

Teaching U.S. Immigration Series

Teaching Immigration and the American Revolution: Lesson Plans and Resources



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INTRODUCTION

Humans have been migrating throughout every place and time in history. Since migration touches every part of life, it is relevant to almost any subject matter. The Teaching U.S. Immigration Series was created to make it easy for you to explore and incorporate immigration as it relates to the social studies topics you are already teaching.

This guide looks at the landscape of immigration during the American Revolution with two lesson plans and a student resource. Each of the two lesson plans, “Comparing Early and Modern Immigration to America” and “Early Immigration Law,” is designed to be flexible and adaptable based on the needs of your class. Each has an extension geared toward older students and could cover one or two class periods. The student resource, “Foreign-Born Heroes of the American Revolution,” summarizes the contributions of 10 individuals and is accompanied by discussion questions and extension ideas. Any of these pieces could stand alone or be woven together into the existing scope and sequence.

Immigration during this time of formation for the United States is a nuanced and fascinating topic, raising many questions. Through the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, waves of Europeans were migrating to settle in the New World, clashing with and pushing out the Native Americans who already lived here. Why would all these settlers make such an arduous journey, with few guarantees of stability once they arrived? At what point could we truly classify them as “immigrants?” What are the parallels to today’s immigration patterns? The lesson plan “Comparing Early and Modern Immigration to America” asks students to tackle these questions.

It wasn’t until after the Revolutionary War, in 1790, that the new country attempted to take control of the de facto open-border policy and patchwork citizenship requirements across states. How did the founders of a country made up entirely of recent migrants feel about immigration? How did these earliest attempts at regulation set the stage for the complex laws prospective immigrants face now? Students read the original 1790 law and consider its implications in the lesson plan “Early Immigration Law.”

Finally, the faces of immigrants look very different now than they did in the late 1700s. Most newcomers were white Europeans, with men holding much of the public power, and enslaved Africans forced into migration by the tens of thousands. The resource “Foreign-Born Heroes of the American Revolution” examines the critical roles that 10 newcomers played in the struggle of a country they may not even have yet called their own and asks students to critically reflect on the societal structure of the time.

Comparing Early and Modern Immigration to North America

EDUCATOR NOTES:

This lesson plan assumes background knowledge of the colonial period, which students will likely have already studied in this class or in years prior. The main part of this lesson explores reasons people move, beginning with a personal connection for students and using that as a comparison for why Europeans crossed the Atlantic to establish homes in North America. This lesson also introduces or reviews some basic immigration vocabulary and includes an optional additional activity using the Immigrant Stories project, short videos of modern-day immigrants' individual stories.

The second part of this lesson plan, Analyzing Political Cartoons, especially requires familiarity with the colonizing people's interactions with the Native Americans they encountered on both an individual and a national level. This lesson could be placed in advance of or near the beginning of a study of the American Revolution, or during a unit on the colonial period or European colonization of the Americas.

The extension asks students to analyze political cartoons, specifically comparing modern-day immigration and the European settlement of North America, and to think critically about the potential parallels and limits of such a comparison.

This lesson can be adapted based on grade level, student skill and available time. A teacher with younger students might spend more time on the first set of lesson activities, digging into connections between students, early settlers and modern-day immigrants. Younger students might need more support to grasp the nuances of the discussion involving the political cartoons. A teacher with older or more advanced students might move more quickly through the first part of the lesson and spend more time having students analyze and debate the issues in the extension. Each piece, also, can be taught independently, if one or more is the right fit for existing curricula and student readiness.

Lesson Plan:

Comparing Early and Modern Immigration to North America

OBJECTIVE

Students will compare and contrast reasons for migration to the North American colonies with present-day immigration to the United States.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Grade 6-8

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3](#)

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

Grade 9-10

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3](#)

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Grade 11-12

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3](#)

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

GUIDING QUESTION

How does migration to the North American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries compare to immigration to the modern United States?

