



## THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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*Applause Series* Curriculum Guide  
January 9-13, 2017



CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

# THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *The American Revolution*. Theater Unspeakable of Chicago brings this epic period of our country's history to life in a way never seen before. Giving themselves the creative challenge of portraying the United States' entire fight for independence using only their bodies and voices while confined to a 21-square foot platform, this physical theater company provides both a hilarious and moving portrait of the founding of our nation.



The cast of *The American Revolution*.

As you prepare your students for this experience, we hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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This study guide was compiled and written by Allison McGuire; edited by Karoline Myers.  
Based in part on materials by Adventure Stage Chicago and Mesa Arts Center.

# ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

**Public education programs** allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 55,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space. Features include the Lauridsen Fountain, the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by Claes Oldenburg, and the Swirl sculpture by Jim Campbell.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 21st season of school performances!

# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- \* What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- \* What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- \* What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- \* Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- \* Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

### A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- \* Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- \* Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- \* Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- \* Do not text during the performance.
- \* Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- \* When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- \* **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- \* Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- \* Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- \* Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# TEMPLE THEATER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts.  
Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Temple Theater.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. (Full payment and cancellation policies may be viewed at [DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education](http://DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education).)
- DMPA reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Temple for the Performing Arts, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS

- The Temple Theater is located in the Temple for the Performing Arts located at Tenth and Locust Streets in downtown Des Moines.
- Directions from I-235: Take Exit 8A (downtown exits) and the ramp toward Third Street. Travel south on Third Street approximately six blocks to Grand Avenue. Turn west on Grand Avenue and travel to Thirteenth Street. Turn south on Thirteenth Street and then east on Locust Street.
- Buses will park on the south side of Locust Street in front of the Nationwide building. See next column for additional parking information.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at [education@desmoinesperformingarts.org](mailto:education@desmoinesperformingarts.org) or 515.246.2355.  
Thank you!

## PARKING

- Police officers stationed at the corner of Tenth and Locust Streets will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the theater. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the theater. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with DMPA Education staff.

## ARRIVAL

- When arriving at the theater, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. A staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- DMPA staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the theater.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seats or taking groups to the restroom.

## IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- \* If an item is lost at the Temple Theater, please see an usher or call 515.246.2355

# VOCABULARY

**Boston Massacre:** the killing of five colonists by British soldiers in March of 1770. The soldiers were in the country to enforce the heavy tax burden of the Townshend Act, which the colonists were protesting by heckling and throwing snowballs.



**Continental Army:** George Washington's troops, who fought the British in the Revolutionary War.



**Continental Congress:** a gathering of delegates who spoke and acted on behalf of the colonists, most specifically the meetings in 1774 (First Continental Congress) and between 1775-81 (Second Continental Congress). After the war began, the Second Continental Congress acted as the government, writing the Declaration of Independence, overseeing the war, and governing, until the current Constitution was ratified in 1788.



Victorian.web.org

**East India Trading Company:** a British stock company indirectly controlled by the government. The company traded goods from all over the world, especially East Indian spices.

**House of Burgesses:** the colonial legislative assembly of Virginia.



wikipedia.org

After losing his first military campaign, George Washington served in the House of Burgesses for fifteen years before the American Revolution. During this time, he learned about governing.

**House of Commons:** the lower house of the British Parliament. The Parliament approved the Stamp and Townshend Acts, but later repealed them to quiet colonists' protests.



Britannica.com

**Intolerable Acts:** the American name for the punishments that Parliament imposed on the colonies after the Boston Tea Party. One of these acts ordered the closing of the Boston Harbor until the owners of the lost tea were paid back.

**minutemen:** early responders in times of crisis in the American Revolution. They made up about a quarter of the Continental Army and were typically the best trained of the troops.



ushistory.org



landofthebrave.info

**regulars:** members of the British Army; also referred to as the Redcoats.

**Six Nations Confederacy:** six tribes of Native Americans in upstate New York who fought with the British during the War of Independence. Also called the Iroquois Confederacy.

