

Lesson 13:

Forms of Political Participation in Colonial America

Teacher Version

Essential Question

How did colonists participate in government and community life before and during the American Revolution?

Lesson Bridge

Review Lesson 10:

- Patriots

Review Lesson 11:

- Loyalists

Review Lesson 12:

- Neutrals

Bridge Question:

- How have we seen different colonists participate in civic life so far?

Hook Question

How can ordinary people help make decisions in their community?

Key Vocabulary

Introduce and clarify the following terms:

- Political Participation
- Voting
- Jury
- Militia
- Minutemen

Reading and Text Coding

V = Voting

J = Jury Service

M = Militia Service

I = Important Information

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

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer

Category	Evidence (paragraph #)	What this shows about colonist participation in civic life
Voting		
Jury Service		
Militia Service		
Leadership and Public Service		

Video Segment (10 minutes)

Videos: [Lewis Morris](#) *and* [The Road to Liberty: Lexington and Concord](#)

Teacher Prompt: “Lewis Morris served his community in many ways, including as a Major General in the New York militia during the American Revolution. Many ordinary colonists also served their communities through militia service. Communities established the militia to provide protection for their residents. Typically, men ages 16-60 were required to serve. Today, citizens continue to serve their communities in many ways, although local militias no longer play the role they did during the colonial period. However, both of these forms of service were critical as the colonies began their fight for independence. The next video shows how ordinary citizens responded when conflict between Britain and the colonies reached a breaking point.”

Note: Lewis Morris demonstrates participation through leadership and public service, including his service as a Major General in the New York militia. The Lexington and Concord video highlights how ordinary colonists also participated through militia service. Together, the two videos show different ways colonists contributed to their communities.

Video Segment (10 minutes)...cont'd

- ***Students complete Handout #4 while watching.***
- ***Teacher prompts (after video):***
 - “How did Lewis Morris participate in public life?”
 - “Why did colonists join local militias?”
 - “What responsibilities did minutemen have?”
 - “How did participation help communities?”

Interpretive Discussion

- ***Teacher Prompt:*** “Which form of political participation seems most important in colonial America?”
- ***Students discuss:***
 - Which category appears most often?
 - Why was voting important? Militias? Juries?
 - How did leaders help communities?
 - Which category seems most important to you for civic life at that time?

Interpretive Discussion...cont'd

- ***Teacher Prompt (after students talk):*** “Colonists participated in different ways. Communities depended on citizens who voted, served on juries, protected their neighbors, and helped lead government. Which do you think seems most important in colonial America?”

Debate: Which form of political participation was most important? (10-12 minutes)

Political Participation categories:

Voting

Jury Service

Militia Service

Leadership and Public Service

Debate: Which form of political participation was most important? (10-12 minutes)...cont'd

The Debate Question

Which form of political participation was most important in colonial America?

Debate Directions

Choose one category and explain why it was the most important form of political participation in colonial America. Students must support their thinking using evidence from the text or videos.

Final Writing Prompt

Revolutionary Writers Essay: Militia Participation

*If you had been a colonist living near Lexington or Concord in April 1775,
would you have joined the militia or minutemen to defend your community?
Explain your answer using details from the text and videos.*

Students should write a paragraph that:

- states their position
- explains why they would join or not join
- uses evidence from the text and videos
- explains how militia service was a form of political participation

Final Writing Prompt...cont'd

Important: This essay is the primary assessment for Lesson 13 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 colonists participated in civic life in many different ways.”
- **Turn-and-Talk:** “Which form of participation would you have been most likely to choose? Why?”
- **Exit Ticket:** “What is one way colonists participated in government or community life?”