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# Comparing Revolutionary War Primary Sources

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## TPS- DePaul Level II Program

### Lesson Plan

Title: Comparing and finding evidence in a Revolutionary War primary source and the Social Studies textbook

Overview: We will review some terms and definitions that are critical for the student's understanding of their reading. They will read certain excerpts from a primary source Revolutionary War time period journal and their Social Studies textbook. They will be asked to answer questions to show their understanding and thinking about the time period.

Goal: This lesson will show students that information found in their textbook may or may not always agree with a primary source. It will show that primary sources are written from one perspective and may have some biases due to the thinking of the writer.

Objectives:

- Students will understand what a primary source is.
- Students will compare a primary source to their Social Studies textbook.
- Students will make inferences from their primary source reading.

Investigative question: What is a primary source and how can it help us learn about historical events?

Time Required: One lesson of at least one hour

Students will be using the laptop lab for this lesson. We will begin by reviewing vocabulary they need to know and looking at a map of New Jersey to see where Margaret Morris lived and its proximity to Trenton, NJ. I will show them how to log in to the necessary website and then students will work in pairs to answer the questions.

Recommended Grade Range: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Subject: Social Studies- Revolutionary War

Standards:

RL1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

RI1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI5 Compare and contrast the overall structure of events, ideas, concept, or information in two or more texts.

RI6 Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

RI7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

W7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies essential question: How did the patriots' point of view differ from the loyalists' point of view?

Credits: Nancy Cocconi

**Preparation:**

**Materials Used:**

- A list of vocabulary words pertinent to the lesson.
- An explanation of the journal they will be using, a map of the area in New Jersey referenced, and directions to get into the primary source journal.
- Questions for the students to answer.
- Rubric for evaluating their work.

**Resources Used:**

Building a Nation: Scott Foresman Social Studies 5<sup>th</sup> grade textbook

“Words You’ll Need to Understand” (shown to students on Smartboard)

- Private Journal- kept during a portion of the Revolutionary War for the amusement of a sister
- URL: <https://archive.org/details/privatejournalke00morr>
- Author/Creator: Margaret Morris
- Date: 1836

**Procedure:**

1. Meet with the fifth grade team to review the lesson and get any feedback.
2. On the SmartBoard, pull up vocabulary words that are relevant to the lesson.

### Words You'll Need to Understand

- Primary Source- an account of something that happened by a person who witnessed or participated in the event. Read page 284 and 285 of your textbook.
  - Mercenary- A soldier paid to fight for another country. The British paid men from Germany to fight for them against the Patriots.
  - Hessian- A German mercenary in the British army in America during the Revolutionary War.
  - Tory- An American colonist who supported the British side during the American Revolution.
  - Patriot- People who opposed British rule.
  - Regular- British soldier
  - Galley and gondola- a low flat ship with one or more sails and up to three banks of oars, chiefly used for warfare, trade, and piracy.
  - Quaker beliefs- They do not believe in war, they are teetotalers (they do not drink alcoholic beverages) and they are called "friends".
3. Review these words with the students. This will help students connect their prior knowledge to insure their understanding as they read from the textbook and the journal.
  4. Pull up the page that explains what the journal is, how to get to it, and show the map of New Jersey showing location of Burlington and Trenton.

**In this lesson, we will be reading a journal (primary source) written by Margaret Morris beginning on Dec. 6, 1776. She is a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). She was left a widow early in life and died in 1816 at the age of 79. She was living in Burlington, N.J. on the banks of the Delaware River when she wrote this journal.**



Open the website [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov).

In the search box, type in Private journal- kept during a portion of the revolutionary war, for the amusement of a sister.

Click on the journal link, click read online, full screen, enlarge.

