:** Colonists who wanted independence from Britain.
  - **Loyalists:** Colonists who remained loyal to Britain and the king.
  - **Neutrals:** Colonists who tried not to take sides.
  - **Natural Rights:** Rights people are born with—such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
  - **Consent of the Governed:** The idea that government gets its power from the agreement of the people.
  - **Tyranny:** Cruel or unfair use of power by a government or ruler.
- **Teacher prompts:**
  - “Why might people disagree about whether a government is being fair?”
  - “What happens if people believe a government no longer protects their rights?”
  - “Why would some colonists still remain loyal to Britain?”

**Note:** Students should understand that the colonies were deeply divided. Not all colonists supported independence. This lesson focuses primarily on the ideas that motivated Patriots, but students should recognize that these disagreements affected families, communities, and friendships.

### Reading and Text Coding (25–30 minutes)

- **Teacher prompt:** “As you read today, pay attention to both the political ideas and the personal experiences that pushed many Patriots toward independence.”
- **Students read:** Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals—America’s First Big Divide (Handout #1)
- **Students use three codes to mark sections:**
  - P (Patriot Ideas): Describes Patriot political beliefs or arguments for independence.
  - B (British Actions): Describes actions by Britain or Parliament that Patriots believed were unfair.
  - I (Important Information): Important background or context that does not clearly fit P or B.

*Note:* The “I” code is intentionally open. Students who disagree about coding are engaging in strong historical thinking. Use discussion prompts such as: “Why did you choose I instead of P?” “Could this paragraph fit more than one code?” “What evidence supports your thinking?”

### Teacher Modeling—I Do (5 minutes)

- *Think aloud:*
  - “This paragraph explains natural rights and consent of the governed. That’s clearly Patriot political philosophy, so I’d code it P.”
  - “This section explains unfair taxes and punishment after the Boston Tea Party. That’s describing British actions, so I’d code it B.”
  - “This paragraph explains Franklin’s humiliation in London. That’s important background and personal motivation, so I might code it I.”
  - Model uncertainty and evidence-based reasoning. Not every paragraph fits neatly into one category. Encourage students to explain and defend their thinking.

### Guided Practice—We Do (5 minutes)

- *Read the next paragraph together.* Celebrate productive disagreement. There is no single correct answer for every paragraph.
  - “What is this section mostly explaining?”
  - “Is this describing Patriot beliefs, British actions, or important background information?”
  - “Could more than one answer make sense?”
  - “What evidence supports your thinking?”

### Independent Practice—You Do (15–20 minutes)

- *Students continue coding independently.*
- *Teacher prompts:*
  - “What political ideas are most important in this section?”
  - “What made Patriots believe Britain had become a tyranny?”
  - “How did personal experiences shape people’s choices?”
  - “What evidence supports your code?”

## Phase 2: Build Argument (Synthesis → Evidence → Writing)

*Purpose: Students gather and use evidence to explain why many Patriots believed independence was necessary.*

- *Teacher prompt:* “Now that we understand what made Patriots believe that Britain had become a tyranny, we are going to gather evidence to explain why Patriots believed independence was necessary.”

## Directed Note-Taking (15–20 minutes, Handout #3)

### *Guiding Question:*

*Why did Patriots believe independence from Britain was necessary?*

- **Teacher prompt:** “Today you are gathering evidence to explain why many Patriots believed independence was justified. Think carefully about both the ideas and experiences that influenced them.” Remind students to use paragraph numbers when citing text evidence. Students may draw on notes from any handout when writing their essay.

| Concern                            | Evidence (paragraph #) | What this shows about Patriot beliefs. |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Natural rights being violated      |                        |                                        |
| Lack of consent/<br>representation |                        |                                        |
| Fear of tyranny                    |                        |                                        |
| Desire for self-government         |                        |                                        |

- **Teacher prompts:**
  - “What rights did Patriots believe Britain was violating?”
  - “Why did representation matter so much?”
  - “What made Patriots believe Britain had too much power?”
  - “Which Patriot belief seems most important to you?”

