"It is a glorious victory. It will rejoice the hearts everywhere and give new life to our hitherto waning fortunes...If he (General George Washington) does nothing more, he will live in history as a great military commander" (Meltzer, 108). With these words recorded on Dec. 26, 1776, Washington's aide, Colonel John Fitzgerald, stated the importance of the American success at the Battle of Trenton. This battle, along with the nighttime crossing of the Delaware River and the Battle of Princeton, demonstrated the bold and inspirational leadership of Commander-in-Chief George Washington. These events of the winter of 1776-1777, known as the Christmas Campaign, are widely believed to have changed the course of the American Revolution.

For many Americans Emanuel Leutze's historical painting, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, with its depiction of determination in the face of adversity, symbolizes the War of Independence. Many viewers of the painting believe that it accurately represents the events of Christmas night 1776. Painted in Germany in 1851 by Emanuel Leutze nearly 75 years after the event, it was put on display in Brooklyn in October of that year where it was seen by more than five thousand viewers in two weeks. One hundred fifty years later it remains an enduring image of the American Revolution and of George Washington. American art critics and historians have stated that it is neither history nor art (Scheer, 17). What is the real story of the crossing of the Delaware River and of the Battles of Trenton and Princeton? How did General George Washington and a rag-tag American army defeat Hessian mercenaries and British troops and change the course of the war?

*The Christmas Campaign of 1776: Many Voices* is a resource-based, collaboratively planned and team-taught unit in which students are active learners who apply new skills as they do historical research. Students will use primary and secondary sources to study the many perspectives on this famous event. They will examine history paintings and portraits using a technique called "object analysis." Students will learn how to examine maps and journals to see the words behind the myth. From these "many voices" students will gain a larger understanding of General George Washington and the important events of the winter of 1776.

**Unit objectives for students:**

1. Students will understand the importance of the battles of Trenton and Princeton in the winter of 1776/1777.

2. Students will understand the bold and inspirational leadership of General George Washington in these important battles.
3. Students will access, evaluate and use a variety of primary sources (historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifact, historical sites, art and other records from the past) and secondary sources and judge their authority.

4. Students will apply a methodology called object analysis (description, deduction, and speculation) to study history paintings and portraits.

**Major Components of this unit**

**Resource-Based Learning: What is It?**

Resource-based learning is an approach to learning which a) actively involves the student in the center of all learning activities, b) is dependent on the articulation of process and content objectives and c) requires deliberate planning so that multiple resources and varied teaching strategies are incorporated in all plans (Brown, 82). The teacher is not the source of all knowledge but rather a facilitator. This unit was designed using this philosophy.

**Applying Content and Process (or Performance) Standards as a Framework for Learning**

*The Christmas Campaign of 1776: Many Voices* integrates the content and performance standards for tenth grade American history students as presented in the Board of Education document "Higher Standards for Social Studies," *New Haven Public Schools Academic Performance Standards*. Expectations are that students will "gain a basic knowledge of American culture through a chronological study of major issues, movements, people, and events." More specifically the content standards state that "students will discuss key battles, military turning points, and strategic decisions" and "students will discuss ...the individuals who provided leadership in the Revolution." In addition tenth grade American history students should demonstrate competency in a variety of performance standards such as the ability to "gather historical information from multiple primary and secondary sources." New Haven's Information Literacy Curriculum also expects students to become "information literate," able to access, evaluate, and use information.

**Using Multiple Resources in History Teaching**

Students typically see history as the study of "what happened way back then" and "just give me the facts, ma'am". Robert Darnton, professor of history at Princeton University, states that "students arrive in class with the illusion that we've got history pretty much under control. It's in books they think: hard facts bound between hard cover" (Darnton, 15). Through using multiple sources primary and secondary print, non-print, electronic and human students can better understand why "what really happened" can be furiously debated, both at the time of the event and even now.

Today's history textbooks do not look like the text-heavy editions of the past. They feature more illustrations and more references to primary sources. Reproductions of maps, engravings, prints, portraits, money, as well as excerpts from journals, diaries, documents, etc. are common. Photographs of artifacts such as weapons, tools and food are also featured. There are references to historic places, architecture, music, stories, folklore the building blocks of history.
Primary sources materials created by people who were witnesses or participants are no longer found only in reference libraries, museums, and historical societies. Many documents have been digitized and accessible on the Internet, including audio and video clips. Students can visit virtual museums and libraries, historical sites, archives, etc. and find primary source materials in abundance. Diaries and journals, maps, photographs, and other images and words from the past are important, and too often underutilized sources for students.

Secondary sources like monographs, reference materials, chronologies, atlases, videos, magazines, etc. are also important to history students. An overview in a general encyclopedia is a good place to find basic information who, what, where, when, why about a topic. A book about the topic will probably include a list of works cited or a bibliography that identifies additional resources.

Movies and videos are useful sources, especially for visual learners. Teachers using videos, however, must present thoughtful and structured activities that reinforce viewing as another way of gathering information and not just a means of entertainment.

As we can see, the materials useful in a history curriculum are varied and history instruction should reflect it. In this unit students will use history paintings, portraits, maps, videos, journals, letters, digitized books, a virtual museum, general and reference books about the period, biographies, websites, magazine articles, and other resources both primary and secondary. See Resources for Classroom and Student Use.

The teacher/s must make the decision as to whether these resources will be organized and available to students (photocopies of articles, printouts of webpages, reserved book collections, a list of possible Internet sites, etc.) or located by the students independently. This is in part a time management issue. There are occasions when class time is better spent in working with materials and other times where "location and access" are important skills to be taught and applied.

