

Chris Ippolito

NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture

“The American Revolution on the Northern Frontier: Fort Ticonderoga and the Road to Saratoga”

Unit Overview

Content Area: *Social Studies/American Revolution*

Unit Title: *British Strategy on the Northern Frontier and the Turning Point of the War*

Target Course/Grade Level: *U.S. History/8th Grade*

Unit Summary:

The unit will focus on the British strategy of using the waterways in eastern New York State to cut off New England and snuff out the Revolt. Major themes will include colonial geography and resources, 18th Century military strategy, and the crucial role played by Benedict Arnold and how events on the northern frontier between 1775-1777 pushed Arnold towards his eventual treason.

Primary interdisciplinary connections:

- 1) *Language Arts/Literacy: Primary sources will reveal 18th century language differences and new vocabulary will be introduced connected to the Revolution’s northern campaign. In addition, military and environmental terminology will be introduced.*
- 2) *Art: Students will examine several maps and period works of art that provide a window into the northern frontier of the 18th century. Photos of the forts and bodies of water on the northern frontier will be compared and contrasted with maps to provide additional perspective.*
- 3) *Science: Climate is always a crucial factor when examining conflict. Students will examine the obstacles the harsh climate of the northern frontier posed and how British and Americans reacted to it.*

21st century themes:

- 1) *Civic Literacy*
- 2) *Environmental Literacy*

Unit Rationale

The turning point of the American Revolution is accepted to be the American victory at Saratoga, which brought France into the war and destroyed the British strategy of cutting off New England from the other colonies. Students need to understand the reason for this strategy and how its failure was determined by a crucial series of events from 1775-1777.

Learning Targets

Standards

NJ SS CCCS: 6.1.8.B.3.a; 6.1.8.B.3.c; 6.1.8.D.3.a; 6.1.8.D.3.c; 6.1.8.D.3.d; 6.1.8.D.3.e;

CPI #

Cumulative Progress Indicator (CPI)

6.1.8.B.3.a

Assess how conflicts and alliances among European countries and Native American groups impacted the expansion of the American colonies.

6.1.8.B.3.c

Use maps and other geographic tools to evaluate the impact of geography on the execution and outcome of the American Revolutionary War.

6.1.8.D.3.a	<i>Explain how the consequences of the Seven Years War, changes in British policies toward American colonies, and responses by various groups and individuals in the North American colonies led to the American Revolution.</i>
6.1.8.D.3.c	<i>Analyze the impact of George Washington as general of the American revolutionary forces.</i>
6.1.8.D.3.d	<i>Analyze how prominent individuals and other nations contributed to the causes, execution, and outcomes of the American Revolution.</i>
6.1.8.D.3.e	<i>Examine the roles and perspectives of various socioeconomic groups (e.g., rural farmers, urban craftsmen, northern merchants, and southern planters), African Americans, Native Americans, and women during the American Revolution, and determine how these groups were impacted by the war.</i>
Unit Essential Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What was the British strategy in the early years of the American Revolution?</i> • <i>Why was Saratoga the turning point of the Revolution?</i> • <i>Could the United States have won the Revolution without Benedict Arnold?</i> 	Unit Enduring Understandings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>British strategy relied upon linking Quebec with New York City through control of the Hudson River, Lake George and Lake Champlain in order to cut off New England from the other colonies.</i> • <i>Saratoga is the turning point of the Revolution because it proved the end of the British strategy to cut off New England and convinced potential European allies that America could win the war against Britain.</i> • <i>Benedict Arnold’s heroics at Ticonderoga, Valcour Island and Saratoga were essential to American victory in the Revolution, yet are greatly diminished in American history due to Arnold’s treason.</i>
Unit Learning Targets <i>Students will ...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understand the geography of the northern frontier during the American Revolution and the efforts the British undertook to utilize that geography in forming Revolutionary War strategy.</i> • <i>Will discuss the various reasons why Saratoga was the turning point of the American Revolution.</i> • <i>Learn the positive and negative exploits of Benedict Arnold, debate his place in history and compare and contrast Arnold with other famous Americans who committed treason, such as Washington, Robert E. Lee and Edward Snowden.</i> 	
Evidence of Learning	
Summative Assessment <i>Students will engage in structured debate to determine Benedict Arnold’s place in American history and if his act of treason was in any way justifiable. Students must utilize primary sources as evidence and may compare Arnold to other famous Americans who have committed treason.</i> Equipment needed: <i>Power Point, Smart Board, Primary Source Documents</i> Teacher Resources: <i>Primary Source Documents, Maps</i>	

