

The American Revolution

Overview

In this lesson, students learn how the Continental Army defeated the British in the Revolutionary War. First, in an **Experiential Exercise**, the class participates in a game of Capture the Flag, which models the strengths and weaknesses on both sides of the conflict. After the game, students read about the Revolution and take notes on the factors that helped the colonies win the war. Finally, students apply their learning in a Processing assignment.

Objectives

Students will

- describe characteristics of the British and American military forces at the start of the American Revolution.
- identify the main reasons that the Continental Army was able to defeat the British in the Revolutionary War.
- explain the main provisions of the Treaty of Paris.

Materials

- *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism*
- Interactive Student Notebooks
- Graphic Organizer Placard 7
- four small towels or rags (1 red, 3 blue) to be used as flags
- four orange cones or other items to mark off corners of the playing field
- tape
- whistle
- prizes for winning team (optional)



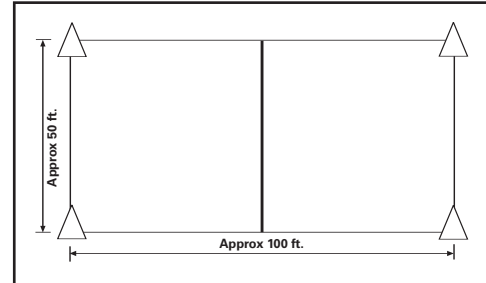
Preview

There is no Preview for this lesson. The Experiential Exercise functions as a preview to the history.



Experiential Exercise

1 Prepare playing area and materials for Capture the Flag. Before class, mark off an area roughly 50 feet by 100 feet (smaller, if you have a class of fewer than 30 students) on a grassy field or playground area. Use cones or other items (trash cans, backpacks) to mark off the four corners. Use tape to divide the field in half.



2 Review the objective and rules of Capture the Flag. Take students to the playing area and explain the rules, as follows:

- The object of the game is to capture the other team's flag and bring it back to your team's side of the field without being tagged by a member of the other team.
- When you are on your side of the field, your job is to play "defense" and tag members of the other team if they come onto your side. If you go onto the other team's side of the field, your job is to play "offense" and try to capture their flag and bring it back to your side without getting tagged. You may not throw or hand the flag to another teammate.
- If you are tagged on the other team's side of the field, you must leave the field immediately and sit next to the teacher. If you are tagged while the flag is in your hand, you must return the flag first. The teacher will tell you when you can reenter the game. If the teacher sees you tagged and you do not come out immediately, you will be eliminated from the remainder of the game.
- Only one student on each team can guard the team's flag, and he or she cannot touch or move the flag. All other team members must play offense or defense.
- When you hear the whistle, stop playing and return to your side of the field.

3 Divide students into three teams. Have students form a single line, in order from those with the most experience playing Capture the Flag to those who have never played the game. Follow these guidelines to create three teams:

- Call upon the quarter of the class with the *least* experience to be the Blue team.
- Call upon the half of the class with the *most* experience, remove the best player, and make this group the Red team.
- Ask the student you removed from the experienced group to be the captain of the Blue team.
- Call upon the remaining quarter of the class to be the White team.

(Historical Analogy: The Continental Army was much smaller and less experienced than the British military. However, George Washington, an experienced soldier, was the commander-in-chief of the Continentals. **Note:** This and other historical analogies are given to help you understand the connections between the game and the history. Do not share these with students until after the game.)

4 Conduct six rounds of Capture the Flag. Follow the steps outlined below for each round.

Round 1

Step 1: Prepare the teams for the first round of the game.

- Have the Red team stand in a line and warm up by stretching and jogging in place. Tell the Blue team not to do anything. (**Historical Analogy:** The British military was better trained than the American forces.)
- Move half the Red team ten yards away from the playing field. Tell these students they can only enter the game when you tell them. (**Historical Analogy:** British reinforcements and supplies had to travel across the Atlantic Ocean.)
- Tell the White team to root for the Blue team. (**Historical Analogy:** France sent financial aid and supplies to the Americans early in the war.)

Ask the White team: *Who do you think will win? Why?*

Step 2: Have students play for approximately two minutes. Do not allow the other half of the Red team to enter the game during this round. Be sure to blow the whistle to end the round before the Red team can capture the Blue team's flag.

Step 3: Allow students one minute to rest, and permit Red and Blue players who are not in the game to enter. Have the remainder of the Red team enter the game. Allow any students who have been tagged to reenter the game.

Round 2

Step 1: Prepare the teams for the second round of the game.