Using Primary Sources

Primary sources fascinate students because they are real and they are personal; history is humanized through them. Through using original sources, students touch the lives of the people about whom history is written. They participate in human emotions and in the values and attitudes of the past.

Students can use primary sources to study and interpret the past just as historians do. By doing so, they will do more than just absorb information; they can learn to analyze, evaluate, recognize bias and contradiction, and weigh the significance of evidence. They can also better understand that there can be multiple perspectives on issues. Working with primary sources helps students develop knowledge, skills, and analytical abilities. Students learn to ask questions, think critically, make intelligent inferences, and develop reasoned explanations and interpretations of events and issues in the past. Constructing their own understanding of people, events and ideas can bring history alive.

Students who use primary sources must learn new skills in order to unlock these witnesses from the past. See the lessons for some ideas.

Using History Paintings and Portraits

Reproductions of many paintings and portraits are now included in American history textbooks. Three of the texts used by students in New Haven pubic schools include Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre in full color with the red of the British uniforms repeating in the blood of the fallen patriots. John Trumbull's The
Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775; The Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776; and The Surrender at Yorktown are found in most texts. And it is a rare textbook that does not include one of the most famous history paintings of all, Washington Crossing the Delaware by Emanuel Leutze.

A typical response to art is to make a quick and personal judgment. In this unit students will learn to examine a painting or portrait (as they would other sources) in a thoughtful and productive way. One approach to studying art and artifacts is "object analysis", a technique developed by Dr. Jules Prown and explored in this seminar "Art As Evidence: The Interpretation of Objects."

"Object analysis" is a three step process. In step one "description" the viewer observes the evidence presented within the object itself. The viewer does an inventory or list of all subject matter, large or small. This is the time to be totally objective, with the purpose being to record all visual information. In the following steps, this information may or may not be informative. The viewer next analyzes the painting in terms of its formal structure (two- and three-dimensional) as well as color, light, texture.

In step two "deduction" the viewer examines the evidence in order to support deductions. Here the focus moves from the object itself to the relationship between the object and the viewer. The viewer imagines what it would be like to be "in" the picture, sensually, intellectually and emotionally. It is not at all unusual to find that the emotional response is shared among a painting's viewers. Again, the viewer should identify those descriptive elements that cause the response.

The third and last step is "speculation" which moves completely to the mind of the viewer. After reviewing the information developed in the two preceding steps, the viewer develops theories and hypotheses. From these theories and hypotheses research questions can be developed (Prown, 9).

In this unit, students will examine three history paintings related to the battles at Trenton and Princeton (including the crossing of the Delaware) and two full-length portraits of General George Washington. The teacher/s will model the process and then students will apply it.


This example of object analysis is in narrative form in order to give the reader a sense of the painting and also what the intellectual process would look like. In the classroom the teacher and/or students would begin by listing objects in the painting. From that list deductions would be made and questions developed.

**Description**

In the foreground, General George Washington, in full uniform, looks directly at the viewer as he stands casually with his left hand resting on a cannon barrel on a gun carriage. Behind him is a military figure holding the reins of a brown horse and a flag with thirteen six-pointed white stars on a blue field. In the dirt in the left foreground is a crumpled red flag and in the right foreground two multi-colored flags drape off the cannon and into the dirt.

In the middle ground two male military figures in blue uniforms approach on horseback. In the background a column of fourteen military figures (each in blue has an upraised sword and there are nine in red) march from left to right. Behind them are a wooden fence and seven buildings of which one is large and with a distinctive projecting porch and cupola.
Deduction

The scene portrayed is after the conclusion of a battle. The evidence is this: three captured flags tossed or dragging on the ground while another flag waves proudly; a small group of soldiers in blue uniforms and with swords drawn surround and guard another group of soldiers in red uniforms as they march out of sight. We see the victors and the vanquished.

We can also deduce that the time of year is late fall/winter/early spring (bare tree branches) and that the background with its setting of large building with its distinctive cupola and porch depicts an actual place.

Speculation/Questions for further research

Keeping in mind that our objectives for this unit are to identify key battles, turning points, strategic decisions and learn about the leadership abilities of General George Washington and others, here are some questions that can focus further research:

Questions about the Military Operation

• What was the strategic role of cannons and other artillery in this battle?
• What was the strategic role of the cavalry in this battle?
• What were the personal armaments (swords, musket, handgun, bayonet, pike, etc.) and uniforms of an officers and enlisted men like and did these change/improve during the war?
• Which of the nine Principles of War (mass, objective, surprise, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, and simplicity) (9 Principles of War) favored the Americans in this battle? Which favored the British?
• Did the building with the distinctive architecture play an important or interesting role in the battle?

Questions about the artist and painting

• Why was this portrait painted? What was Charles Willson Peale’s relationship with Washington?
• When was this portrait painted and is that of significance?
• What was the response to this painting?

Team Teaching

The unit will be team-taught by an American history teacher and a library media specialist. The benefits of
team teaching are well-known. Students have access to a "bigger brain." The classroom teacher brings an in-depth knowledge of curriculum content and of the students; the library media specialist contributes an understanding of the research process, particularly in regards to accessing, evaluating and using information, especially primary sources.

There is also an improved student/teacher ratio, always helpful in supervision. Different groupings become possible. One of the adults can work with a smaller group, introducing or reinforcing skills. Or the library media specialist can help students with Internet research while the classroom teacher assists with the other resources. Team teaching also makes continuity more likely, especially in the event of teacher or library media specialist absence the show goes on. And the adults can support each other!

