

Social Studies 7: Historical Thinking Lesson Plan

Compelling Question: How does a Loyalist fit into the context of the American Revolution?

Using primary sources and the historical thinking skills coming out of Sam Weingburg's Stanford History Education Group, students will learn more about the viewpoints of a loyalist living in Skenesborough (Whitehall, NY). They will also learn how to utilize the skills of sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and close reading.

Before students arrive make enough laminated copies of the sources for each group to have one. Also make one copy of the question sheet for each student.

When students arrive set them up in small groups of 3-4.

Anticipatory set

Begin the class by reading together a brief biography of Philip Skene.

Wikipedia page on Skene: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Skene

Have class discuss how Skene might feel about events in the Revolutionary War.

Is he a loyalist or a patriot?

How might he feel about the Boston Massacre?

How might the war impact him?

What can be learned about the viewpoint of loyalists from Skene?

Lesson Activity

Working in groups have students analyze document set one. Then bring the whole class back together to discuss what they have learned. Then repeat this process.

Ask them how they are using the historical thinking skills? What are they learning? (Use the enclosed chart to help generate deeper discussion)

This could also be done as a stations activity with students traveling around the room to different stations where the laminated documents are located. (May not work as well because of chronology and discussion)

Summative Assessment

When you have finished with the students working their way through the content have them complete the summative assessment as a homework assignment or follow-up activity the following class day.

Historical Thinking Skills Chart

HISTORICAL THINKING CHART

Historical Reading Skills	Questions	Students should be able to . . .	Prompts
Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who wrote this? What is the author's perspective? When was it written? Where was it written? Why was it written? Is it reliable? Why? Why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the author's position on the historical event Identify and evaluate the author's purpose in producing the document Hypothesize what the author will say before reading the document Evaluate the source's trustworthiness by considering genre, audience, and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author probably believes . . . I think the audience is . . . Based on the source information, I think the author might . . . I do/don't trust this document because . . .
Contextualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When and where was the document created? What was different then? What was the same? How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how context/background information influences the content of the document Recognize that documents are products of particular points in time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the background information, I understand this document differently because . . . The author might have been influenced by _____ (historical context) . . . This document might not give me the whole picture because . . .
Corroboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do other documents say? Do the documents agree? If not, why? What are other possible documents? What documents are most reliable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish what is probable by comparing documents to each other Recognize disparities between accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author agrees/disagrees with . . . These documents all agree/disagree about . . . Another document to consider might be . . .
Close Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What claims does the author make? What evidence does the author use? What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience? How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the author's claims about an event Evaluate the evidence and reasoning the author uses to support claims Evaluate author's word choice; understand that language is used deliberately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think the author chose these words in order to . . . The author is trying to convince me . . . The author claims . . . The evidence used to support the author's claims is . . .

**This is a chart of the targeted skills. It will be useful to help generate deeper class discussion surrounding the documents. For more information visit:
sheg.stanford.edu

Document Set One: Source A
Letter from Philip Skene to Dr. Gamble May 23, 1770

Dear Gamble Shenesborough the 23rd of May 1770

Your letters of the 23rd and 30th of April are both before me, least the survey of six Miles points should not be had, I enclosed another from which the Patent may be fixed, but beg this may be returned after-boreyd as I have no other, my Anxiety is this Matter is from the Valuableness of the place our will as to secure me in some convenient I have made, and am to make by building a House, necessary for passengers over this long distance between this and Ft. I am sorry the Season was not better, next year hope there will be some Hayzings I intend sending a Stage load to Albany, so that the General may send some of his most Idle servants with a Stage to Albany, as the Season most fit from York, for should I send from hence the Hayzings might not answer at York, and that would distress me, to get my Stage back & I am sorry the Yorkers Money bill is rejected because money is wanting but America must Blame herself for attempting things, that are too soon by a Century; I have been very sorry that the troops left Boston, when the insult happened to the Centry &c. had I the Honour of commanding, should have encamped the troops, & sent, I had received orders from the commander in Chief, and not been turned out by the mob I think Military Honour had received a wound from this Matter, far be it from me, to espouse Military people in the wrong, our Laws are good and should punish all transgressors of it, and though we are raised by our Country, to support Civil Authority, and liable to Civil & Military Laws, yet dignity Roman like is to supported, I suppose if the Officer commanding was cool and kept proper discipline the Bostonians would not be so bold to have attacked or raised their threatened numbers I shall be glad to hear how these Matters are secured at home; I am glad Sir Jeffrey your friend and with you every happiness, I owe him some Gratitude, he by some promises, I shall never be any grateful, tho' he will never have the power to recover me what I have lost by being too steady to this his first