**Sons of Liberty:** a secretive rebel group that opposed the British government. It had chapters in Boston and New York, and members used both nonviolent (newspaper articles) and violent (tar and feathering) methods to protest. The Sons of Liberty were responsible for the Boston Tea Party.

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Experience the entire American fight for independence from Lexington to Yorktown in this piece of imaginative, physical theater.

## PHYSICAL THEATER

*The American Revolution* is performed by a group called Theater Unspeakable, which specializes in a type of performance called physical theater. In physical theater pieces, much of the story is told through action, rather than spoken lines. It includes genres like mime and dance, where performers typically are silent. Depending on style, it can be common for dialogue to be spoken, too. Regardless, physical theater puts the human body at the center of a performance and uses it to express the ideas of the story.

*The American Revolution* contains lots of dialogue, but with 7 people sharing a small platform, there isn't much room for sets or props. Instead, the bodies of the actors become the sets and props. In the show, the actors transform their bodies into pieces of paper, boats, horses, and even each other's arms and legs!

## KEY FIGURES & EVENTS

In their comedic, fast-paced retelling of this key period in American history, audiences will encounter the following:

### KEY FIGURES

- ◇ King George III
- ◇ George Washington
- ◇ Martha Washington
- ◇ Samuel Adams
- ◇ The Sons of Liberty
- ◇ John Adams
- ◇ Abigail Adams
- ◇ Thomas Paine
- ◇ Billy Lee
- ◇ Benjamin Franklin
- ◇ King Louis of France
- ◇ General von Stueben
- ◇ Molly Pitcher

### KEY EVENTS

- ◇ French and Indian War
- ◇ Stamp Act
- ◇ Townshend Act
- ◇ Boston Massacre
- ◇ Tea Act
- ◇ Boston Tea Party
- ◇ Paul Revere's Midnight Ride
- ◇ Battle of Lexington
- ◇ Second Continental Congress
- ◇ Crossing of the Delaware
- ◇ Battle of Yorktown

ABOVE: Notice the size of the platform the actors share. It measures 21 square feet.

## DEvised BY...

Usually, when actors come to the first rehearsal of a play, they get a script. That script has been written by one playwright, and it tells the actor what lines to say and when to say them. However, when the actors in *The American Revolution* came to their first rehearsal, the play didn't exist yet. Instead, 17 people collaborated to write the play, and now, some of those same actors perform it across the country.

## MULTIPLE ROLES

In movies, an actor usually plays only one role. Movies can have hundreds of people performing in them, but imagine having enough actors to portray the entire British and Continental armies trying to fit on a small platform! The seven actors in *The American Revolution* portray dozens of characters. They use movement, gestures, and character voices to give clues about who they are, so watch closely. Otherwise, you might be confused as to how Thomas Jefferson ended up getting a foot rub in King George's palace!

# ABOUT THEATER UNSPEAKABLE



Theater Unspeakable is a Chicago-based group founded in 2010. Its Artistic Director, Marc Frost, wanted a place to create physical theater projects. Their goal is to experiment with different theatrical styles until they come up with new types of theater all their own.

## SHOWS

Theater Unspeakable makes works, ranging from original tales to their own spin on historical events. In addition to *The American Revolution*, their current shows are:

**Superman 2050:** In Theater Unspeakable's first show seven actors share one tiny platform to tell an original Superman tale set in a fictional 2050 Metropolis that looks a lot like Chicago.

**Murder on the Midwest Express:** A whodunit on a bullet train in the year 2050.

**Moon Shot:** The company's fourth show, *Moon Shot*, is planned to premiere this year! It tells the story of the 1969 moon landing.

## INTERVIEW WITH ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, MARC FROST

### Why did Theater Unspeakable choose to make this play?

The American Revolution is definitely a big story — with all its important political and historical moments not to mention eight years of battles — but it's not one we hear very much today... maybe it's because our nation's founding seems too academic, too stale, too far removed from the way we live today. That's where movement-based narrative...can help us make a story fresh and alive for a contemporary audience.