**Collaborative Planning**

Team teaching requires collaboration. From initial planning to final assessment of the students and the unit, collaboration between the library media specialist and teacher is very important. The planning process begins with a discussion of objectives, content, possible products, potential resources and technologies, learning activities, a timeline, skills needed (including skills to be taught), instructional arrangements (large, group, small group, individual, for example) and assessment. They create an essential or "big" question that will guide the research. The teacher and the library media specialist divide responsibilities. For example, the classroom teacher might group students and communicate with parents while the library media specialist locates and organizes resources. Both teach skills and supervise.

**Background Information on the Christmas Campaign**

In late 1776 General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, desperately needed a victory. Defeated in New York, Washington and his troops retreated across New Jersey and crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania on Dec. 8 just as the British reached Trenton. Camping on the western banks of the Delaware in mid December 1776, not only were the men cold, hungry and demoralized, they were ending their one-year enlistments at the end of the month and looking forward to going home. This would leave Continental Army is desperate shape. The Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, was also demoralized and ready to flee to Baltimore which they did on Dec.12 The situation was grim.

On Dec. 17, the British Army went into winter quarters in New York leaving garrisons at Trenton, Princeton, and several other locations. The troops defending Trenton were Hessian mercenaries led by Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall. Already contemptuous of the fighting ability of the Americans, the Hessian troops relaxed for their Christmas celebrations and Rall partied most of the night.

Washington developed a plan for a three-pronged surprise attack across the Delaware River at dawn on December 26. Cadwalader's troops would cross the river at Bordentown and keep that garrison occupied; Ewings's would cross at Trenton and cut off an escape route. Washington and the main division of 2,400 men and 18 cannon would cross at McKonkey's Ferry, nine miles above Trenton. However, only Washington's contingent of 2,4000 men made it across the ice-choked and dangerous river. The help of John Glover and his Marblehead Massachusetts boatmen was crucial. Already delayed and facing a terrible snowstorm, Washington led his men to Trenton convinced that they had lost the element of surprise. Early in the morning
of December 26, 1776, Washington encircled and attacked Trenton. The Hessians, sleeping off their Christmas celebration, were caught completely unaware. Rall, trying to rally his mention, was shot and later died. Nearly a thousand Hessians were captured and surrendered their army colors. The cost to the Americans was four slightly wounded men.

Washington then retreated back across the Delaware River in order to rest his men. On Dec. 30 the general made an impassioned plea to the troops to reenlist. They recrossed to occupy Trenton. On Dec.31, Washington had Thomas Paine's newly published words from the *American Crisis* read to the troops in order to persuade them to re-enlist, promising a bonus. The majority signed up for another twelve months.

General Cornwallis moved into Trenton on Jan. 2, 1777. Believing he had Washington trapped against the Delaware River, he rejected the advice to attack at once, saying he would "bag the fox tomorrow". Washington withdrew during the night, leaving his campfires burning. With muffled cannon wheels, the American troops slipped around the British and marched towards Princeton. General Hugh Mercer was leading American troops to protect the advancing left flank when he and his men were discovered by the British who charged with bayonets. General Mercer was killed. Washington's troops advanced. The small British garrison was caught completely by surprise and retreated into Nassau Hall in the college where it was defeated. Washington then withdrew to the northeast and went into winter quarters.

**The Importance of the Battles of Trenton and Princeton**

David Ramsay, Washington's first biographer, wrote succinctly of the importance of these battles in 1814: "The victories at Trenton and Princeton produced the most extensive effects, and had a decided influence on subsequent events. Philadelphia was saved for that winter. Jersey was recovered. The drooping spirits of the Americans were revived. The gloomy apprehensions which had lately prevailed, of their being engaged in a hopeless cause, yielded to a confidence in their General and their army, and in the ultimate success of their struggles for liberty and independence " (Ramsay).

Others agreed: Ambrose Serle, secretary to Admiral Howe, wrote in his diary on Christmas eve about "the dying Groans of Rebellion" but on the day after Trenton wrote: "I was exceedingly concerned...as it will intend to revive the drooping Spirits of the Rebels and increase their Force" (McDowell, 109).

"His (Washington's) brilliant campaign had forced Howe to abandon nearly all of New Jersey, and brought hope to what has seemed a hopeless cause" (American Heritage, 207). Washington's success meant that the British would rethink their plan of holding down large areas with a network of posts because it had proved not only impractical but dangerous. Washington demonstrated that he could be both mobile and daring. In addition the changing fortunes of the Continental Army influenced ...those to take up the American cause (Flexner, 98).

**The Christmas Campaign of 1776: Many Voices**

*Notes to Teachers about Teaching Strategies*

The main concepts of the unit are reflected in the true/false statements in the kick-off lesson. Working collaboratively, the teaching team should decide, based on their knowledge of the students, time and resources available, etc., how to structure the learning activities. Students could work in five groups (one for each painting) or with a partner (one pair for each of the 12 questions.) Another arrangement is to have three groups: one studying the crossing, one the battle of Trenton and the last the battle of Princeton.
Some of the learning activities could happen in the classroom, others in a computer lab or the library media center (which also has computers.) In addition to the recommended titles in Resources for Classroom and Student Use, as many materials as possible should be available for students to use from interlibrary loans to printouts from good Internet sites that students have discovered at home in this resource-based unit. Helpful materials would include additional biographies of Washington and the other figures, military and art histories, as well as general monographs about the period.