(Excerpt of letter transcribed)

... I have been very sorry that the troops, left Boston, when the insult happened to the Gentry & had the Honour of Commanding, should have incamped the troops, Until I had receiv'd orders from the Commander in Chief, and not been turned out by the mob, I think Military honour has received a wound from this matter, far be it from me, to espouse military people in the wrong, our Laws are good and should punish all Transgressors of it, and though we are Raised by our Country to support Civil Authority, and be able to Civil & Military Laws, yet dignity Roman like it to supported, I suppose if the officer Commanding was Cool and keep proper discipline the Bostonians & c. would not Chused to have attacked or raised their threatened numbers, I shall be glad to hear how these matters are received at home....

Source: The Skene Collection, Thompson-Pell Research Center, Fort Ticonderoga, Ticonderoga, New York

Document Set One: Source B
Excerpt from deposition of trial of Captain Thomas Preston

This excerpt is taken from the deposition of the trial of Captain Thomas Preston the commander of the British soldiers in the events of the Boston Massacre. James Woodall is a witness in defense of Preston.

James Woodall: “I saw one Soldier knocked down. His Gun fell from him. I saw a great many sticks and pieces of sticks and Ice thrown at the Soldiers. The Soldier who was knocked down took up his Gun and fired directly. Soon after the first Gun I saw a Gentleman behind the Soldiers in velvet of blue or black plush trimmed with gold. He put his hand toward their backs.

Whether he touched them I know not and said by God I’ll stand by you whilst I have a drop of blood and then said fire and two went off and the rest to 7 or 8.... The Capt., after, seemed shocked and looked upon the Soldiers. I am very certain he did not give the word fire.”

Sources: *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* (1905), Vol. 7, 8-9; Hiller B. Zobel, ed., *The Legal Papers of John Adams* (1965) 3: 46-98; William Bruce Wheeler and Susan D. Becker, eds. *Discovering the American Past: A Look at the Evidence*, 5th ed. (2002), 81-88

Document Set Two: Source A
Letter from Philip Skene to Governor John Penn of Pennsylvania

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Philadelphia the 24th of June 1775 393

Sir

In Obedience to my Royal Masters Commands, I came to this part of America, where to my very great Astonishment, I was made a Prisoner and deprived of my Liberty, as soon as the Vessel came to anchor before this Place, of which you are the Kings representative and Commander in Chief, His Majesty was pleased to appoint me, His Lieut Governor of the Ports of Brown point & Frontenac, as well as Inspector into the State of all Lands belonging to the Crown, within the district, of the Province of Quebec and that part of the Province of New York, which lies on Lake Champlain; I am honored with his Majesties Instructions under His Majesties Royal Sign Manual, and by the Tenor of my Warrant, all Governors, Justices of the Peace, Constables, and all other His Majesties Civil Officers, with the Colonies and Plantations in America are to be aiding & assisting to, and promote and encourage me, and my deputies, in the due Execution of my and their duty, in all Matters of my Warrant, as they shall answer

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to the contrary, Therefore in Justice to my Royal Master,
Your Honor, and myself, I make application to you, that I may
have immediate Relief and be sett at my Liberty or return to
England the place of my Nativity, as I am certain that I have not
transgressed any Law of the Land, I have the Honor to be

To your Honor Peter

His Answer

Sir
Your most obedient
humble servant
Philip Shear

Sir Philadelphia June the 26th 1775

I have this day received your letter of the 24th acquainting
me with your being made a Prisoner and deprived of your Liberty
as I am most Zealously disposed to afford you every ~~affirming~~
power, I should be obliged to you, if you will inform me in what manner
you are restrained and by whom, that I may take your case into
consideration, I am just now under the necessity of going out of Town,
and shall return to Morrow Morning at 11 o'Clock

The Hon^{ble} Philip Shear
Lieut Governor of Brown Point
and Secunderoga

I am Sir
Your most obedient
humble servant
John Pear

(Letter transcribed)