- Tell the Blue team that they will receive a prize, such as candy, if their team wins the game. Do not offer the Red team any prize if they win. (**Historical Analogy:** The Declaration of Independence increased motivation for most Americans.)
- Tell one student on the Blue team that even if the Blue team wins, you cannot guarantee that he or she will receive the prize offered other members of the Blue team. Give that student the opportunity to switch to the Red team. (**Historical Analogy:** African Americans wondered whether the equality promised in the Declaration of Independence would apply to them. Many doubted that it would, and chose to fight on the British side. Others hoped they would be treated equally, and chose to fight on the American side.)

Ask the White team: *Who do you think will win? Why?*

Step 2: Have students play for approximately two minutes. Be sure to blow the whistle to end the round before the Red team can capture the Blue team's flag.

Step 3: Allow students one minute to rest, and permit Red and Blue players who are not in the game to enter. Allow any students who have been tagged to reenter the game.

Round 3

Step 1: Prepare the teams for the third round of the game.

- Call the Blue team aside and deliver a brief “pep talk.” Encourage the Blue team to keep a positive attitude, even though their situation looks difficult. Tell them, “These are the times that try men’s souls.” (**Historical Analogy:** Thomas Paine’s pamphlet *The Crisis* encouraged Patriots to keep fighting.)
- Add a second Blue flag that the Red team must capture. Tell both teams that the Red team must capture both flags to win. Tell the players on the Red team that one person may not capture both flags at once. (**Historical Analogy:** American victories at Trenton and Princeton—in the Middle Colonies—showed the British that winning the war would be more difficult than they thought, and boosted American morale.)

Ask the White team: *Who do you think will win? Why?*

Steps 2 and 3: Repeat Steps 2 and 3 from Round 2.

Round 4

Step 1: Prepare the teams for the fourth round of the game.

- Tell the Blue team that they do not have to capture the Red flag in order to win the game. They only have to keep the Red team from capturing all the Blue flags. (**Historical Analogy:** Washington realized he did not have to defeat the British to win the war. He only needed to keep the British from defeating and capturing his army.)
- Call the Blue team aside and explain that if they can hold on for one more round, they may receive help. (**Historical Analogy:** After Americans won the Battle of Saratoga, the French promised to become active allies.)
- Allow one volunteer from the White team to join the Blue team. (**Historical Analogy:** Several Europeans, such as Lafayette and von Stueben, volunteered to help the Americans.)

Ask the White team: *Who do you think will win? Why?*

Steps 2 and 3: Repeat Steps 2 and 3 from Round 2.

Round 5

Step 1: Prepare the teams for the fifth round of the game.

- Add a third Blue flag that the Red team must capture. Tell both teams that the Red team must capture all three Blue flags to win. Remind the players on the Red team that one person may not capture more than one flag at a time. (**Historical Analogy:** Successful hit-and-run tactics used by the Americans in the Southern Colonies tired out the British forces.)
- Have the White team enter the game on the Blue team’s side. Explain that if the Blue team wins, the White team will win a prize, too. (**Historical Analogy:** France sent troops and naval support to America, which proved decisive at Yorktown.)

Steps 2 and 3: Repeat Steps 2 and 3 from Round 2.

Round 6

Step 1: Ask the Red team members if they want to continue to play under the current rules. Allow Red team members to express their frustration over the way the rules have been changed to favor the Blue team. Expect many Red team members to say they are ready to quit, and a few members to adamantly argue to keep playing.

(Historical Analogy: After Yorktown, British popular support for the war decreased dramatically. King George and others, however, refused to accept defeat for months after Yorktown.)

Step 2: Declare the Blue team the winner. Have a representative from the Red team concede victory by shaking hands with representatives from the Blue team and the White team. **(Historical Analogy:** Americans won the Revolutionary War.)

Step 3: Announce the terms of the end of the game. Have the Red team hand over its flag to the Blue team. Give the Blue team and the White team their prizes. Finally, have the Blue team captain promise the Red team that Red team members will be treated with respect even though they lost the game. **(Historical Analogy:** The Treaty of Paris ended the war. By the terms of the treaty, Britain withdrew its forces and recognized American independence. America promised that it would not seize any additional property from Loyalists.)

5 Return to the classroom and debrief the activity. Have students sit with their teams. Ask the following questions:

- (To the Red team) How did you feel at the very beginning of the game? Why?
- (To the Blue team) How did you feel at the very beginning of the game? Why?
- (To the White team) At the very beginning of the game, which team did you think would win? Why?
- (To the Red team) How did you feel as the game went on? Why?
- (To the Blue team) How did you feel as the game went on? Why?
- (To the White team) What rule changes helped the Blue team win?