Formative Assessment Prompts

- *The Americans had to build a north-facing fortification on Mount Independence to complement the defenses at Fort Ticonderoga. Why did the French build Fort Carillon facing south instead of north? How did the British defeat at Carillon during the French and Indian War impact both British and American reaction when each lost Fort Ticonderoga during the Revolution?*
- *Great Britain’s strategy during the Revolution was to link Quebec with New York City and isolate New England. What three waterways were the British looking to secure to make this happen? Why were waterways necessary if the vast majority of troops were making their way south on foot?*
- *Benedict Arnold’s small navy on Lake Champlain has been credited with delaying Burgoyne’s 1776 offensive until the following spring/summer. If Burgoyne had reached Saratoga in the late fall of 1776, would America have had the success it did in 1777? What was Burgoyne’s reason for not continuing to move south, and did he miscalculate by abandoning the Forts on Lake Champlain in the fall of 1776?*
- *Define portage. Why was the Ticonderoga peninsula so crucial during both the French and Indian War and the American Revolution? Between Lake Champlain, Lake George and the Hudson River, which was most important to control during the American Revolution? Explain your answer.*
- *Define treason. Compare and contrast Washington and Arnold. Was Arnold any more of a traitor to the United States than Washington was to Great Britain?*
- *Saratoga is considered the turning point of the American Revolution. Could the United States have won the decisive battle without Benedict Arnold? Could the United States have won the war without Arnold’s heroics?*
- *At the time of his defection to the British, Benedict Arnold was arguably the United States’ second most respected General after Washington. Why do you think Arnold’s exploits are often diminished in history texts? Should educators or the news media attempt to rewrite history based on subsequent actions by those who have made history?*
- *Define resentment. Was Benedict Arnold justified in his resentment after Saratoga? Discuss what you feel was the most significant factor in Arnold’s treason.*
- *What character traits do you feel superior soldiers have? What character traits helped Benedict Arnold to be among the greatest soldiers in the American Revolution? Did these traits contribute to his eventual treason?*
- *List the raw materials present in the painting “View of the Lines at Lake George.” (1759) What army supplies are not in clear abundance from the painting? What was most efficient means of supplying an army with massive amounts of materials?*

Lesson Plans

Lesson	Timeframe
<i>Geography of the Northern Frontier during the French & Indian War and American Revolution</i>	<i>1 Day</i>
<i>Biography of Benedict Arnold leading up through Battle of Quebec</i>	<i>1 Day</i>

<i>British Strategy for 1776/Battle for Valcour Island</i>	<i>1 Day</i>
<i>Battle of Saratoga and its consequences</i>	<i>1 Day</i>
<i>Arnold treason</i>	<i>1 Day</i>
<p><i>Culminating Debate:</i></p> <p><i>1) Could the United States have won the American Revolution without Benedict Arnold?</i></p> <p><i>2) Was Arnold in any way justified to have committed treason?</i></p> <p><i>3) How is Arnold different from George Washington or Robert E. Lee?</i></p> <p><i>4) How is Arnold different from Edward Snowden?</i></p>	<i>2 Days</i>
<p>Curriculum Development Resources</p> <p><i>Primary Sources will include, but not be limited to the following:</i></p> <p><i>A) Benedict Arnold’s Declaration of Principles (June 1775)</i></p> <p><i>B) British account giving “great honor” to Arnold for his escape at the Battle of Valcour (1776)</i></p> <p><i>C) Alfred Thayer Mahan quote crediting Arnold’s Navy (1776)</i></p> <p><i>D) Benedict Arnold’s letter from/to Washington (Spring 1778)</i></p> <p><i>E) Letter from Gates lauding Arnold’s heroics at Saratoga II (1777)</i></p> <p><i>F) Wintersmith Map (1777)</i></p> <p><i>G) Map of the Country between CROWN POINT and FORT EDWARD (1759)</i></p> <p><i>H) Painting: “View of the Lines at Lake George” (1759)</i></p> <p><i>I) Photos of Crown Point (2014)</i></p> <p><i>J) Photos of Fort Ticonderoga (2014)</i></p> <p><i>K) Photos of Hudson River from Saratoga (2014)</i></p>	