Philadelphia the 24th of June 1775

Sir

In Obedience to my Royal Master Commands, I came to this part of America, where to my very great Astonishment, I was made a Prisoner and deprived of my Libery, as soon As the Vessel came to Anchor before this Place, of which you Are the Kings representative and Commander in Chief, His Majesty was pleased to appoint me, His Lieu Governor of the Forts of Crown Point & Ticonderoga, as well as Inspector into the State of all Lands belonging to the Crown, within the district, of the Province of Quebec and that port of the Province Of New York, which lies on Lake Champlain, I am honored with his Majesties Instructions under His Majesties Royal Sign Manual, and by the Tenor of my Warrant, all Governors, Governors, Justices of the Peace, Constable, and all other His Majesties Civil Officers, with the Colonies and Plantations in America are to be aiding & Assisting to, and promote and encourage me and my deputyes, in the due Execution of my and their duty, in all Matters of my Warrant, as they shall answer (page turn) to the Contrary. Therefore in the Justice to my Royal Master, Your Honor, and myself, I make application to you, that I may have immediate Relief and be sett at my Liberty or return to England the place of my Nativity, as I am Certain that I have not Transgressed any Law of the Land, I have the Honor to be

To Governor Penn	Sir Your most obedient humble Sercant (signed) Philip Skene
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His Answer
Sir

I have this day received your letter of the 24th last acquainting me with your being made a Prisoner and deprived of your Liberty as I am most Zealously disposed to afford you every relief in my

power, I should be obliged to you, if you will inform me in what Manner you are restrained and by whom, that I may take your case into consideration, I am just now Under the necessity of going out of Town and shall return to morrow Morning at 11 o'Clock

I am

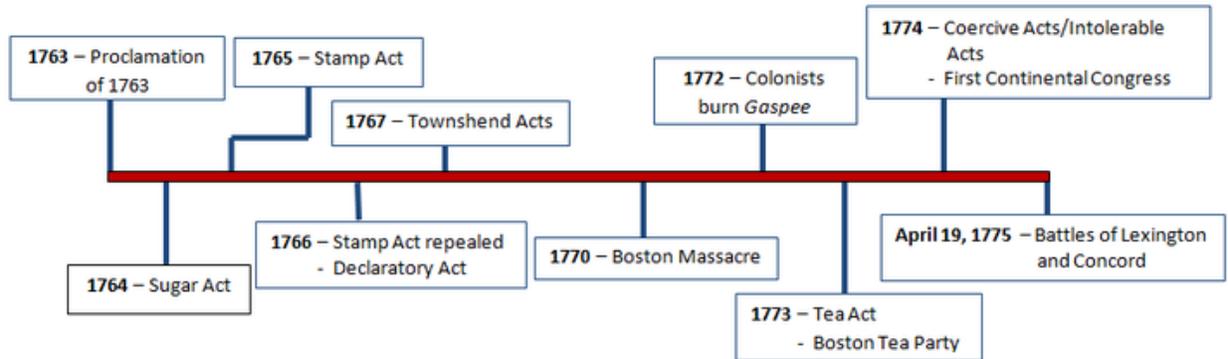
The Hon Philip Skene
Lieu Governor of Crown Point
And Ticonderoga

Sir
Your most obedient
Humble Servant
(signed) John Penn

Source: The Skene Collection, Thompson-Pell Research Center, Fort Ticonderoga, Ticonderoga, New York

Document Set Two: Source B

Timeline of Events in the American Revolution



Source: <https://sites.google.com/a/svvsd.org/custis/unit-ii-colonial-life-and-the-american-revolution/the-road-to-revolution>

Document Set Three: Source A
Letter from Philip Skene to the community of Skenesborough July 15, 1784.

Chelsea the 15th of July 1784

To the Inhabitants of Skenesborough

Gentlemen

I take the opportunity that the Bearer
Mr Jones gives, to send this to inform you all,
that I intend God willing to Visit Skenesborough
this fall, more especially as I am under the
Description of the 5th and 6th Articles of the Peace
ratified between America and this Country, not
shall be wanting in my power to the Inhabitants
to make every thing agreeable, and ^{as} we are taught
that Blessed are the Peace Makers for they shall
enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven; what is sowed
with the Olive Branch, must be wiped away
and we must like repenting sinners be soon
to Righteousness, forgive and forget our trespasses

nothing will give me greater pleasure than to
become once more your Friend, and Neighbour at
Sheneshorough; I shall cancell all debts, paid
and raise the different Works, for Irony Mills
and all other things to the Advantage of the
Township, I flatter myself that my Conduct
Especially for the rights of the good people of
Vermont, will prove me worthy of their protection
even at that early day when I stepped out
for their just rights, through, Hawley, and
Brankenside, by the concurring advice of
my Old Friends at Castletown, Athan Allen &
I write this in a hurry as I have only half an
hour time, Mr Jones will inform you further
of my intention and Wishes I am
To all the Inhabitants
of Sheneshorough
your very humble
Servant & sincere friend
Philip Shen

(Letter Transcribed)

