

ACTIVITY**1****Document-Based Activities**
The American Revolution**Using Source Materials**

HISTORICAL CONTEXT Men and women from all walks of life were caught up in the American Revolution. Women served in a variety of ways, including a few who fought on the battlefield. African Americans, free and enslaved alike, served and became some of war's earliest heroes. Volunteers from Europe played important roles in the Continental Army, as well.

TASK

Using information from the documents in Part A and your knowledge of U.S. history, answer the questions that follow each document. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay, in which you will discuss and compare the roles played by women, African Americans, and Europeans in the American Revolution.

PART A

DIRECTIONS Read and examine the following documents. Underline key words and make notes in the margin if you wish. Then answer the questions using complete sentences.

DOCUMENT 1

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *independency*, *foment*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

I long to hear that you have declared an independency . . . in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands.

—Abigail Adams

from a letter to her husband, John Adams, during the Continental Congress, 1776

1a. What news is Abigail Adams hoping to hear from her husband?

1b. What does Abigail Adams want her husband to do?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 2

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *transform*, *maraud*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

Despite their low positions in society, women did participate. On the home front, they sewed uniforms and knitted stockings for the soldiers. With their husbands away fighting, some women had to take over as weavers, carpenters, blacksmiths, or shipbuilders. Others transformed their homes into hospitals for the wounded.

Both men and women fought on the battlefield. Hundreds of women served as nurses, laundresses, cooks . . . there were some that actually engaged in battle . . . Deborah Sampson put on men’s clothing and called herself Robert Shirtliffe in order to enlist in the Army. “Robert Shirtliffe” fought courageously; “his” company defeated marauding Indians north of Ticonderoga.

—Tina Ann Nguyen, “American Athenas: Women in the Revolution”

2a. What kinds of jobs did women take over from men during the American Revolution?

2b. How did Deborah Sampson manage to enlist as a soldier in the army?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 3



—Molly Pitcher at the Battle of Monmouth
(undated steel engraving)

3a. According to legend Molly Pitcher took over at the cannon after her husband dropped from exhaustion. Which of the people in this engraving is supposed to be her husband?

3b. How is Molly Pitcher represented in this engraving?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 4

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *treacherous, drubbing, trifling, duty*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary. This excerpt is taken from a play. Mrs. Flourish and Runt are two characters in the play.

Mrs. Flourish: The French! The cursed French! Mr. Runt, are the cause of all our misery. This rebellion would have been crushed long before this, but for them.

Runt: Your observations are very just, madam, and I am entirely of your opinion. And as to the French, everybody says they are a treacherous crew. I know when I was in England, it was the general opinion there . . . that they never would fight. And I don't despair but Old England will give them a drubbing yet. But as to us, I think we are in a worse box than ever. Out of the frying pan, into the fire. And all this for a trifling duty on tea.

—Mercy Otis Warren
from her play *The Motley Assembly*, 1779

4a. What event is Runt referring to in the last sentence of his speech? How can you tell?

4b. Do you think Mrs. Flourish is a Patriot? Why or why not?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 5

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *apprentice, regiment*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

The Militia Act of the summer of 1775 had required that “all free male persons, hired servants, and apprentices between the ages of 16 and 50 years . . . be enrolled or forced into companies.” This excluded slaves by definition, but free blacks were registered to serve, though “without arms.”

. . . Many a runaway told the nearest recruiter that he was a freeman, anxious to fight. More often than not, he was accepted without too many questions; the army was always short of men.

During the winter of 1777–78, dozens of black Virginians served in every one of the state regiments, freezing, starving, and dying at Valley Forge. By February 1778, the survivors were marching with white comrades through the snow, practicing Baron von Steuben’s . . . drill. Eight weeks later, an army report listed 755 blacks in the Continental Army, including 138 Blacks in the Virginia Line.

—Robert A. Selig
“The Revolution’s Black Soldiers,” 1997

5a. What group of people did the Militia Act of 1775 affect?

5b. How did some runaway slaves manage to serve in the army despite the ban on slaves?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 6



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—Peter Salem Shooting Major Pitcairn at Bunker Hill
by James E. Taylor, 1899

6a. Which man in the painting is Peter Salem? How can you tell?