## Meet a Founding Father: Samuel Adams (10 minutes)

- **Teacher prompt:** “We’ve read about the political ideas that influenced many Patriots during the Revolution. Now we’re going to ‘meet’ one of the strongest Patriot voices: Samuel Adams. Samuel Adams believed Britain was threatening colonial liberty and turning into a tyranny. As you listen to his biography and watch the video, think about the actions he took and why he believed resistance was necessary.”
- **Read** Samuel Adams’ biography aloud to the class from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/freedom250/founders-museum/signers/profiles/#samuel-adams>
- **Show** Samuel Adams’ video to the class from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrIUKiAoKyk>

**Note:** The video helps students connect emotionally and personally to Samuel Adams. The text remains the primary source for understanding Patriot political philosophy.

- *Students complete Handout #4 while watching.*
- *Teacher prompts (after video):*
  - “What risks did Samuel Adams take?”
  - “Why do you think he believed resistance was necessary?”
  - “How did he try to persuade other colonists?”
  - “What made him a Patriot?”

### Interpretive Discussion (10 minutes)

- *Teacher prompt:* “Why did Patriots believe independence was necessary?”
- *Students discuss:*
  - Were Patriots mainly reacting to taxes?
  - Or were they reacting to deeper ideas about rights and government?
  - What makes a government legitimate?
  - When do people believe government power has gone too far?
- *Teacher prompt (after students talk):* “Patriots believed government only works fairly when it protects rights and has the consent of the people. They believed Britain had broken that agreement.” Let this synthesis emerge from student responses rather than leading with it.

### Debate: Was the fight for American independence justified? (10–12 minutes)

*Teacher Setup:* Display the debate question and the four concerns:

#### The Debate Question

*Which concern best explains why Patriots supported independence?*

#### American Patriot concerns:

- Natural rights being violated
- Lack of representation/consent
- Fear of tyranny
- Desire for self-government

*Note:* These are not separate systems or categories. They are different ways the text helps explain why Patriots were concerned enough to fight for American independence.

#### Debate Directions

Choose one concern and explain why it best explains Patriot support for independence. Students must support their thinking using evidence from the text or video.

## Structured Discussion

- Call on students who chose different ideas. *Prompts include:*
  - “What evidence supports your position?”
  - “Does another group disagree?”
  - “Were Patriots mainly defending rights or reacting emotionally?”
  - “Would all colonists have agreed with the Patriots? Why or why not?”
  - “Would you have supported independence in 1776? Explain.”
  - There is no single correct answer. The goal is for students to use evidence to defend a position—exactly the thinking the essay requires. Teachers may shorten discussion or combine steps depending on class time.

## Bridge to Essay

- *Teacher prompt:* “Today you explored why Patriots believed independence was necessary. Your essay should explain the actions Samuel Adams took and why he believed resisting Britain was important.”

## Primary Assessment Task (20–25 minutes, Handout #2)

### Revolutionary Writers Essay: Samuel Adams

Important: This essay is the primary assessment for Lesson 10 and also serves as one of nine potential student essays for the FIREWORKS250 Revolutionary Writers Essay Competition for students with teachers participating in cohort 2. Participating teachers should save all student essays. Students will select their best essay at the end of the year to submit for the competition.

- *Teacher prompt:* “We met Samuel Adams today and learned about his beliefs and actions. Now use what you know about Adams and what you read in the text to explain your thinking. Use Handout #2 to plan and write your essay.”

## Writing Prompt

*Samuel Adams showed great courage and determination as a Patriot.*

*Describe two ways he stood up for what he believed in and explain why these actions made him a Patriot.*

*Explain your answer using details from the text and the video.*

Students should write a paragraph that:

- describes two actions Samuel Adams took.
- explains what Samuel Adams believed.
- explains why Patriots believed resistance was necessary.
- uses evidence from the text and video.

Sentence starters to share with students (optional):

Samuel Adams believed...

One way he stood up for his beliefs was...

Patriots believed Britain was...

This action showed courage because...

Samuel Adams became a Patriot because...