**Guiding Questions for the unit**

- Why is the Christmas Campaign important to the American Revolution?
- What qualities made General George Washington a successful leader?
- Kick-Off Lesson: What Do You Know About the Christmas Campaign of 1776?

This first lesson introduces the individuals and events of the Christmas Campaign. This activity will be repeated at the end of the unit.

**Materials**

Blank paper for students to record answers; pens/pencils; chart paper for teacher to record “What We know or think we know”; slides, transparencies, color copies or websites for each of the following paintings

- *Washington Crossing the Delaware, Dec.26, 1776* by Emanuel Leutze, 1851
- *General George Washington at the Battle of Trenton* by John Trumbull, 1792
- *The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776* by John Trumbull, 1786
- *The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, January 2, 1777* by John Trumbull
- *George Washington at Princeton* by Charles Willson Peale, 1779

**Directions**

Show first slide (Washington Crossing the Delaware) and ask students what they know or think they know. On chart paper titled "What We know or Think We know about George Washington or the Crossing of the Delaware (and Following Battles)." Accept and record all answers without comment. Tell the students that they will be learning why this event and the battles that followed were important in the Revolutionary War. They will also learn about George Washington's qualities that made him a successful leader.

Each student should fold his paper in half, write his name and numbers 1 to 12 on one half of the paper. Ask them to answer TRUE or FALSE to each statement as it is read.

As each slide is displayed, read its title and the true/false statement. DO NOT GIVE THE ANSWER!

**Painting #1: Washington Crossing the Delaware, Dec.26, 1776**
1. This painting was painted in Germany 75 years after the event. (TRUE: It was painted by Emanuel Leutze in 1851 in Dusseldorf.)
2. This painting accurately portrays how Washington and his men crossed the Delaware River. (FALSE: Washington did not stand, the Durham boats are much larger, the event happened in the night not at dawn; etc.)
3. After Washington and his men crossed the Delaware they were an easy march to Trenton. (FALSE: They still faced a nine-mile march through snow and sleet to get to Trenton.

**Painting #2: General George Washington at the Battle of Trenton.**

4. Because this battle only concerned a small outpost in New Jersey, it is not considered important. (FALSE: This battle, the first won by Washington, changed the attitudes of Americans and British. See main text for more information.)
5. General George Washington refused to use spies against the British. (FALSE: Washington used spies throughout the war. John Honeyman was a double agent whose information about the Hessian positions was crucial.)
6. After this battle on Dec. 26 most of the American soldiers, who had enlisted for only a year, would return home. (FALSE: Although they were planning to go home, most soldiers responded to Washington's plea to stay.)

**Painting #3: The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776.**

7. Hessians were highly trained and hired-for-pay soldiers from Europe who respected the military tactics of the American soldiers. (FALSE. The Hessians had contempt for the fighting abilities of the Americans and also thought that American battle tactics like sniping and ambushes were dishonorable.)
8. The Hessian commander Johann Rall recovered from his wound and had a major role in later battles. (FALSE: Colonel Rall died from his injuries in a house in own.)
Painting #4: The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, January 2, 1777.

9. Bayonets played a very important role in this early part of the battle of Princeton. (TRUE: The bayonet charge by British Colonel Mawhood succeeded because the surprised Americans were armed with slow-loading rifles which can not use bayonets. This put the Americans at a great disadvantage.)
10. General Washington would never have charged into the middle of a battle as the painting shows here. (FALSE: Although there are few paintings of Washington in the midst of a battle, he was known for his bravery under fire and rallied his troops under fire.)

Painting #5: General George Washington at Princeton.

11. This portrait and others of Washington by Charles Willson Peale are believed to look more like the real Washington than Gilbert Stuart's portraits, the one on the dollar bill. (TRUE: Peale painted seven portraits of Washington including one before the war. His paintings of Washington are considered more accurate.)
12. Everyone agrees that the battle at Princeton was a military success for the Americans. (FALSE: Another point of view that Washington was really retreating to winter quarters when the Army met up with the British.)

Do not give the students the answers. Collect the papers and keep until the end of the unit. Also keep the chart "What We Know..."for later use.

Suggested Activities and Resources

- View "The Leader Emerges," a 10 minute segment from the video "1776" (vol.2 of the video series The American Revolution by the History Channel.) This excellent but brief introduction to George Washington includes comments from historians; paintings (including the Peale Washington), photographs, and quotes from the major players. Record all adjectives and/or phrases used to describe Washington. Review and discuss.
• View "Trenton and Princeton", a 10 minute segment from "Washington and Arnold" (vol.2 of the video series *The American Revolution* by the History Channel.) which summarizes the two battles.
• Read selections from a variety of secondary sources. These materials can be placed "on reserve" and accessible to all students. See Resources for Classroom and Student Use for titles.
• Analyze historical and military maps, including those of the period (primary sources.)
• "Plan of the Operations of General Washington against the King's Troops in New Jersey from the 26th of December 1776 to the 3rd January 1777 by William Faden." This map, in the *American Heritage Book of the Revolution* (page 202) and online in the *American Memory Collection at the Library of Congress: The American Revolution and Its Era: Maps and Charts of North American and the West Indies, 1750-1789* (http://memory.loc.gov) shows the movements of the American and the British and was prepared by a British mapmaker.
• "The Revolution in America: the Battle of Trenton and the Battle of Princeton" U.S. Military Academy. (http://www.deanusma.edu/history/dhistorymaps/) shows positions of the troops.
• "The Battle of Trenton" from Billias' *Gen. John Glover and His Marblehead Mariners* (http://1-14th.com/HistTrentonBattle.htm)
• "The Battle of Trenton" in McDowell's *The Revolutionary War* pages 104 and 105 is a panoramic view with a key showing important locations such as Washington’s command post and Knox’s cannons.
• Generic Lesson for Map Analysis
Title: "It's on the Map!"