Graphic Organizer

1 Introduce Chapter 7 in *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism*. Explain that in this lesson, students will study the American Revolution and how the Continental Army was able to defeat the British. Have students read Section 7.1. Remind them that important terms appear in colored type (teal). Each term is defined in the Glossary. **(Note:** You may want to have students use the Prereading Handout on page xv of the lesson guide to conduct a prereading of the chapter.)

2 Introduce Graphic Organizer Placard 7. Ask, *What do you see here? How is this graphic organizer like the game we played? How do you think the game we played might be like the Revolutionary War?* Tell students that the three teams shown in the graphic organizer represent the British (Red team), American (Blue team), and French (White team) forces in the Revolutionary War. In this chapter, students will use the graphic organizer to help them learn how the Continental Army was able to defeat the British.



Reading

1 Have students turn to Reading Notes 7 in their Interactive Student Notebooks. Explain that for each part of their Reading Notes, they should read the given section in the book, answer the corresponding questions, and annotate the activity map by completing the unfinished sentences.

2 Have students read Sections 7.2 through 7.8 and complete their Reading Notes. Consider having students complete their Reading Notes for Sections 7.2 and 7.3 in class. Review answers to make sure students are completing the Reading Notes correctly. Students can complete the remaining sections in class or at home.



Geography Challenge

Have students analyze the maps on pages 98–99 of *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism* by asking them the questions that accompany each map. This activity can be done with the entire class as a group, or in mixed-ability pairs.



Processing

Have students complete Processing 7 in their Interactive Student Notebooks.



Investigating Primary Sources

Ask students to read “Life in the Continental Army” on page 432 of *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism* and complete the corresponding assignment.



Assessment

Masters for assessment appear on the next four pages.

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. D 6. A 7. C 8. D 9. B 10. D
11. C 12. A 13. D 14. A 15. B 16. C 17. A 18. C 19. B 20. A
21. The bulleted points can provide a rubric for this item.



Online Resources

For an Internet research project on the American Revolution, refer students to Online Resources for *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism* at www.historyalive.com/historyalive. Other resources at this site include Web links and enrichment essays and activities.



Option for Students with Special Needs

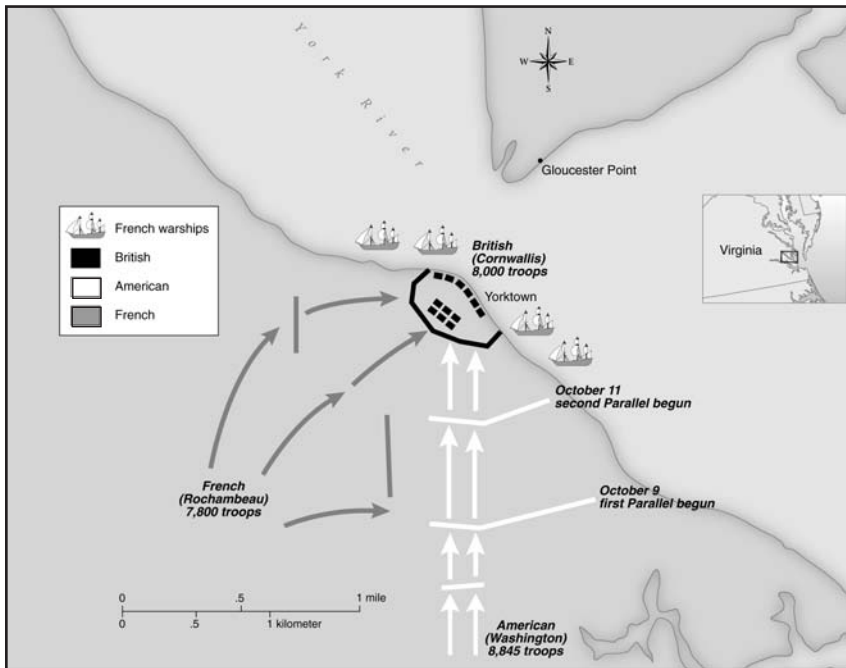
See page 344 for tips on adapting this lesson to meet the needs of

- English language learners.
- learners reading and writing below grade level.
- learners with special education needs.
- advanced learners.

Fill in the bubble beside the best answer to each question.