6b. Which side is Peter Salem on? Which side is Major Pitcairn on? How can you tell?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 7

Before You Read: The following words in the document below may be new to you: *influx*, *competence*, *sorely*, *enlistee*. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

With the first foreign material aid in 1777, the influx of foreign officers into the American Army began . . . Most were adventurers in search of fortune . . . Few were willing to accept any but the highest ranks. Nevertheless, they brought with them professional military knowledge and competence that the Continental Army sorely needed . . . Louis DuPortail, a Frenchman, and Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a Pole, did much to advance the art of engineering in the Continental Army . . . Johann de Kalb and Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, both Germans, and the Marquis de Lafayette, an influential French nobleman who financed his own way, were all to make valuable contributions as trainers and leaders.

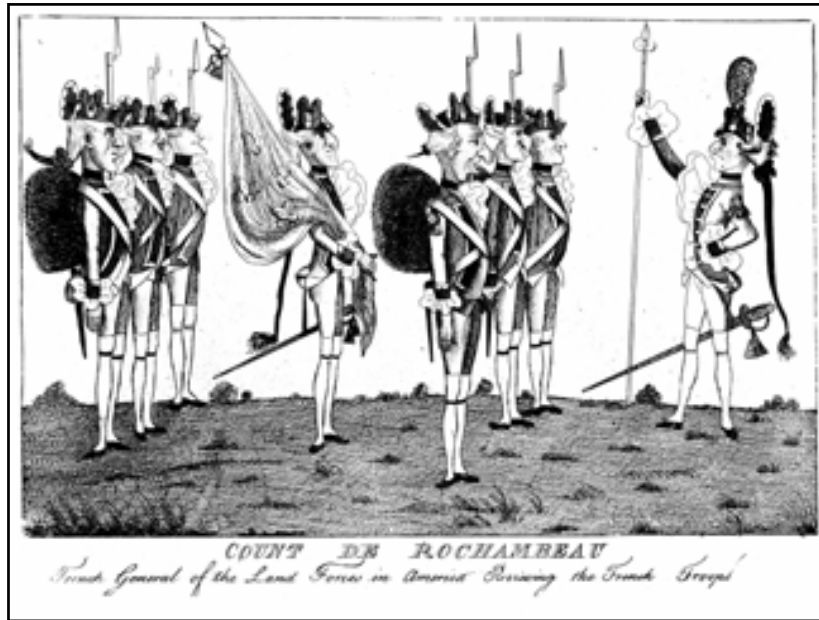
—“The Winning of Independence, 1777-1783”
American Military History, 1989
Center of Military History, United States Army

7a. Why were foreign officers welcomed into the Continental Army?

7b. What specific contributions did foreign volunteers make to the Continental Army?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

DOCUMENT 8



—Count de Rochambeau, French General of the Land Forces in America
Reviewing the French troops, British cartoon, 1780

8a. This cartoon was drawn by a British artist. In it he shows the French troops in America. Why would the British care if there were French troops in America?

8b. How can you tell that the artist was trying to make fun of the French troops? What effect would this have on British troops?

Activity 1, The American Revolution, continued

Writing a Document-Based Essay

PART B

DIRECTIONS Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, a body of several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from at least *four* documents in Part A to support your response. You may draw on any additional knowledge you have acquired about the subject.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT Men and women from all walks of life were caught up in the American Revolution. Women served in a variety of ways, including a few who fought on the battlefield. African Americans, free and enslaved alike, served and became some of the war's earliest heroes. Volunteers from Europe played important roles in the Continental Army, as well.

TASK

Using information from the documents in Part A and your knowledge of U.S. history, write an essay in which you discuss and compare the roles played by women, African Americans, and Europeans in the American Revolution.

GUIDELINES

In your essay, be sure to:

- Provide a thorough response to the Task. Be sure to cover all parts of the assignment.
- Include specific information from at least *four* of the sources in Part A.
- Incorporate relevant information from your textbook and class work.
- Organize your essay in a clear and logical way.
- Support your statements with facts and information that address the topic.
- Write a conclusion that sums up your ideas.

Note: Do not simply restate the Task or Historical Context. Your essay should include more information.