Grades: 5-12

Information Literacy Standard: Read and interpret visual and statistical information in maps

Performance Objective: Analyze a historical map

Materials: Map analysis worksheet "It's on the Map!, a map for demonstration, other maps for individual or small group practice

Procedure

1. Initiation: "Topographic maps, political maps, weather maps, road maps, maps are everywhere." Give some examples of everyday use. State that we can also learn maps to learn about the past. There are specific things to look for and think about when using historical maps.
2. Input & modeling: Using a historical map model examine the physical qualities (Handwritten? Scale? Compass? Legend? Features (political, topographical, etc.) Date(s)? Creator?
3. Guided practice & checking for understanding: Discuss the map using the questions on the worksheet.
4. Independent practice: Students (individually or in small groups) examine other maps. And complete the worksheet.
5. Closure/Review: Does the map accurately portray the scene described? What did you learn from this map that you may not have learned from another source?

"It's on the Map!"

Physical qualities of the map (check one or more):

___ Compass ___ Handwritten ___ Date ___ Notations ___ Scale ___ Other ___ Name of mapmaker ___ Title ___ Legend (key)

Date of Map: ______ Creator of Map: _________________________

Where was the map produced? __________________________

Map Information

A. List three things in this map that you think are important:
1. _____________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________

B. Why do you think this map was drawn?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

C. What evidence in the map suggests why it was drawn?
   ______________________________________________________________

D. What information does the map add to the other accounts of this event?
   ______________________________________________________________

E. Does the information in this map support or contradict information that you have read about this event? Explain.
   ______________________________________________________________

F. Write a question to the mapmaker that is left unanswered by this map.
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________ (Adapted from the National Archives and Records Administration)
• Analyze primary source documents.

Letters: Washington's to Gen. McDougall on Dec. 25 briefly describes the battle at Trenton. (http://americanrevolution.org/delxing.html) and any from his Writings, especially his letter to John Hancock on Dec. 26 telling of the trials his men faced; "The difficulty of passing the River in a very severe Night, and their March thro'a violent Storm of Snow and Hail, did not seem to abate their Ardour." (p.264). (see Classroom and Student Resources)

Journals: "An Eyewitness Account of the Battle of Trenton Written by an Officer on Washington's Staff" reports his perspective from Dec. 23-27 (http://www.state.nj.us/state/history/trenton.html). In Meltzer's The American Revolutionaries: A History in Their Own Words students can "hear" the voices of patriots, loyalists, women, solders, etc.

Students should consider these questions when examining primary source documents: Who created the item and why? Was it created through a spur-of-the-moment act, a routine transaction, or a thoughtful deliberative process? Did the recorder have first hand knowledge of the event or report what others saw or heard? When was the piece created at time of the event, immediately after, after some lapse of time (if so, how long)? What opinions or interests may the recorder have had that influence what was recorded? Did the recorder wish to inform or persuade others? Did the recorder have any reasons to be honest or dishonest? Was the source meant to be public or private? Was it produced for personal use, for one or more individuals, or for a large audience? ("Analysis of Primary Sources“http:memory.loc.gov>)

• Study history paintings. Here is another generic lesson that can be adapted to any painting.

Generic Lesson: Object Analysis of a History Painting or Portrait

Title: Take a Closer Look at a History Painting or Portrait!

Grade: 5-12

Information Literacy Standard: Obtain historical data and formulate historical questions from encounters with art

Performance Objective: Describe, deduce, develop questions

Materials: Worksheet* or plain paper folded into thirds for each student; slide or transparency of painting; pencils; additional reproductions of paintings; chart paper titled "What I See/What I Deduce/Questions" and marker.

Procedure:

1. Initiation: Teacher discusses that art can be a window to view the past and that history paintings or portraits can offer special insights and initiate questions. But instead of jumping from one thing to another in our discussion of the painting, we will follow a systematic approach called "object analysis" which has 3 steps; description, deduction, and speculation or asking questions.
2. Input & modeling: The teacher models step one, description, examining one area of the painting or topic like people, architecture, natural forms, etc., inventorying the visual information and recording (or has a student record) the items. Teacher then talks about the relationship of
the viewer to the painting emotionally, intellectually, sensually, and makes a deduction, based on information already recorded. Teacher then asks a question based on the deduction. (Examples: ice in the river > extreme cold > did the time of year influence the decision about the crossing of the Delaware?) (See above: "Object Analysis of George Washington at Princeton")

3. Guided practice & checking for understanding: Students individually or in groups repeat the process with another area of the painting, another topic, etc. Student/groups share and the information is recorded. Teacher asks guiding questions if necessary.

4. Independent practice: Individuals or groups follow the process with another painting.

5. Closure/Review: Tell students that this same procedure can be used with other types of paintings and other objects.

6. Comments: *Worksheet has three columns: "What I See/What I Deduce/Questions"

Assessment Lessons: What Do You Know About the Christmas Campaign of 1776?

Assessment 1:
Students repeat the kick-off lesson, using their true/false answers from their earlier papers as a point of reference. Students share what they learned about the artists, the paintings or the events so that everyone is able to take advantage of each other's research. This is also the time where students revisit the original chart "What We Know or Think We Know about George Washington or the Crossing of the Delaware (and Following Battles)."