It is important to tell both sides of any story...I think most US audience members can sympathize with the American side and that is where we have tried to show the most complexity. That George Washington was not born a hero, that John Adams had major ego problems and that the Founding Fathers and Mothers were real people trying to deal with real situations long before they became mythologized into marble portraits.

### How did you approach the obvious presence of slavery in this time period without making it central to the story?

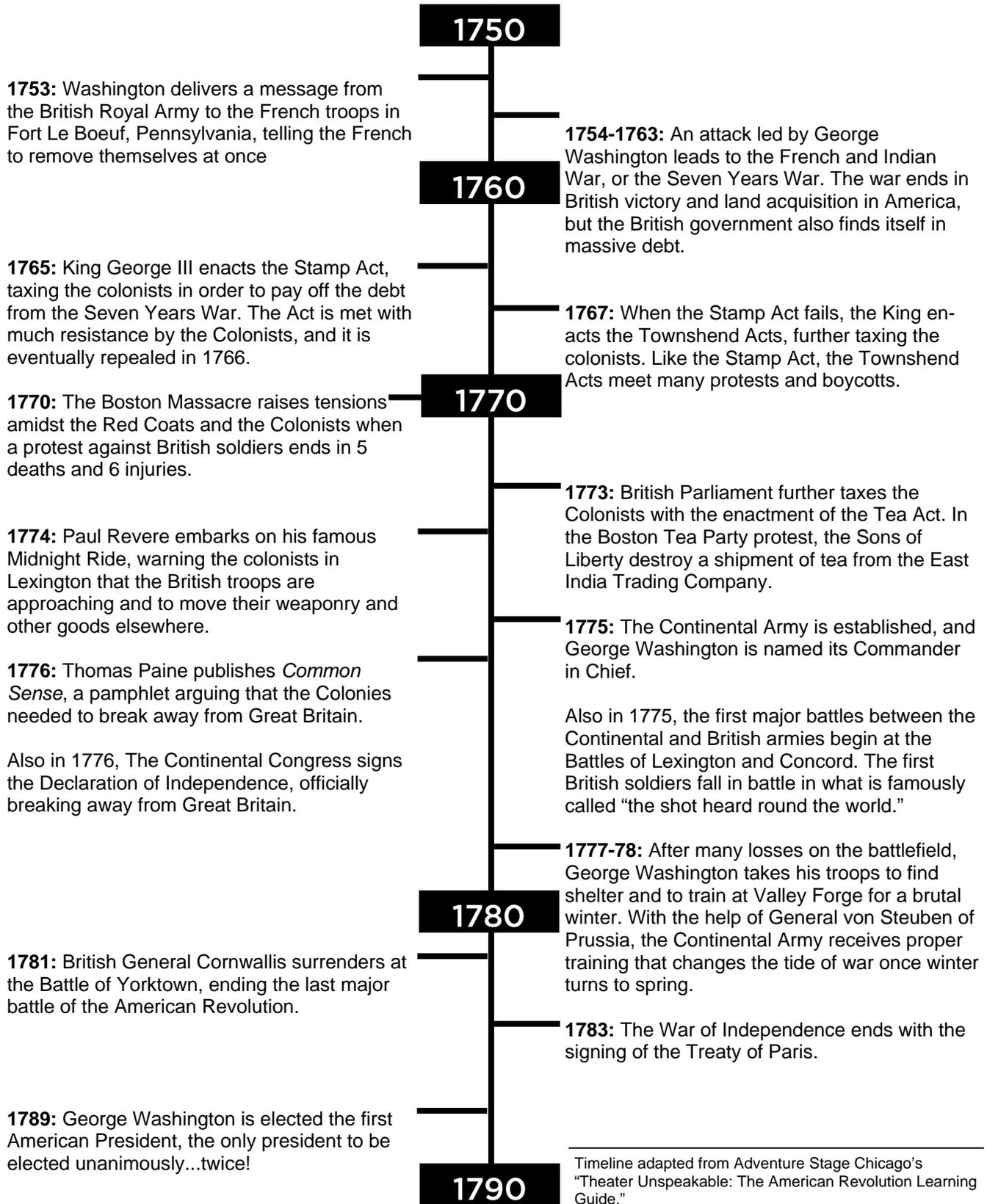
We did not want to shy away from the fact that slavery was an everyday fact of life during the American Revolution. Washington, Jefferson, and many other famous revolutionaries spoke about "unshackling themselves from the chains of England's tyranny" while at the same time keeping slaves in their own households.