5. Hand out papers with the questions for the students to answer.

**Answer the following questions by referring to the journal and your textbook. As you are reading, write any questions or things you wonder about on a separate piece of paper.**

**1.) Read page 5 and 6 of the diary. How can you tell that Margaret Morris is a religious woman? Give at least two pieces of evidence from the journal.**

**2.) Read page 304 (column 2) in your textbook. According to the textbook, what is one reason Washington was successful on Christmas Day?**

**3.) Read the Dec. 27th entry (page 18) in the journal. According to the journal, what is one reason Washington was successful on Christmas Day? How did Margaret Morris feel about this?**

**4.) In this same reading, how did the casualty report (number of dead and injured) or soldiers taken prisoner in the journal compare to what we read in the textbook? What could account for this difference?**

**5.) Compare what is said about the appearance of the troops on page 16 in the journal with what is said on page 304 (bottom of column 1) in your textbook.**

**6.) In your own words, describe a primary source.**

**7.) Read page 11 and 12. Read page 16. Which side of the conflict does Margaret Morris sympathize (agree) with- the loyalists or the patriots? Cite evidence from the journal.**

6. As the students are reading, they are to write down any questions or things they wonder about. They read to investigate the questions on their paper. They will be able to construct new knowledge as they compare the two sources. This should generate other questions and wondering. Their learning will be expressed in their writing as they answer the questions.
7. After 45-60 minutes, we will share and review our findings helping the students to reflect on their learning.

**Evaluation:**

The rubric below can be used to show how well the students work together in their pairs or teams and how well they were able to cite evidence, draw inferences, and create new learning.

Student Name:

**Collaborative Work Skills**

**Revolutionary War Journal**

Category	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Quality of Work	Provides work of the highest quality.	Provides high quality work.	Provides work that occasionally needs to be checked/redone by other group members to ensure quality.	Provides work that usually needs to be checked/redone by others to ensure quality.
Attitude	Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task.	Rarely is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the task.	Occasionally is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Usually has a positive attitude about the task.	Often is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Often has a negative attitude about the task.
Focus On Task	Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done. Very self-directed.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Other group members can count on this person.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Other group members must sometimes nag, prod, and remind to keep this person on	Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.

			task.	
Ability to Cite Evidence	When answering questions, student is able to cite several pieces of evidence to back up answer.	When answering questions, students can find one piece of evidence to back up answer.	When answering question, student is vague when citing evidence.	Student has difficulty finding evidence to back up answer.

13-16 Points = A

9 – 12 Points = B

5 – 8 Points = C

## Revolutionary War Primary Source Lesson Reflection

Nancy Cocconi - Graham Elementary School

March 19, 2014

As I was planning this lesson and opened the Library of Congress primary source journal from a school computer, I realized the firewall in our district does not allow the students to access the archived files at the Library of Congress. When I asked a district tech person to help with this, I was told they would not open it for student use. The solution I found was to save the file as a PDF and some of the pages were truly unreadable. By signing in the laptops under my name, the students were able to read the journal and this made the lesson much easier for the students.

The students had good background knowledge from the Revolutionary War time period but it was not evident when we began the lesson. Possible reasons are that the students were not in school yesterday due to a staff SIP Day and so may have been getting a slow start on the day. They also had hurried to get to the laptop lab for this lesson. It is possible having two observers may have made them a little reticent to answer questions even when they knew the answer.

I realize this is a difficult lesson for 5<sup>th</sup> graders. They had to work hard to understand the complex text in the journal. Many unfamiliar words were used in the journal and they were not familiar with the colonial language. I needed to read it several times myself in order to understand it. The students worked in pairs and the engagement was high. It was interesting to hear many of their comments as they tried to understand the journal. The lesson is long and some of the kids were struggling to stay focused. I might take out the first question – how can you tell that Margaret Morris is a religious woman? This question seemed to take the students about twenty minutes to answer and they really didn't need to make any comparisons or create any new knowledge when answering this question. They were strictly finding evidence from the journal. If this question were removed, the lesson would probably take just an hour for their work and then a few minutes to share out their findings.

The lesson was definitely rigorous and a good example of using the Common Core Standards. At our district LMC Director's meeting, we have opportunities to share lessons that we have taught. I was able to share this lesson with the other Directors in our district and it is posted on our LMC Directors google docs page for others to use. Mrs. Hume told me her students enjoyed the lesson and were still buzzing about it when they returned to their classroom.