

Revolutionary South Carolina

A Lesson Plan Adaptable for All Grades

Note: This teaching guide contains ideas that can be modified to fit the grades of your students. Look for different options throughout the guide with specific suggestions for Elementary, Middle and High School classrooms.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What happened in South Carolina 250 years ago? (Elementary)

How did South Carolina contribute to the American victory in the Revolutionary War? (Middle)

How did the American Revolution change and transform South Carolina? (High)

OVERVIEW

The American Revolutionary War was fought between 1775-1783, and now is the 250th anniversary of that conflict that secured independence from Britain and established the United States. South Carolina's role in the war changed it from a colony to a state and helped to create and defend a new nation.

South Carolina delegates had supported and signed the Declaration of Independence, and the Americans scored an early war victory at the Battle of Sullivan's Island. Still, for many South Carolinians, the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and the United States' fight for independence seemed far away, unfolding in New England and northern states. That changed in 1780, and South Carolina was caught in the crosshairs of war and decisive moments.

British generals planned to take control of the southern colonies, including South Carolina. In April 1780, they captured Charleston, and thousands of American soldiers were forced to surrender. Then, local militia groups in South Carolina—led by men like Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, and Andrew Pickens—began fighting back. They used surprise attacks to slow down the British as they moved through different parts of the state. American defeats at Waxhaws and Camden and victories at King's Mountain, Cowpens and Eutaw Springs marked key moments in the Revolutionary War, shifting morale and building momentum to force the British out of the state. By the fall of 1781 while a British army surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, the British remaining in South Carolina had to retreat back to Charleston, and most of the state was under Patriot control.

The battles and military occupations across South Carolina changed the state and made life difficult for many residents. Civilians and Native American tribes were often caught in the middle and had to make choices who to support. Guerilla warfare put communities and neighbors at war with each other

and with invading forces. The divisiveness left a deep impact in the memory of survivors. The Southern Campaign of the American Revolution secured independence on the battlefields, and South Carolina was a central point in the later years of the conflict.

Let's learn about the history, challenges and changes of the Revolution in South Carolina! How will you remember the War for Independence during the 250th anniversary?

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - List some of the events that happened or influenced South Carolina during the American Revolution. (All)
 - Note some of the political and social changes that occurred in South Carolina during or because of the Revolutionary War. (Middle/High)
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Examine some primary and secondary sources to learn about South Carolina during the American Revolution. (All)
3. Evaluation
 - Consider how the Revolution can be remembered in South Carolina today and what lessons can be drawn from the history. (All)

ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students what to share what they know about the American Revolution in South Carolina. Make a list on paper or a board.
2. Ask students if they have questions about the Revolution, particularly in their home state. List the answers or ideas.
3. Watch the [In4Minutes: Southern Campaign](#) video.
4. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history.
5. Distribute the [lesson's worksheet](#).
6. Students will read a Secondary Source and a Primary Source and use the worksheet to draw conclusions. (Sources are found on the [Lesson Plan Page](#), under the sections Articles and Primary Sources.) *Feel free to modify the questions to best suit your students' needs.*
 - Elementary suggestion:
 1. 10 Facts: The Southern Campaign (simplify if needed)
 2. "We fight get beat and fight again": Nathanael Greene to George Washington, 1781 (particularly the first paragraph)
 - Middle/High suggestion:
 1. Ambush: Francis Marion and the Art of Guerrilla Warfare

2. "I detest to Distress poor Women & Children": Francis Marion to Horatio Gates, October 1780
7. Revisit the lists of facts and ideas from Step 1; briefly discuss if the students' ideas have changed. Ask students if they have thought of lesser-known stories or questions about the Revolution in South Carolina; would the 250th anniversary be a time to explore that history and its meanings?
8. Using the words "REVOLUTIONARY SOUTH CAROLINA" have students list places, people, events, or character qualities that represent and define that period of state history. (For example: R – Resistance, E – Eutaw Springs, V – Victory)

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the "Education Standards" to view the details.

RESOURCES

Visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You'll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [In4Minutes: Southern Campaign](#) (video)
- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Considering options

During the Revolutionary War, South Carolinians faced tough choices. Families were often divided, neighbors took different sides, and there was no easy way to stay safe. Facilitate a discussion about what you would have done and why. What are the pros and cons of some of these options? Are there other options to consider? What would you have done and why?

- Join the Continental Army (fighting for independence from Britain, and possibly have to leave South Carolina as the battles and campaigns move to other states)
- Join the South Carolina militia or a partisan group (fight for independence, but likely not have to leave your home state)
- Join the British Army or a Loyalist Militia (stay loyal to the king)
- Move west (relocate into or beyond the Appalachian Mountains and try to escape the conflict)
- Try to stay neutral (can you stay at peace with both sides?)
- Leave South Carolina and sail to another state or to a different country (do you have the money to make this type of move; where would you go and why?)

Option 2: Local history

Is there Revolutionary War history in your community? Explore resources like the [South Carolina 250](#), the [South Carolina Liberty Trail App](#), or reach out to a local historical society. Can you discover if your area had a nearby battle? Where people who lived here supportive of the British cause, the American cause, or was it a divided area? Are there any monuments or historic markers in your area? Are there know artifacts or primary sources from the Revolutionary War that were used or created here?

Have students research or bring in photos or your own research notes to share.

Ask the students for ideas of how the American Revolution could be remembered in your local community? Are there things to celebrate? Are there things to remember thoughtfully?



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★