Assessment 2:
Students view the 100 minute made-for-tv movie The Crossing. The screenplay for the movie was written by Howard Fast who wrote a book by the same title. Jeff Daniels, as the general, "convincingly portrays Washington as a real flesh-and-blood individual." The review in Teacher-Librarian (June 2000) also states that "students and teachers alike will delight in this entertaining and educational story of a defining moment in the life of George Washington and the history of the United States."

I suggest that this video be used as a concluding activity because I believe that students who see this current day interpretation at the beginning of the unit will have a more difficult time looking at the primary and secondary resources objectively.

The video easily divides into 3 approximately 30 minute segments: background and preparation for the crossing, the crossing, and the battle at Trenton. The video may be stopped when students want to add, clarify or criticize based on their learning.

Guiding questions: How does Jeff Daniel's portrayal of George Washington compare with your knowledge of him? Does the movie add to your understanding of the people and events of the winter of 1776 and if so, how? What, is anything, would you change about the movie?
Suggested resources for each painting and its true/false statements.

Painting #1: Washington Crossing the Delaware, Dec.26, 1776 by Emanuel Leutze,1851.

Background Information on the Painting

One of the best known images of Washington, this painting was done in the artist's studio in Germany and is representative of the Romantic style of the times. In 1849 Leutze began the painting and enlisted a young artist from Ohio, Worthington Whittredge, to pose for the painting because Leutze wanted true American body types. Whittredge was painted as the steerman and as Washington; other Americans were also recruited (Scheer, 18). The first version of this picture was damaged by a studio fire in 1850 and Leutze immediately painted a second version which was sent to America in 1851 and exhibited in New York and Washington. When the New York exhibition closed on February 28, 1852, more than 50,000 people had paid to see the huge twelve by twenty foot painting. A print published in 1853 gave the image national distribution and this painting has become a popular image of both Washington and the War.

It shows Washington leading the army back across the river in the early hours of the Day after Christmas 1776. Washington stands steadfastly with his eyes focused on his destination on the far riverbank. His crew and others struggle to move the boats through the ice filled water. There are historical inaccuracies: Washington did not stand, the flag is incorrect, the event did not happen towards the dawn, the barge used was 40-60' long. However the artist has captured the drama of the moment.

Background Information on the Artist

Emanuel Leutze, born in Germany in 1816, came to the U.S. at the age of nine. He grew up in Philadelphia and became a successful artist. He returned to Dusseldorf, Germany in 1841 to join an active artist colony. He was visited by many American artists.

Suggested sources for student research

- Washington Crossing the Delaware in the Art Gallery Foyer (http://americanrevolution.org/artmain.html) This reviews how Leutze came to paint the picture and notes some of the inaccuracies.
- George Washington Crossing the Delaware: Explore & Learn. (http://metmuseum.org/explore/gw/el_gw.htm) This interactive lesson at the Metropolitan Museum (home of the painting) lets students explore perspective, light, color, form motion, and proportion in the painting.
- The River Crossing (from Colonel's Glover's Regiment of Marblehead fisherman) (http://1-14th.com/HistTrentonCross.htm) This website is about Glover and his men as well as the later accomplishments of the regiment.

See Resources for Classroom and Student Use for additional suggestions.
Painting #2: General George Washington at the Battle of Trenton by John Trumbull, 1792.

Background Information on the artist

John Trumbull was born in 1756 and grew up in Lebanon, Connecticut. He lost the sight in his left eye after falling down a flight of stairs when he was around five years old. Trumbull wanted to become an artist, but his father, the governor of Connecticut insisted that he attend Harvard University. After graduating from Harvard, he became an aide-de-camp to Washington where his artistic skills were of great value for map drawing. He subsequently resigned from the military and went to Boston and then London for training. He was imprisoned for eight months after being accused of treason. He returned to New York in 1782 but after the end of the war went back to London where he studied in Benjamin West's studio. He decided to "take up the History of our Country, and paint the principal Events of the late War" (Cooper, 7).

While abroad he painted *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775* (1786) and *The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack of Quebec, December 31, 1775* (1786). The paintings studied in this unit, *General George Washington at the Battle of Trenton* (1792), *The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776* (1786) and *The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, January 2, 1777* (1789) were painted during the last years of the century. In 1817 he was commissioned by Congress to "compose and execute four paintings commemorative of the most important events of the American Revolution" (Cooper, 15). These well-known paintings include *The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776*. His historical paintings have been extensively reproduced but Trumbull struggled all his life with financial difficulties. In 1831 he gave all the works in his studio to Yale University in exchange for an annuity. John Trumbull died in 1843 and is buried in the Trumbull Gallery of the Yale University Art Gallery beneath his portrait of General George Washington.

Background information on the painting

*General George Washington at the Battle of Trenton* was commissioned by the city of Charleston for its city hall during Washington's visit there in 1790 as part of his trip south. However, the portrait was turned down by South Carolina Congressman William Loughton Smith because he "thought the city would be better satisfied with a more matter-of-fact likeness, such as they had recently seen him calm, tranquil, peaceful" (George and Martha Washington: Portraits). This painting has more in common with Trumbull's history paintings than with other portraits. Trumbull kept this portrait and it was later purchased by the Society of the Cincinnati in Connecticut and donated to Yale University.

Washington is shown in full military dress, accompanied by a member of the cavalry (as indicated by the helmet.) He stands amid destruction and behind him the battle rages on.

Suggested resources for student research

- Washington's letters and other documents can be found in Writings or online at George Washington Papers Homepage. (http://www.virginia.edu/gwpapers/main.html) For example, in a letter written on Jan.5, 1777 to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, Washington gives his perspective on the events of Trenton and Princeton.