1. The main American *strength* when the war began was
 - ☐ an army of well-trained militia volunteers.
 - ☐ a large and powerful navy.
 - ☐ an able and inspiring leader in George Washington.
 - ☐ a large supply of guns and bullets.
2. Compared to the Continental Army, British troops were all of the following *except*
 - ☐ better fed.
 - ☐ better led.
 - ☐ better trained.
 - ☐ better equipped.
3. Many African Americans joined the Continental Army hoping that
 - ☐ independence would lead to the end of slavery.
 - ☐ they could return to Africa after the war.
 - ☐ Congress would give them land for their service.
 - ☐ Britain would grant them their freedom.
4. American victories at Trenton and Princeton
 - ☐ forced the British to abandon New York and New Jersey.
 - ☐ showed that the Americans could beat the British and their allies.
 - ☐ convinced Spain to side with the United States.
 - ☐ proved that Washington could not trust his men to fight.
5. After 1776, Washington's basic military strategy was to
 - ☐ starve the British out of New York City.
 - ☐ defeat the British in one large battle.
 - ☐ avoid battles at all costs to keep his army safe.
 - ☐ fight a defensive war and tire the British out.
6. The Battle of Saratoga was a turning point in the war because it
 - ☐ brought France into the war as an American ally.
 - ☐ ended General Burgoyne's career.
 - ☐ liberated Georgia from British control.
 - ☐ forced the British to leave Canada.
7. The American cause in the South was kept alive by
 - ☐ Hessian mercenaries.
 - ☐ Loyalists.
 - ☐ guerrilla troops.
 - ☐ foreign volunteers.
8. In the Treaty of Paris, the Americans won their independence and
 - ☐ the right to strip Loyalists of their property.
 - ☐ a pledge that future conflicts with Britain would be settled peacefully.
 - ☐ the return of all taxes collected by Britain before the war.
 - ☐ all the territory lying to the east of the Mississippi River.

Use the map and your knowledge of social studies to answer the questions below.



9. The map shows the battle of
 - ☐ Long Island.
 - ☐ Yorktown.
 - ☐ Saratoga.
 - ☐ Trenton.
10. In which state did this battle take place?
 - ☐ New York
 - ☐ Georgia
 - ☐ New Jersey
 - ☐ Virginia
11. Which three countries were involved in this battle?
 - ☐ France, Spain, and the United States
 - ☐ Germany, the United States, and France
 - ☐ Britain, France, and the United States
 - ☐ the United States, Germany, and Britain
12. How many troops did Cornwallis have?
 - ☐ 8,000
 - ☐ 7,000
 - ☐ 9,000
 - ☐ 5,000
13. Cornwallis was outnumbered by a ratio of about
 - ☐ five to one
 - ☐ three to one
 - ☐ four to one
 - ☐ two to one
14. What was the outcome of this battle?
 - ☐ Cornwallis surrendered, ending the war.
 - ☐ The warships were lost in a fierce storm.
 - ☐ Washington withdrew rather than risk his army.
 - ☐ Rochambeau's troops barely escaped alive.

Read the passage below. Then read each question and choose the best answer based on the passage.

These are the times that try men's souls.
 The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from
 the service of their country;
 but he that stands it NOW,
 deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered;
 yet we have this consolation with us,
 that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.
 What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly:
 it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.

Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods;
 and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should
 not be highly rated.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>15. Who wrote this passage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Joseph Martin in his memoirs <input type="radio"/> Thomas Paine in <i>The Crisis</i> <input type="radio"/> George Washington in his diary <input type="radio"/> Nathaniel Greene in orders to troops | <p>18. The passage contains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> facts about the Continental Army. <input type="radio"/> anti-British propaganda. <input type="radio"/> arguments for continuing to fight. <input type="radio"/> opinions about what to do next. |
| <p>16. What is the best synonym for <i>try</i> as it is used in the first line?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> attempt <input type="radio"/> judge <input type="radio"/> test <input type="radio"/> taste | <p>19. What is the main idea of the second section of the passage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Living under tyranny is like living in hell. <input type="radio"/> We value most what we struggle hardest to achieve. <input type="radio"/> The harder the struggle, the more we want to give up. <input type="radio"/> We value most what we get with the least effort. |
| <p>17. "Summer soldiers and sunshine patriots" might best be described as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> quitters. <input type="radio"/> optimists. <input type="radio"/> fighters. <input type="radio"/> traitors. | <p>20. This passage was written to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> persuade. <input type="radio"/> discourage. <input type="radio"/> inform. <input type="radio"/> amuse. |

Follow the directions to complete the item below.

