

THE CAPTURE OF FORT TICONDEROGA



GRADES 4-5

OVERVIEW

Students read three accounts of the 1775 capture of Fort Ticonderoga, written by Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold, and British Lieutenant Jocelyn Feltham, who was second in command at Fort Ticonderoga at the time, and analyze the differences in the three accounts.

Depending on the reading abilities of your students, they may find some of the language unfamiliar. You may wish to read the letters out loud with your students. Then have your students analyze the letters, considering how the descriptions are alike and how they differ.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- * Compare and contrast three primary source documents
- * Make an informed argument based on evidence in the readings
- * Answer questions based on information in the letters

STUDENT STANDARDS

COMMON CORE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.6

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8

Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.



INTRODUCTION

Much of what we know about the historic capture of Fort Ticonderoga by Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold, and the Green Mountain Boys on May 10, 1775, comes from the letters, journals, and diaries of the participants. This activity includes descriptions of the capture written by three witnesses: Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold, and Jocelyn Feltham. Even though all three were present during the capture, their accounts don't completely agree.

History is not a list of facts; it is the interpretation of events. These three men each had biases and reasons for including or excluding certain facts. In the hours and days after the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold were engaged in a heated contest over who would command captured Fort Ticonderoga. In the dozens of letters Ethan Allen wrote after May 10th, Benedict Arnold was only mentioned in one—the letter written to the New York Committee of Safety. Why? There was a warrant for Allen's arrest in New York, so it was to Allen's advantage, in that one letter, that his actions in capturing the fort not be seen as by his action alone.

On the other hand, Lieutenant Jocelyn Feltham, second in command of the British troops at Ticonderoga, wrote a report to General Thomas Gage, the Commander-in-Chief of all British forces in North America. Feltham didn't care whether Allen or Arnold is in charge. His chief motivation was to defend his actions and those of his commander, Captain William Delaplace.

STUDENT STANDARDS

C3 FRAMEWORK

D2.His.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.

D2.His.6.3-5. Describe how people's perspectives shaped the historical sources they created.

D2.His.10.3-5. Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past.

D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.



MATERIALS

Excerpts from three accounts (attached):

- * Benedict Arnold to the Committee of Safety in Massachusetts
- * Ethan Allen to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress
- * Jocelyn Feltham to Lt. General Thomas Gage

ACTIVITY

Read three accounts of the capture of Fort Ticonderoga and answer the questions on the attached worksheet.