- Spies and spying: John Honeyman was an Irish weaver who offered to spy for the Americans and used several covers (butcher, Tory, British agent) to collect intelligence on British military activities in New Jersey. He participated in a deception operation that left the Hessians in Trenton unprepared for Washington's attack.
across the Delaware River on December 26, 1776. See also pages 240-242 in Ketchum's *The Winter Soldiers*.

*Painting #3: The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776 by John Trumbull, 1786.*

**Background Information on the Painting**

This history painting was created to commemorate the defeat of the Hessians after a surprise attack on Christmas night. Trumbull traveled along the east coast painting miniatures of the men who would appear in this painting; Washington himself sat several times and this image was used for this painting but also for *The Death of General Mercer* and *The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis*.

We see General Washington along with his aide directing the care of the mortally wounded Hessian, Colonel Johann Rall. Such a meeting is not historically accurate although many of the men represented in the painting are American officers. Likenesses for these portraits were painted on trips along the eastern seaboard and also from other portraits or from memory.

**Suggested sources for student research**

- The Declaration of Independence: "He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation."

- Comments on the importance of Trenton by Major General Nathanael Greene: "The importance of Trenton to the Americans is not to be reckoned by the mere numerical test of killed, wounded, and prisoners. It was a new proof to the unskilled and destitute colonists that they were good for something as soldiers, and that their cause was not hopeless. Coming after a long course of retreat and disaster, it inspired them with fresh courage. Bunker Hill had taught the Americans that British regulars could be resisted. Trenton proved to them in an hour of despondency that the dreaded Hessians could be conquered."
  (http://members.aol.com/JonMaltbie/NatGreene.html).


- David Ramsay's biography of Washington: Published eight years after George Washington's death, David Ramsay's *Life of Washington* is the first biography of Washington. It achieved great popularity. David Ramsay was a contemporary of Washington and a historian. He was twice elected a delegate to the Continental Congress, and served as its chairman in a specially-appointed post and was hugely popular.. It is extraordinary to be able to access this document online.

An excerpt from Chapter 3: "On receiving information of their numbers and different cantonments, Washington observed "Now is the time to clip their wings, when they are so spread." Yielding to his native spirit of enterprise which had hitherto been repressed, he formed the bold design of re-crossing the Delaware, and attacking the British posts on its eastern banks." (http://earlyamerica.com/lives/gwlife/chapt3/index.html)

*Painting #4: The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, January 2, 1777, ca.1789*

**Background Information on the Painting**
This is the third of Trumbull's Revolutionary War series to commemorate the loss of a general. The composition represents several incidents of the opening round of the battle of Princeton simultaneously (Cooper, 63). Mercer and his troops who are armed only with slow-loading muskets are attacked by the British with bayonets. In chronological order the battle happened is this way. British Captain William Leslie (shown on the right) is mortally wounded in the first fire. Then General Mercer (front) is bayoneted but survives nine days, and the intensity of the action continues (left.) Finally Washington arrives to rally the troops. Doctor Benjamin Rush, accompanying Washington, later tried and failed to save the lives of Mercer and Leslie. For more information on this and other Trumbull paintings see Helen Cooper's Cooper, John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter.

Suggested resources for student research

- The virtual museum at Valley Forge National Historical Park has lots of information about Continental soldiers and officers, riflemen, horsemen and artillery. (http://www.cr.nps.gov/csd/exhibits/revwar/vafo)

- In Princeton, New Jersey, was the Mercer oak. Legend has it that after being stabbed but not wanting to leave the scene, the badly injured Mercer was given a place to rest against the tree. Read more about this symbol of the Revolution at (http://www.princetontwp.org/news141pg1.html)

Painting #5: George Washington at Princeton by Charles Willson Peale, 1779

Background Information on the Artist

Charles Willson Peale was born in Maryland in 1741 and decided that he could do the work of an itinerant artist. After training in Philadelphia, New England, and London, Peale returned to Maryland in 1769. In 1772 Peale's first portrait of Washington, George Washington in the Uniform of a Colonel in the Virginia Militia, was commissioned by Martha Washington and painted and displayed at Mount Vernon. This was Peale's only portrait of Washington done before the revolution. His portraits of Washington are considered the best likenesses of him (Gardner, 59) and Peale (and his relatives) painted many paintings of Washington. One of the most versatile men of his day Peale was an inventor, scientist, and founder of a picture gallery/natural history museum. He also saw active duty at Trenton and Princeton.

Background Information on the Painting

Peale was commissioned by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in January 1779 to paint an official portrait of Washington, Washington sat for this painting as he did many times for Peale and his relatives. Peale traveled to the Princeton and Trenton battlefields in order to make sketches. Many replicas were made, and with different backgrounds. Peale himself wrote: "I have on hand a number of portraits of Gen. George Washington. One the ambassador had for the Court of France, another is one for the Spanish Court, one other has been sent to the island of Cuba, and sundry others which I have on hand are for private gentlemen" (Gardner, 63). Some have a blue ribbon across the chest (signifying rank as commander-in-chief.) In this replica at Yale University Art Gallery (not on display at this time) the ribbon has been painted over but leaves traces. Please note that some of the replicas do not include the two figures on horseback. It is regarded as a symbolic representation of ultimate victory. George Washington at Princeton was instantly popular and Peale received orders for over two dozen replicas.
• "Images of George Washington". Choate-Rosemary Hall. (http://crh.choate.edu/english/salot)

This student-produced site contains many well-known images of Washington.