21. Pretend you are a soldier in the Continental Army who has fought under General Washington for most of the war. Write a letter home to your family, after the Battle of Yorktown. Be sure to include the following items in your letter:
- at least three reasons why the Americans were able to defeat the British in the Revolutionary War.
 - a description of what General Washington was like as a leader. Give at least two specific examples.
 - a description of what Valley Forge was like, and how you were able to survive.
 - details that reveal your attitude about the war.



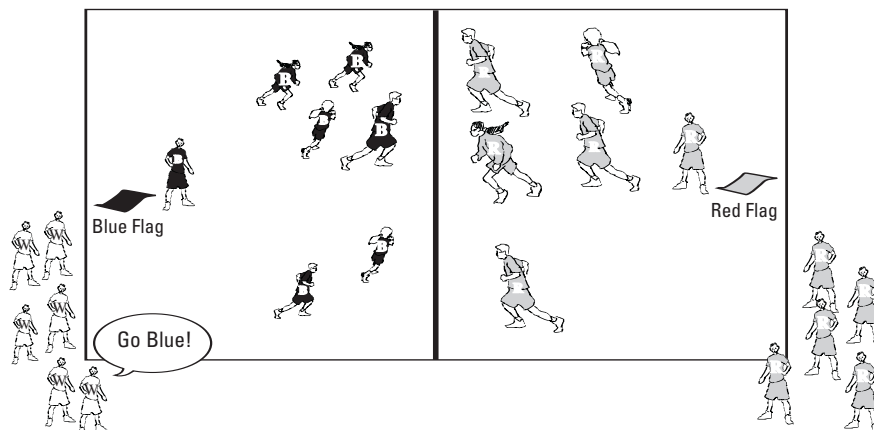
Read Sections 7.2 and 7.3. Then follow the directions below.

7.2 American Strengths and Weaknesses

1. List three weaknesses of the Americans at the start of the war.
 - The Continental Army was very small and always short of soldiers.
 - Few Americans were trained for battle.
 - The army was plagued by shortages of guns, gunpowder, food, and uniforms.
2. Besides patriotism, list two American strengths at the start of the war.
 - The Americans received secret aid from the French.
 - George Washington was an experienced military leader who inspired courage and confidence.

7.3 British Strengths and Weaknesses

1. List three strengths of the British at the start of the war.
 - The British Army had 50,000 soldiers, reinforced by 30,000 Hessian mercenaries, as well as Loyalists, Native Americans, and African Americans.
 - British soldiers were well trained and experienced, compared to the Americans.
 - British forces were well supplied with food, uniforms, ammunition, and weapons.
2. List two weaknesses of the British at the start of the war.
 - Sending troops and supplies from Britain to America was slow and costly.
 - The British were not passionate about defeating the rebels, and they had poor military leadership.
3. Complete the annotations for the map of Round 1 of Capture the Flag.
 - The Blue team is smaller. It has not warmed up. It hasn't played Capture the Flag as much as the Red team, just like... American forces were smaller and had less training and experience than the British.
 - The Red team is larger. It has warmed up. It has played Capture the Flag more than the Blue team, just like...the British army was larger, better trained, and more experienced than the Americans.
 - The Blue team's captain has experience playing Capture the Flag, just like... George Washington was an experienced general.
 - The White team cheers for the Blue team, just like...the French secretly aided the Americans at the beginning of the war.
 - Half of the Red team starts the game far away from the field, just like...Britain was far away from America and had to ship troops and supplies across the Atlantic.