### What message are you hoping audiences walk away with?

Billy Lee once said of Washington, "When I think about George, I think of our country. Not a perfect one, but a good one." This is the same message I would like people to take with them when they leave the theater. The country's founding had an imperfect beginning, built upon the sacrifice, slaughter, and subjugation of many individuals and peoples, but I want them to leave feeling proud of their country's founding, because it truly was the dawning of a new era for personal freedom,

Interview adapted from Adventure Stage Chicago's "Theater Unspeakable: The American Revolution Learning Guide."

# AMERICAN REVOLUTION TIMELINE



# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 1

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## 1) KING OR QUEEN FOR A DAY

**Goal:** To understand the effects of a lack of fair tax regulations and governmental representation

**Explanation:** The colonists were especially upset by being taxed without representation. Every new tax or law made by King George III fanned the flames of their anger with British rule. In this activity, students will gain insight into how the colonists felt.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Small candies, tokens, or beads (enough for each student to have 15 to 20)
- ◇ Small cups to hold tokens
- ◇ Chart paper
- ◇ Optional crown for teacher

**Activity:**

1. Tell students there is to be a change in procedure in class today. To really understand how the colonists felt, for today the students will be colonists and you, the teacher, will be the King or Queen. (Depending on the age of the students you can adjust the time frame as needed.)
2. Pass out the candies/tokens and cups and have each student write their name on their cup. Let them know they are not to eat or touch their candies or tokens yet. Get a cup for yourself and write King or Queen \_\_\_\_\_ on it.
3. If you are adding a dramatic flair to the activity now would be the time to don your crown.
4. Label a piece of chart paper with King or Queen \_\_\_\_\_'s Laws and another chart paper with King or Queen \_\_\_\_\_'s Taxes.
5. Tell students that from now on there will be some new laws and taxes in the classroom and that they, as students in the classroom, will need to abide by them or they will be "punished" by having to pay a candy or token to you.
6. Make at least one Law and one Tax to begin with and write them on the chart paper so they can be referred back to. A helpful first law is that students may not play with or touch their candies/tokens unless they are paying a law or tax. Possible first taxes might be a Classroom Tax or Furniture Tax for use of the classroom materials and furniture. After writing the laws and taxes down, they are enforceable. You can collect candy/tokens from the students as needed. If students complain you can make a Complaining Tax and collect another candy for each complaint.

7. Continue on with your day as normal but stop periodically to create new laws and taxes. They do not have to be sensible or fair but do make sure they do not impede student safety or personal needs (i.e. laws/taxes about using the restroom or getting drinks) or call out a particular characteristic about students (blue-eyed students, etc).

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. Do you feel the new laws and taxes in the classroom were fair?
  2. Do you prefer me as your teacher or your monarch?
  3. Did you change your behavior during the activity?
  4. Would you want to come to school if every day was like today? Why or why not?
- 

## 2) WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS

**Goal:** To consider basic human rights and support a point of view with reasons and information.

**Explanation:** Students will write their own Declaration of Independence.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Blank paper
- ◇ Pens/markers

**Activity:**

1. Give each student a piece of paper and a pen.
2. Ask each student to write at the top: "I hold these truths to be self-evident."
3. Define "self-evident" for students.  
***Self-evident: clearly true and requiring no proof or explanation***
4. The students, like Thomas Jefferson, will write their own Declaration of Independence.
5. Have students consider what rights they think every person should have.
6. Also encourage students to include their ideas about what rights are necessary for groups of people to live together peacefully.