• Two online exhibitions showcase a variety of images of Washington: George and Martha: The Presidential Years National Portrait Gallery http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/gw/index.htm and "His True & Impressive Image; Portraits of George Washington" American Art, Mead Art Museum. (http://www.amherst.edu/~mead/collections/american/)


Activity: Photocopy and/or print-out a variety of images of Washington. Display these. Vote for your favorite!

• "Washington Lost Princeton."(http://www.ballindalloch-press.com/55th/Princeton.html). Majesty's 55th Regiment of Foot, the author claims that Washington didn't achieve most of his objectives and that the battle of Princeton was, at best, a draw.

There is as photograph of the cannonball scar made by the American artillery as they attacked the British in Naussau Hall (Princeton University) (http://www.princeton.edu/~okkey/cannonscar.html)

Works Cited


**Resources for Classroom and Student Use**


*General George Washington at the Battle of Trenton* by John Trumbull, 1792

[http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/gw/trenton.htm](http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/gw/trenton.htm) In print in: Cooper, frontispiece

[http://teachpol.tcnj.edu/amer_pol_hist/](http://teachpol.tcnj.edu/amer_pol_hist/) > check postcard at Yale Art Gallery

*The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776* by John Trumbull, 1786. In print in: Cooper, 74

*The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, January 2, 1777* by John Trumbull, ca. 1789. In print in: Cooper, 63


“CIA Intelligence in the War of Independence.” CIA. (http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/warindep/frames) These are spy stories throughout American history.

*The Continental Soldier in the War for American Independence*. National Park Service and GPO, 1976. This poster contains a lot of information about the daily life and responsibilities of a Continental soldier.

Cooper, Helen A. *John Trumbull: The Hand and Spirit of a Painter*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982. This catalog provides excellent and detailed information on Trumbull and his history paintings and portraits. Frontispiece is Washington at Princeton

*The Crossing*. (History Channel) A&E. 1999. This 100 minute video is based on Howard Fast’s book of the same title and recreates the famous event.


Dupuy, Trevor and Gay M. Hammerman. Editors. *People & Events of the American Revolution*. New York: R.R.Bowker, 1974. The first section of the book is a chronology of the war from 1733 to 1784. The second section contains information on loyalists and patriots, requirement “playing a remembered part in the Revolution” Also a list of Women, Loyalists, Patriots, Spies and Secret Agents, etc.

Fast, Howard. *The Crossing*. New York: William Morrow, 1974. This engaging book has plenty of interesting details, like how Washington’s brown horse was shot from under him during the battle at Trenton and quickly replaced with a white horse. (Basis for the made-for-TV movie by the same name)


George Washington Papers Homepage. (http://www.virginia.edu/gwpapers/main.html) A search engine on the site connects the user to selected papers and documents and links to other Washington-related sites. Excellent primary source.


“His True & Impress Image; Portraits of George Washington” American Art, Mead Art Museum. (http://www.amherst.edu/~mead/collections/american/) This online exhibit features many images of Washington.

“Images of American Political History” http://teachpol.tcnj.edu/Amer_pol_hist> This is a collection of over 500 public domain images related to American history.


Meltzer, Milton. The American Revolutionaries: A History in Their Own Words. N.Y.: Crowell, 1987. In this collection of documents you can hear the voices of patriots, loyalists, women, solders, etc.


“Presidents of the U.S.” (POTUS) Internet Public Library. (http://www.ipl.org/ref/POTUS/gwashington.html)
This site contains excellent links to Washington and other presidents.


This is a one page summary of the event.


"Washington Lost Princeton."(http://www.ballindalloch-press.com /55th/ Princeton.html). This is another point of view on the battle of Princeton. Speaking on behalf of His Royal Majesty's 55th Regiment of Foot, the author Washington claims that Washington didn't achieve most of his objectives and that the battle of Princeton was, at best, a draw.


**Teacher Materials**

"Digital Classroom" National Archives and Records Administration. (http://www.nara.gov/education/classrm.html) This site at NARA, along with the "Learning Page" (see below), are helpful in teaching the use of primary sources. Model lessons are provided.

"History Matters." (http://historymatters.gmu.edu/) This site at George Mason University is an excellent resource for teaching American history and is designed for high school teachers.

"Higher Standards for Social Studies." *New Haven Public Schools Academic Performance Standards*, n.d. This is the core social studies document for New Haven social studies teachers.

Myers, J. Jay. "Washington's Dire Straits." American History Illustrated . June 2001, 21-30. This overview of the humiliating defeat of the American forces on Long Island discuses the important role for Colonel John Glover’s regiment of seamen from Massachusetts. This regiment was later crucial in the crossing of the Delaware. The cover illustration is the Peale portrait George Washington at Princeton .

National History Standards (http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/thinking5-12-4.html) The national standards are detailed and thoughtful.

Shiroma, Deanne. Using Primary Sources on the Internet to Teach and Learn History . ERIC Digest. ED442739. (http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests) 6/24/01 The Internet offers access to many primary documents. This article explains about the types and uses of primary sources and lists exemplary sites.


"Teaching About George Washington." ERIC Digests. ED424191.1998. (http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_DIGESTS/) In this article, published on the bicentennial of Washington's death in 1999, 0the author reminds us to remember the importance of individuals in history. He states that Washington was an incredible leader (with references and websites.)

"Teaching with Historic Places." National Registry of Historic Places. (http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/whyplaces.htm) The National Park Service website provides guiding on teaching using historic places (and you don't have to be there) and provides excellent lessons from sites all over the country.

https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu
©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms