Lesson 12: Neutrals and the American Revolution

Teacher Version

FIREWORKS250
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Essential Question

Why did some colonists choose to remain neutral during the American Revolution?

Lesson Bridge

Review Lesson 10:

- Patriots

Review Lesson 11:

- Loyalists

Bridge Question:

- How could someone decide not to support either side?

Hook Question

If two groups around you strongly disagreed and were beginning to fight, would you always feel like you had to choose a side? Why or why not?

Key Vocabulary

Introduce and clarify the following terms:

- Neutrals
- Patriots
- Loyalists
- Quaker
- Pacifist
- Persecution

Reading and Text Coding

N = Neutral Motivation

P = Patriot Perspective

L = Loyalist Perspective

I = Important Information

- Teacher Modeling—I Do
- Guided Practice—We Do
- Independent Practice—You Do

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer

Concern	Evidence (paragraph #)	What this shows about neutrality
Fear of violence and danger		
Religious or moral beliefs		
Practical and everyday concerns		
Uncertainty about the outcome		

Video Segment (10 minutes)

Video: Joseph Hewes

Teacher Prompt: "In the text from this lesson, we read about Elizabeth Drinker, a Quaker who tried to remain neutral during the American Revolution. Now we are going to meet Joseph Hewes, who also came from a Quaker background but chose to support independence and became a signer of the Declaration of Independence. As you listen and watch, think about why two people with similar religious influences might make different choices during the Revolution. You are going to have to make some inferences based on what you've read about Elizabeth Drinker, the Joseph Hewes biography I will read to you, and the video we will watch together."

Note: The video may help students connect emotionally and personally to Joseph Hewes and the choice he made to become a Patriot despite his Quaker background. The reading remains the primary source for understanding the different choice made by Elizabeth Drinker.

Video Segment (10 minutes)…cont'd

- ***Students complete Handout #4 while watching.***
- ***Teacher prompts (after video):***
  - "Why did Elizabeth Drinker remain neutral?"
  - "Why did Joseph Hewes support independence?"
  - "How did Quaker beliefs influence each person?"
  - "Why might people with similar backgrounds make different decisions?"

Interpretive Discussion

- ***Teacher Prompt:*** "Why did some colonists choose neutrality?"
- ***Students discuss:***
  - Was neutrality easy or difficult?
  - What risks came with remaining neutral?
  - Why might someone avoid taking sides?
  - Can a person care deeply about their country and still remain neutral?

Interpretive Discussion…cont'd

- ***Teacher Prompt (after students talk):*** "Many neutral colonists were not indifferent. They cared deeply about their families, communities, and beliefs. Some believed that avoiding conflict was the most responsible choice."

Debate: Why did many colonists remain neutral? (10-12 minutes)

Neutral Concerns:

Fear of violence and danger

Religious or moral beliefs

Practical and everyday concerns

Uncertainty about the outcome

Debate: Why did many colonists remain neutral? (10-12 minutes)…cont'd

The Debate Question

Which concern best explains why many colonists remained neutral during the American Revolution?

Debate Directions

Choose one concern and explain why it best explains colonists choosing neutrality. Students must support their thinking using evidence from the text or video.

Final Writing Prompt

Revolutionary Writers Essay: Joseph Hewes and Elizabeth Drinker

Imagine you are a Quaker living in 1776.
Would you remain neutral like Elizabeth Drinker or become a Patriot like Joseph Hewes?
Explain your choice using at least two reasons and
support your answer with evidence from the text and video.

Students should write a paragraph that:

- explains which choice they would make
- describes Joseph Hewes's perspective
- describes Elizabeth Drinker's perspective
- explains how Quaker beliefs influenced each person
- uses evidence from the text and video

Final Writing Prompt…cont'd

Important: This essay is the primary assessment for Lesson 12 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.

Closure (5 minutes)

- ***Teacher prompt:*** "Today we learned that not all colonists chose to become Patriots or Loyalists. Many people remained neutral because of their beliefs, fears, responsibilities, or uncertainty about the future."
- ***Turn-and-Talk:*** "Which reason for neutrality do you think is most understandable—and why?"
- ***Exit Ticket:*** "What was the strongest reason some colonists chose not to take a side during the American Revolution?"