Sample paragraph:

*Samuel Adams showed great courage and determination as a Patriot. One way he stood up for what he believed in was by organizing protests against unfair British taxes like the Boston Tea Party. He believed Britain was treating colonists unfairly and taking away their rights. Another way he stood up for his beliefs was by writing speeches and newspaper articles encouraging colonists to resist British rule. These actions made him a Patriot because he worked hard to protect liberty and convince people that the colonies should govern themselves.*

Closure (5 minutes)

- **Teacher prompt:** “Today we learned that the American Revolution was not only about taxes or anger. Many Patriots believed Britain had violated important principles about rights, representation, and self-government.”
- **Turn-and-Talk teacher prompt:** “Which Patriot idea do you think mattered most—and why?”
- **Exit Ticket prompt:** “What belief most strongly pushed Patriots toward independence?”

## Handout #1

### Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals—America's First Big Divide

In the 1770s, the 13 American colonies were part of the British Empire. When trouble grew between the colonies and Britain, people had to decide whose side they were on. Estimates vary, but many historians say the colonists split into three main groups, with about a third of the colonists in each group:

- **Patriots**—They wanted independence from Britain and were ready to fight for it.
- **Loyalists (also called Tories)**—They stayed loyal to King George III and the British government.
- **Neutrals**—They tried to stay out of the fight and not pick a side.

This split turned neighbors against neighbors and even tore families apart. It made the American Revolution feel like America's first civil war—a war not just against Britain, but also between Americans who disagreed about the future of their country. This story focuses on the Patriots and the political ideas that led them to break away from Britain.

#### What Did Patriots Believe? Their Political Philosophy

Patriots believed in powerful ideas that came from writers like John Locke. They said every person is born with natural rights (or unalienable rights) to life, liberty, and property. Governments exist to protect those rights. The power of government should come from the consent of the governed. That means the people must agree to be ruled. If a government stops protecting rights and begins to hurt the people instead, the people have the right to change it or even create a new one.

Patriots believed King George III and Parliament were breaking this agreement. They pointed to unfair taxes, such as the Stamp Act and the Tea Act, passed without letting colonists vote in Parliament. They also complained about British soldiers searching homes without permission and about closing Boston's port as punishment for the Boston Tea Party. To Patriots, these actions were examples of tyranny—a government acting like a cruel king with too much power.

They wanted a government where the people had more say and their rights were safe. That is why they declared independence in 1776.

#### Famous Patriots and Why They Chose Independence

**George Washington.** George Washington was a tall, strong Virginia planter who had served bravely in the British army during the French and Indian War. Politically, he believed in the ideas

of natural rights and consent of the governed. He saw Britain's new taxes and rules as tyranny that took away colonial freedoms. As a leader in Virginia's government, he spoke out against the king's unfair laws. He said they treated Americans like second-class subjects instead of equal citizens.

Washington also had personal reasons for supporting independence. He owned a lot of land and felt Britain's policies hurt his own life and future. He had hoped to get more western land as a reward for his army service, but the king stopped colonists from settling there. Washington also had to pay high taxes on his tobacco crops while British merchants grew rich. These frustrations made him feel betrayed by the country he had once fought for. In 1775, he agreed to lead the Continental Army, risking his home, family, and life to fight for a new nation where people could control their own destiny.

**Benjamin Franklin.** Benjamin Franklin was a clever inventor, writer, printer, and diplomat from Pennsylvania. He had lived in London for many years and was famous on both sides of the Atlantic. Politically, he started out as a loyal British subject. He believed the colonies and Britain could solve their problems together. Franklin strongly supported the idea of natural rights and tried to convince British leaders that colonists deserved fair treatment, representation in Parliament, and respect for their liberties. For years he worked hard as a colonial agent in London, writing letters, meeting officials, and publishing articles to explain the American side.

But in 1774, angry British officials forced him to stand alone in a crowded room called the "Cockpit." For hours, they shouted insults at him, called him a traitor and a thief, and publicly humiliated him. This attack was meant to shame him into silence, but it backfired. Franklin realized the king and Parliament would never give Americans the consent of the governed or treat them as equals. He returned to America fully committed to independence.

Franklin's personal reasons were tied to his love of freedom and progress. He had spent his life building libraries, starting fire companies, inventing useful things like the lightning rod, and improving life for ordinary people. He believed a free America would be a place where anyone could rise through hard work and ideas, without a distant king holding them back. The humiliation in London and Britain's refusal to change made him see independence as the only way to protect those dreams. Franklin helped write the Declaration of Independence. Later he served as a diplomat in France, where he worked hard to win crucial help for the Patriots. He became one of the most important voices for the new nation.

**Samuel Adams.** Samuel Adams was a Boston businessman and one of the most passionate Patriot leaders. Politically, he was a strong believer in natural rights and consent of the governed. He argued that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies without their

representatives' approval. He used the phrase "No taxation without representation" to rally people. Adams believed the British government was turning into a tyranny that threatened every colonist's liberty.

On a personal level, Adams was a family man with deep connections to the community, but he struggled with money. He felt Britain's taxes and trade rules made life harder for ordinary people like him. Adams organized secret groups like the Sons of Liberty, planned protests (including the Boston Tea Party), and wrote newspaper articles to wake people up to the danger. Adams wanted to protect the freedoms that let everyday colonists live, work, and speak freely. His fiery speeches and organizing helped turn many neutrals into Patriots and kept the movement strong.

These Patriots—and thousands of ordinary farmers, shopkeepers, and families—believed the ideas of natural rights, consent of the governed, and the right to change a bad government were worth risking everything for. Their political philosophy, mixed with personal hurts like humiliation, lost opportunities, and a desire for a freer future, pushed them to declare independence on July 4, 1776, starting a new nation.

The Revolution was hard and divided Americans deeply, but the Patriots' political philosophy became the foundation of the United States: a country where government gets its power from the people and must protect everyone's rights. As a fifth grader today, you live in the country those Patriots dreamed of—one built on the idea that "We the People" should rule ourselves and protect everyone's rights.

## Handout #2: Essay Writing Organizer

### Writing Prompt

*Samuel Adams showed great courage and determination as a Patriot.*

*Describe two ways he stood up for what he believed in and explain why these actions made him a Patriot.*

*Explain your answer using details from the text and the video.*

Remember: Use what you learned about Samuel Adams from his biography and the video, and what you read in the text about Patriot concerns and actions.

### Step 1: Choose a Patriot Concern

Which concern do you think best explains why Patriots supported independence?

☐ Natural rights being violated   ☐ Lack of representation/consent   ☐ Fear of tyranny   ☐ Desire for self-government

### Step 2: Plan Your Essay

What did Samuel Adams believe about British treatment of Americans and how they should respond?  
Adams believed that \_\_\_\_\_

What is one action Samuel Adams took?

One way he stood up for his beliefs was \_\_\_\_\_

What is a second action Samuel Adams took?

Another way he stood up for his beliefs was \_\_\_\_\_

Why did these actions make Samuel Adams a Patriot?

These actions made him a Patriot because \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3: Gather Your Evidence

Evidence from the text (include paragraph number):

Paragraph \_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence from the video or Adams' biography:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Step 4: Write Your Essay

Use the space below to write your essay paragraph.

[illegible]

### Sentence Starters (optional)

Samuel Adams believed that...

One way he stood up for his beliefs was...

Patriots believed Britain was...

This action showed courage because...

Samuel Adams became a Patriot because...

## Handout #3: Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer

*Guiding Question:*

*Why did Patriots believe independence from Britain was necessary?*

**Directions:** As you read the text, record evidence below. Find evidence for each concern Americans had about government power. Include paragraph numbers for text evidence.

| Concern                        | Evidence (paragraph #) | What this shows about Patriot beliefs |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Natural rights being violated  |                        |                                       |
| Lack of consent/representation |                        |                                       |
| Fear of tyranny                |                        |                                       |
| Desire for self-government     |                        |                                       |

**Think About It:**

What did Patriots most strongly believe about government?

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Which Patriot concern do you think mattered most? Why?

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## Handout #4: Video Notes Organizer

**Video:** Samuel Adams <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrIUKiAoKyk>

**Directions:** Listen as your teacher reads Samuel Adams' biography and as you watch the video. Adams had strong beliefs about rights and resistance. Answer the questions below.

1. What risks did Samuel Adams take?

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2. Why do you think Samuel Adams believed resistance was necessary?

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3. How did Samuel Adams try to persuade other colonists?

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4. Based on what you know about Samuel Adams, what do you think made him a Patriot?  
Write your first thoughts here. (You will develop this further in your essay.)

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