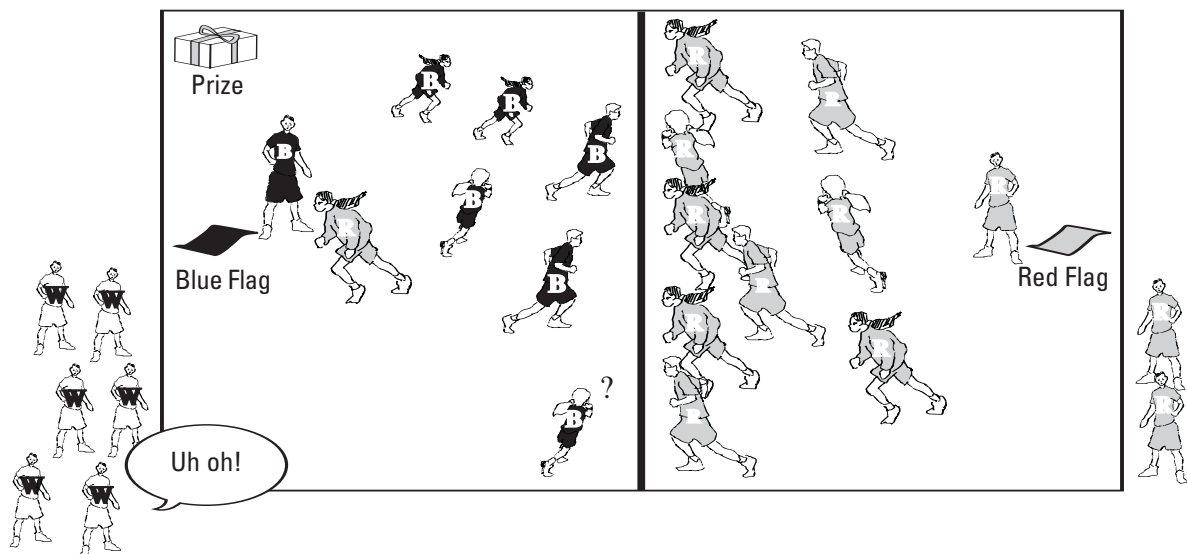




Read Section 7.4 and answer the questions below.

7.4 Britain Almost Wins the War

1. Why did the Declaration of Independence increase Americans' motivation to fight and win the war? Many Americans believed that freedom and the chance to create their own country were goals worth fighting for.
2. For which group of Americans did the Declaration of Independence raise hopes as well as questions? Why? The Declaration of Independence raised hopes and questions for African Americans; they wondered if the words "all men are created equal" applied to them, and whether independence would bring an end to slavery.
3. What factors allowed the British to almost win the war in 1776?
The British, with their greater numbers and superior training, overwhelmed the inexperienced Americans at New York and in other battles in 1776.
4. Complete the annotations for the map of Round 2 of Capture the Flag.
 - The teacher tells the Blue team that they will receive a prize if they win the game. This increases their motivation to win, just like...the Declaration of Independence increased the motivation of many Americans to fight and win the Revolution.



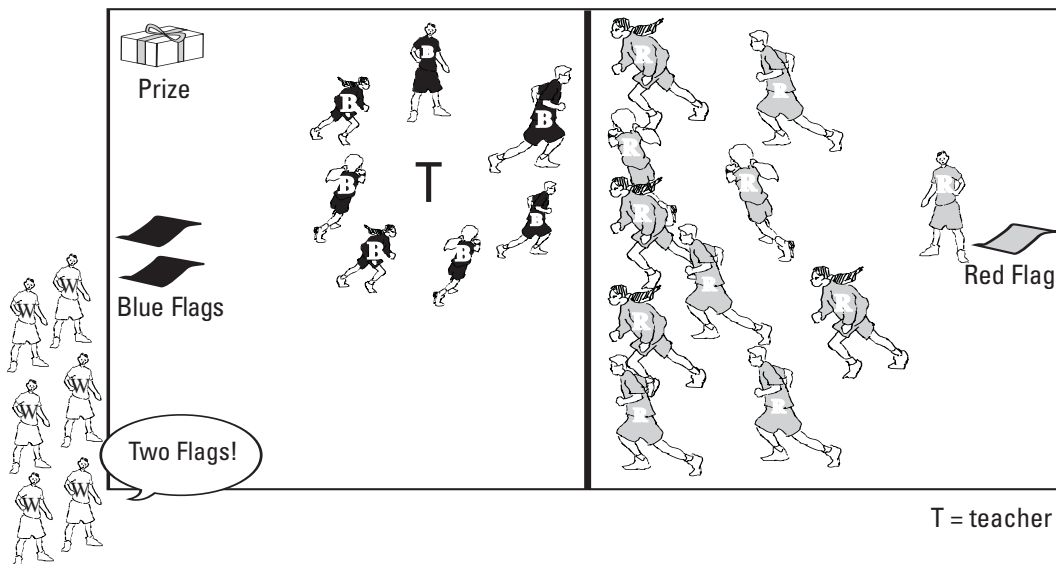
- Because they have more experienced players, the Red team is almost able to steal the Blue flag, just like...the British, with more numerous and experienced soldiers, almost defeated the Americans in 1776.
- One member of the Blue team is told that he or she might not receive the prize, even if the Blue team wins. That player must decide whether to stay on the Blue team or switch to the Red team, just like...African Americans were not sure if fighting for independence would assure them either equal rights or the end of slavery. They had to decide whether to fight on the American or British side.



Read Section 7.5 and answer the questions below.