**Follow-Up Questions:**

1. Why is a declaration of rights necessary? Why would a government limit or restrict citizens' human rights?
  2. Should different communities have different rights? (Families, classrooms, schools, cities, countries) Why or why not?
- 

Activity adapted from Mesa Arts Center's "Theater Unspeakable: The American Revolution Learning Guide."

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 2

## 3) SPIES LIKE US

**Goal:** To write a narrative from the point of view of a Revolutionary spy, using descriptive details.

**Explanation:** Students will place themselves in the shoes of Revolutionary soldiers and spies as they write a letter home encoded with invisible ink.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Paper
- ◇ Pens/pencils
- ◇ Baking soda
- ◇ Water
- ◇ Small cups
- ◇ Cotton swabs
- ◇ Grape juice concentrate



Adventure Stage Chicago.

**Activity:**

1. Students will pretend they are spies for the Continental Army. Their job is to write a letter to the Continental Congress with secret information about the war. They must take special steps to make sure that the information cannot be read by the British in the event their letter is intercepted.
2. Give each student a piece of paper, a pen/pencil, a cotton swab, and a cup of equal parts baking soda and water mixed together.
3. Using the baking soda/water mixture and cotton swab, students can write a letter revealing top secret information about the war.
4. Once the paper has dried completely, students will write their "letters home." The letter must be believable or the British will know it is encoded if they get their hands on it. Suggested questions to consider: Why are you fighting? Is it scary? What do you miss about home? When do you think the war will be over?
5. Have each student give their letter to a classmate to decode. To decode the letter, paint grape juice on the paper with a cotton swab.

**Extension Activity:**

1. Read "From Eavesdroppers to Secret Agents: Women Spies of the American Revolution" (at right) then discuss:
  - ◇ What were women's lives like during colonial times?
  - ◇ Why did this put women in a good position to act as spies during the Revolution?
  - ◇ What did the reading leave you wondering about this topic? (How could a teenager be a spy?)

### From Eavesdroppers to Secret Agents: Women Spies of the American Revolution\*

During the Revolutionary War, spies were important to General George Washington. He relied on them to find out what the British army was planning. Most of these spies were men, but not all of them.

One woman, Lydia Darragh, saved Washington's army from a surprise attack by the British. She lived in Philadelphia during a time when the British controlled the city.

One night in 1777, British soldiers demanded use of Lydia's house for a meeting. They told Lydia and her family to go upstairs to bed, but she snuck back downstairs and listened outside the door of the room where the meeting was taking place. She heard the British officers discussing plans for a surprise attack on Washington's army at Whitemarsh, about 15 miles away. Lydia knew she must warn the General, so she hatched a plan of her own.

The next morning, pretending she needed flour for baking, she set out toward the flourmill. Then she turned toward Washington's camp. On her way there, she saw one of Washington's officers and told him of the attack plans. Thanks to her warning, the army was prepared for the attack and was not defeated.

American sculptor Patience Wright also spied to help the colonial cause. While living in England, she made wax sculptures of famous Britons. As she sculpted, she chatted with her subjects, sometimes learning helpful information. Then she hid secret messages inside her wax sculptures and shipped them to America.

Teenager-turned-spy Emily Geiger volunteered to deliver a top-secret military message through enemy territory. The British captured her, but before she was searched, she read the message, memorized it, and then ate the paper! When the search found nothing, she was allowed to go. Once freed, she continued on her mission and delivered the message to its destination.

\*Graf, Christines. "From Eavesdroppers to Secret Agents: Women Spies of the American Revolution." *Appleseeds*, Dec. 2005, p. 29+. *General OneFile*.