Chelsea the 15th of July 1784

To the Inhabitants of Skenesborough

Gentlemen

I take the opportunity that the Bearer
Mr Jones gives, to send this to inform you all,
that I intend God Willing to Visit Skenesborough
this fall, more Especially as I am under the
Description of the 5th and 6th Articles of the Peace
Ratified between America and this Country,
nothing shall be Wanting in my power to the Inhabitants
to make every thing Agreeable, and as we are taught
that blessed are the peace makers for they shall
enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven; what is passed
with the Olive Branch, must be wiped away
and we must like repenting sinners be born a new
to Righteousness, forgive and forget our trespasses
nothing will give me greater pleasure than to
become once More Your Friend, and Neighbour at
Skenesborough: I shall cancel all debts passed
and raise the different Works, for Iron Mills
and all other things to the advantage of the
Township. I flatter myself that my Conduct
Especially for the rights of the Good people of
Vermont, will prove me worthy of their protection
even at that Early day when I Steped out
for their just rights, through, Hawley, and
Brankenridge, by concuering advice of
my old Friends at Castletown, Ethan Allen &
I wrote this in a hurry as I have only half
an hours time, Mr Jones will inform you further
of my intention and Wishes I am

To all the Inhabitants
of Skenesborough

your very humble
Servant and Sincere Friend
(signed) Philip Skene

Source: The Skene Collection, Thompson-Pell Research Center, Fort
Ticonderoga, Ticonderoga, New York

Document Set Three: Source B
Treaty of Paris 1783

Article 5:

It is agreed that Congress shall earnestly recommend it to the legislatures of the respective states to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights, and properties, which have been confiscated belonging to real British subjects; and also of the estates, rights, and properties of persons resident in districts in the possession on his Majesty's arms and who have not borne arms against the said United States. And that persons of any other description shall have free liberty to go to any part or parts of any of the thirteen United States and therein to remain twelve months unmolested in their endeavors to obtain the restitution of such of their estates, rights, and properties as may have been confiscated; and that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several states a reconsideration and revision of all acts or laws regarding the premises, so as to render the said laws or acts perfectly consistent not only with justice and equity but with that spirit of conciliation which on the return of the blessings of peace should universally prevail. And that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several states that the estates, rights, and properties, of such last mentioned persons shall be restored to them, they refunding to any persons who may be now in possession the bona fide price (where any has been given) which such persons may have paid on purchasing any of the said lands, rights, or properties since the confiscation.

And it is agreed that all persons who have any interest in confiscated lands, either by debts, marriage settlements, or otherwise, shall meet with no lawful impediment in the prosecution of their just rights.

Article 6:

That there shall be no future confiscations made nor any prosecutions commenced against any person or persons for, or by reason of, the part which he or they may have taken in the present war, and that no person shall on that account suffer any future loss or damage, either in his person, liberty, or property; and that those who may be in confinement on such charges at the time of the ratification of the treaty in America shall be immediately set at liberty, and the prosecutions so commenced be discontinued.

Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris.asp

Document Set One Questions:

Source A:

1. Sourcing: Who wrote this document? When?

2. Contextualization: Based on the timing, what event do you think Philip Skene is describing?

3. Close Reading: What is Skene’s opinion of the event? What language does he use to persuade the reader of his opinion?

4. Close Reading: Based on this quote can you tell if Skene is a loyalist or a patriot: “...our Laws are good and should punish all Transgressors of it...”?

Source B:

5. Sourcing: Who is giving this testimony?

6. Corroboration: Does this document agree with Skene’s opinion? Why do you think this is?

Document Set Two

Source A:

1. Sourcing: Who is Skene writing to? When is this letter written?

2. Close Reading: What has happened to Skene?

3. Close Reading: What is Skene using as an argument as to why he should be set free?

Source B:

1. Contextualization/Corroboration: Based on the timeline, what events were happening that explain why Skene might have been imprisoned?

2. Contextualization/Corroboration: Based on the timeline, who was Governor Penn most likely loyal to?

Document Set Three

Source A:

1. Sourcing: Who is Skene writing to? When?

2. Close Reading: What is he asking for from the people?

3. Contextualization: What document is he referring to when he talks about the 5th and 6th Articles of Peace? (Hint: Look at Source B)

4. Close Reading: What is his tone? Why do you think he might choose to write in the tone?

5. Close Reading: Why do you think a loyalist might mention his “old friends at Castletown, Ethan Allen..” in this type of letter?

Source B:

1. Sourcing: What is the year of this document?

(Continued on next page)

2. Corroboration: What parts of Article 5 & 6 do you think Skene would be most excited about?

3. Contextualization: Why might Skene's letter arrive so soon after the Treaty of Paris?