7.5 A Pep Talk and Surprise Victories

1. In your own words, what was the message of Thomas Paine's pamphlet *The Crisis*?
The message of Thomas Paine's pamphlet *The Crisis* was to remind Americans that real patriots hold onto their beliefs, even in hard times.
2. How were the Americans able to win such an overwhelming victory at Trenton?
Washington had his troops cross the Delaware River on Christmas night and take the enemy by surprise early the next morning.
3. How did victories at Trenton and Princeton affect American morale?
Victories at Trenton and Princeton showed that the Americans could beat the British and their allies, and greatly boosted American morale.
4. Complete the annotations for the map of Round 3 of Capture the Flag.
 - The teacher gives the Blue team a pep talk and encourages them to keep fighting, just like... Thomas Paine's pamphlet *The Crisis* encouraged Americans to hold onto their beliefs, even during hard times.



- The teacher adds a second Blue flag. This makes it harder for the Red team to win and boosts the morale of the Blue team, just like... American victories at Trenton and Princeton showed the British that it would be harder than they expected to win the war, and boosted the morale of the Americans.



Read Section 7.6 and answer the questions below.

7.6 The Tide Begins to Turn

1. As the war progressed, how did Washington revise his military strategy?

Washington avoided large battles that might put his army at risk. Instead, he fought a defensive war that was designed to tire out the British.

2. Why did the American cause look more hopeful after the Battle of Saratoga?

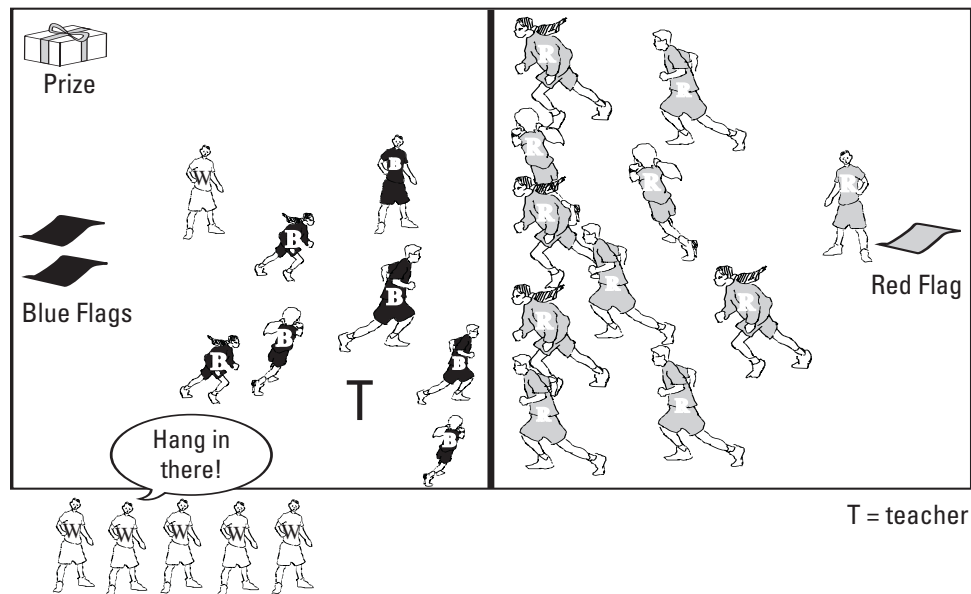
After the Battle of Saratoga, the French agreed to become allies of the Americans.

3. Name two foreigners who were present with the Americans at Valley Forge, and explain how they helped the Americans.

- Baron Friedrich von Steuben of Prussia continually drilled the American soldiers.
- The Marquis de Lafayette of France used his own money to buy warm clothes for the soldiers.

4. Complete the annotations for the map of Round 4 of Capture the Flag.

- The teacher tells the Blue team that they do not have to capture the Red flag to win. Instead, they must keep the Red team from capturing all the Blue flags, just like...Washington told Congress that he would fight a defensive war to try to tire out the British.



- The teacher has one volunteer from the White team join the Blue team, just like...some Europeans, like von Steuben and Lafayette, aided the American cause.

- The teacher tells the Blue team that if they can hold on for one more round, they may receive help, just like...after the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga, the French became American allies.



GUIDE TO READING NOTES 7

Read Section 7.7 and answer the questions below.

7.7 The War Goes South

1. What tactics did the Americans use successfully against the British in the Southern Colonies?

Americans in the South used guerrilla tactics, like hit-and-run raids, against the British.

2. How did the success of the Continental Army in the South contribute to the American victory?

The success of the Americans in the South tired out the British and eventually forced them to retreat to Yorktown, where they were defeated.