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 3

## 4) ENERGY BALL

**Goal:** To practice and strengthen improvisation and pantomime skills

**Explanation:** Theater Unspeakable uses only imaginary props in *The American Revolution*. In this exercise, students practice shaping and interacting with imaginary objects, strengthening their pantomime skills.

**Activity:**

1. Gather the class in a circle.
2. Pull out an imaginary ball, and show its size, shape, and weight.
3. Mold the ball into an object (e.g. fishing pole) and interact with it (e.g. cast the reel, feel the tug, fight to bring it in).
4. Students try to guess the object. When a correct guess is made, mold the object back into a ball and pass it around the circle, until each student has had a chance to interact with the energy ball.



**Follow Up Questions**

1. What was fun about this activity? What was challenging?
2. Is there a person you would like to compliment for their pantomime? What did they do that stood out?

## 5) FILL THE ROOM

**Goal:** To practice pantomime and improvisational skills by filling a defined space with imaginary furniture

**Explanation:** *The American Revolution* performance takes place in a confined space. Actors must be aware of their bodies, and how they fit in their performance space at all times. Students will experiment with this idea by collaborating to fill and navigate an imaginary room.

**Activity:**

1. Define a good-sized “room” in your space by establishing four walls and a door. Visual cues for the walls and doors could be a row of desks, a line on the floor or carpet, or four dots of masking tape on the carpet.
2. Students decide what room in a house they are filling with furniture.
3. One at a time, players must bring an imaginary item into the room and leave it there, entering and exiting through the door. They may not step on anything that has already been placed. Players have “infinite strength,” but must show weight and size so we know what the object might be.
4. Once they have placed the item, they can interact with the object (e.g. play the piano, sleep on the bed, play video games on the console) before calling on other students to guess the object.
5. If no one guesses the object, the student may disclose it.
6. Once everyone has placed an object, see if any students want to give a “tour” of the room, pointing out each object and where it was placed.



**Follow Up Questions**

1. What was fun about this activity? What was challenging?

# POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT AND DISCUSSION, pg. 1

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does freedom mean to you? What does it mean to be free?
2. Is everyone in America free? What freedoms do we fight for today?
3. What did you think of the way the play was presented? Did you think the use of the platform enhanced the ideas or distracted from them?
4. After seeing how famous historical figures were portrayed in the performance, did you see any of them in a different way?
5. When do you follow the rules and when do you break them? Is there a time when it is okay to break the rules? Do you believe the rebels had the “right” to rebel?
6. What was the most memorable moment of the performance for you? Why?
7. What would our lives look like today if there was no American Revolution and we were still under British control? Would we be sitting here in this school today?

## POST-SHOW ASSESSMENTS

### 1) WRITE A REVIEW

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will reflect on the performance by writing their own review.

**Activity:**

1. Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are to write a review of the show to inform others about what they experienced.
2. In the review they should describe with detail:
  - ◇ what they saw
  - ◇ what they heard
  - ◇ how the performance made them feel
  - ◇ what the performance reminded them of
  - ◇ what their favorite part was and why
3. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

### 2) LIBERTY ADS

**Goal:** To analyze the causes of the colonists' rebellion and consider how the Townshend and Stamp Acts affected the colonists.

**Explanation:** Students will create an advertisement that would have been used during the American Revolution to support the Sons of Liberty's cause. The sign should include statements about taxes, specifically the Townshend Act and the Stamp Act and whatever else students believe would convince those who are undecided to side with the Revolution. The sign can also have pictures.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Scratch paper
- ◇ Poster board
- ◇ Pencils/pens/markers

**Activity:**

1. As a large group, discuss why the British taxed the colonists. How did these taxes affect the colonists? What was their response? Other discussion questions could include:
  - ◇ Why was the group called the Sons of Liberty formed?
  - ◇ How would you have reacted as a colonist to the imposed taxes?
  - ◇ If you were living in this era, would you agree with the Sons of Liberty?
  - ◇ What might have happened if the colonists did not boycott the taxes?
  - ◇ The colonists claim that Great Britain had no right to tax them — why?
  - ◇ If colonists were protesting the taxes, why was it necessary to form the Sons of Liberty?
  - ◇ How were the Townshend Acts and the Stamp Acts similar and different?
2. Divide the class into cooperative learning groups and pass out materials.
3. Inform students that their goal is to create an advertisement that convinces undecided colonists to side with the Sons of Liberty.
4. Students sketch out their advertisements on scratch paper, using points raised in the discussion.
5. Once they have agreed on a design, students transfer sketches onto poster board.

Post-Show Discussion Questions adapted from Mesa Arts Center Educator Resource Guide, Theater Unspeakable Learning Guide

## POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT AND DISCUSSION, pg. 3

### 3) MYTHBUSTERS: PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

**Goal:** To enable students to understand and analyze original texts of historical and literary significance

**Explanation:** The actors who devised *The American Revolution* had to separate documented historical fact from American folklore. Otherwise, they might have included the story of George Washington cutting down the cherry tree, rather than an exploration into the complicated contradictions of the Revolutionary War hero. In this activity, students will apply these skills while comparing and contrasting two sources documenting Paul Revere's Midnight Ride.

**Materials:**

Copies for every student of the following:

- ◇ "Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, abridged version ([LINK](#))
- ◇ Compare and Contrast Worksheet (page 15)
- ◇ "Paul Revere Mythbuster" worksheet (page 16)

Copies for half of the class of the following:

- ◇ "Paul Revere's Letter to Jeremy Belknap", edited for grade levels 4-8 ([LINK](#))
- ◇ Paul Revere Heritage Project article ([LINK](#))

**Activity:**

1. Read aloud Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." (There also are several dramatic readings available online.)
2. Discuss the poem and the fact that this poem was written in 1860 – nearly 100 year after the actual event.
3. Discuss Author's Viewpoint and Purpose.
  - ◇ Did Longfellow have a motive for his poem? (Longfellow wrote the poem to inspire patriotism on the eve of the Civil War.)
  - ◇ Does the poem seem to be accurate? (This poem became so popular that many textbooks included this poem as a basis for actual events.)
4. Next, pass out copies of the poem to each student.
5. For the second reading, "share read" the poem with the students by having students follow along silently while the you begin reading aloud. As you read, model prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences, and continue to read with students, serving as a model to help support struggling readers.

6. Pass out copies of the grade-level transcription of Revere's letter, the online source, and the compare and contrast worksheet.
7. In partners, ask students to analyze the events in both the poem and the transcribed letter. One partner will read the letter, the other the online source. They will then each summarize the contents for their partner.
8. Have partners work together to fill out the compare/contrast worksheets.
9. When complete, students will use this information to complete the Mythbusters worksheet on page 16 in pairs. (Answer key [HERE](#).)

**Follow-Up Questions:**

1. Longfellow's poem was written about an event that took place almost 100 years prior to his time in order to affect people's opinions about a current event. What event in the past 100 years would you write about to affect people's opinions about a current event?
2. Do you think that the members of Theater Unspeakable had a point of view when they wrote the play? What message do you think they wanted to share with modern day audiences about current events?

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### 4) WRITE A LETTER

**Goal:** To reflect on the performance experience

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a letter to the performers or Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their experience.

**Activity:**

1. Invite students to write a letter to the actors in *The American Revolution* or to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors.
  2. In their letters they should share:
    - ◇ What their favorite part of the show was and why
    - ◇ How they felt during the performance
    - ◇ Which character(s) they felt the most empathy for and why;
    - ◇ Any additional thoughts they would like to share.
2. Mail the letters to:  
Des Moines Performing Arts  
Attn: Education Department  
221 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

# MYTHBUSTERS WORKSHEET (For Post-Show Assessment 3 on pg. 14)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Use the chart to compare the events in the poem, the events as told by the Paul Revere Heritage Project, and the actual events as described by Paul Revere.