3. How did the French help the Americans in the Battle of Yorktown?

French troops and warships helped the Americans to trap the British army at Yorktown.

4. Complete the annotations for the map of Round 5 of Capture the Flag.

- The teacher adds a third Blue flag. This makes it harder for the Red team to win, just like... successful American hit-and-run tactics in the South made it even more difficult for the British to win the war.



- The White team enters into the game to help the Blue team in this round, just like... the French sent troops and warships to help the Americans defeat the British at Yorktown.



Read Section 7.8 and answer the questions below.

7.8 The War Ends

1. How did the British people respond to news of the Battle of Yorktown?

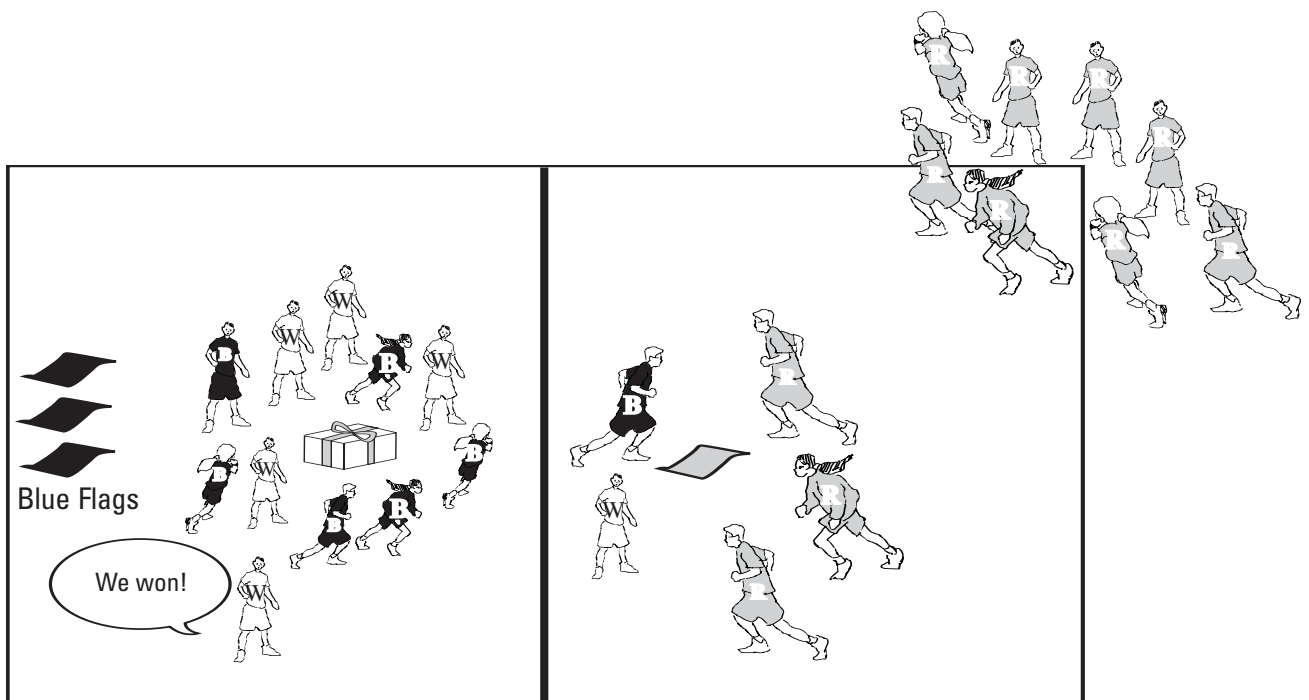
Most British were tired of the war, but King George did not want to accept defeat.

2. What were three key provisions of the Treaty of Paris?

- Britain recognized the United States as an independent country.
- Britain handed over territory from the Atlantic Coast to the Mississippi River.
- The United States agreed to return all rights and property taken from Loyalists during the war.

3. Complete the annotations for the map of the end of the Capture the Flag game.

- By the end of Round 6, many members of the Red team don't want to play anymore, but some do, just like...after Yorktown, many British were tired of the war, though King George did not want to accept defeat.



- At the end of the game, the Blue, White, and Red team captains shake hands. The Blue and White teams receive their prizes. The Red team captain hands over the Red flag. The Blue team promises to be nice to the Red team, just like...
at the end of the war, the Americans, French, and British signed a treaty in Paris. In the treaty, the United States received its independence. The British handed over territory to the Americans. The Americans promised to respect the rights and property of Loyalists.