Events in Longfellow's poem	Events in Paul Revere's letter	Events in Heritage Project source	Events in all three accounts
Key words and phrases:	Key words and phrases:	Key words and phrases:	Key words and phrases:
In your words:	In your words:	In your words:	In your words:

# MYTHBUSTERS WORKSHEET (For Post-Show Assessment 3 on pg. 14)

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

Paul Revere Myth	Paul Revere Fact
The sole credit for the success of the ride was given to Revere only. He rode alone.	
All the events described in the poem occurred on the night of April 18, 1775.	
The signal in the North Church — “One, if by land, and two, if by sea” was meant for Paul Revere to see.	
He climbed the tower of the Old North Church the night of the ride.	
There were dead bodies in the yard of the Old North Church.	
Revere rode triumphantly into Concord.	
His ride through the night was enjoyable and uneventful.	
The purpose of Revere’s Midnight Ride was to prevent the British troops from capturing the secret store of ammunitions in Concord.	

# RESOURCES AND SOURCES

## BOOKS AND MOVIES

### BOOKS:

- ◇ ***Founding Mothers***  
by Cokie Roberts. Ages 7-12.
- ◇ ***The Fifth of March: A Story of the Boston Massacre***  
by Ann Rinaldi. Ages 12-14.
- ◇ ***Johnny Tremain***  
by Esther Forbes. Ages 9-12.
- ◇ ***The Way Lies North***  
by Jean Rae Baster.  
Ages 13-16.
- ◇ ***My Brother Sam is Dead***  
by James Lincoln Collier and  
Christopher Collier.  
Ages 12 and above.

### MOVIES:

- ◇ **1776** (1972) - Rated PG  
*Adaptation of the famous  
Broadway musical in which  
John Adams, Ben Franklin  
and Thomas Jefferson work  
on the Declaration of  
Independence.*
- ◇ ***Felicity: An American Girl  
Adventure*** (2005) - NR  
*10-year old Felicity learns  
about loyalty, patriotism and  
family in 1775 Williamsburg.*
- ◇ ***The Crossing*** (2000) - NR  
*TV film about George  
Washington risking everything  
in his famous crossing of the  
Delaware River.*

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

### School House Rock videos on the American Revolution

- ◇ "The Shot Heard Round the World"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZMmPWTwTHc>
- ◇ "No More King"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBBTF0Wg7dY>

### Hamilton Tony Performance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=639vfDnhOVw>  
*HAMILTON performs "The Battle of Yorktown," at the Tony Awards.  
Note: there is some omitted language in this performance.*

### Road to Liberty game

<http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/road.html>  
*Game that tests understanding of the "Road to Liberty," starting in  
Boston and ending in Washington D.C.. Includes primary sources and  
interviews with historians that elaborate on correct answers.*

### PBS - "Africans in America"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/title.html>  
*Images, documents, stories, biographies, and commentaries on the  
experience of slavery in America. There is also a useful teacher's guide  
and activities for students.*

### Spy Letters of the American Revolution

<http://clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/spies/index-main2.html>  
*Description of spy letters from the William L. Clements Library,  
including links to information about the stories of the spies or the secret  
methods used to make the letter. Contains useful teacher guide and  
activities.*  
<http://clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/spies/stories-saratoga-2.html>  
*This particular page explains the scene in The American Revolution in  
which General Howe is obsessed with the city of Philadelphia.*

## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

"Theater Unspeakable: The American Revolution Learning Guide."

Adventure Stage Chicago.

<http://www.whbpac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/The-American-Revolution-Study-Guide.pdf>

"The American Revolution" Educator Resource Guide. Mesa Arts Center.

<http://mesaartscenter.com/download.php/engagement/student-shows/american-revolution>

"Physical Theatre." BBC.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/ztfk6sg/revision/1>

"Midnight Ride by Paul Revere: Literature vs. History."

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/war-for-independence/resources/midnight-ride-paul-revere-literature-v-history>