MATERIALS

- A classroom resource covering European colonists' decisions to cross the Atlantic, or copies of this leveled article from the National Geographic Society: [Motivations for Colonization](#)
- Immigrant Stories handout
- Internet-connected devices (one per group) for viewing Immigrant Stories videos

ACTIVITIES

Think-Pair-Share:

Give students a chance either to think silently or respond in writing to the prompt: "Think about [or describe] a time when you, your family or other relatives undertook a major move." This can be a move to a new house, city, state or country. Give students time to share their story with a partner or small group.

Tell students: All of these stories from your families are stories of migration. Everyone, at some point in their ancestry, has a story of migration.

If this is new content for students, this is a good opportunity to show them a video like this one: [Map Shows How Humans Have Migrated Across the Globe.](#)

Start a list on the board called "Reasons people move," and have students keep a similar list on a piece of blank paper. Ask students to think about the stories they told or heard, and to identify the reason for the move. As a class, brainstorm as many reasons as you can. If needed, expand students' thinking by asking them why people might want to immigrate to the United States from many countries around the world.

Introduce vocabulary (if students are not already familiar):

- ▶ **Migrant:** a person who moves from one place to another
- ▶ **Immigrant:** a person who migrates into another country (for any reason)
- ▶ **Emigrate:** to leave one's home country to settle in another
- ▶ **Immigrate:** to come live permanently in another country

Tell students: People have moved across both short and long distances for the entire history of the human race. Most of the reasons we listed are similar to reasons people choose to emigrate from their home countries, although the decision may be bigger if it involves traveling to a different country. Some of these reasons were also in the minds of the Europeans who first left their homes to cross the Atlantic Ocean to settle in an unfamiliar continent.

Reading:

Explain to students that they'll be comparing this list to the reasons Europeans had for sailing to the Americas in the 17th and 18th centuries. Ask students to keep a second list based on a text they will read or re-read.

The resource assigned to students here may be part of a textbook already used in the classroom, or copies of this leveled National Geographic Society article: [Motivations for Colonization](#).

Come back together as a class and discuss: how many reasons are the same in both lists? Were people immigrating to what is now the United States for some of the same reasons people do so today?

It's important to note here for students one major reason that people came to the colonies that is not typically comparable to modern immigration: forced migration for the purposes of enslavement. By the beginning of the 18th century, tens of thousands of human beings had been taken from their homes and brought to the colonies for a life in which they were denied basic freedoms and the opportunities for betterment that drove the white settlers.

Additional Activity: Immigrant Stories

This activity uses [the Immigrant Stories Collection](#), a series of short videos about some of the people who have immigrated to Minnesota.

Divide the class into pairs or small groups (each will need an internet-connected device). Have students choose one story to view from the website or from a pre-selected list. Give each student the Immigrant Stories handout and have them complete it for their video. Compare and discuss as a class.

1. Name of immigrant:
2. Country of origin:
3. Year they came to the United States:
4. Summarize their story:
5. Identify the reasons why the person or family decided to immigrate:
6. Was their reason to immigrate similar to a reason that Europeans settled in the Americas?

Extension:

Were the Early Settlers Immigrants?

OBJECTIVE

Students will evaluate whether the first European settlers in the Americas could be considered immigrants by modern standards.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Grade 6-8

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6](#)

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8](#)

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Grade 9-10

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6](#)

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8](#)

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

Grade 11-12

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6](#)

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8](#)

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

MATERIALS

- Copies of political cartoons. Political cartoons about early European settlers, pilgrims and Native Americans can be found online and often may be legally used for educational purposes. We have listed some recommended political cartoons below, or feel free to use others that more closely align with your curriculum and goals. Be sure to follow [fair use guidelines](#).
 - ▶ [Cartoon by Chip Bok](#)
 - ▶ [Cartoon by Signe Wilkinson](#)
 - ▶ [Cartoon by Jeff Parker](#)
 - ▶ [Cartoon by Dave Granlund](#)
 - ▶ [Cartoon by Mike Luckovich](#)
- Analyzing Political Cartoons handout

ACTIVITIES

Analyzing Political Cartoons:

Divide students into groups and give each group copies of **one political cartoon** and a **handout**. Let students know that all of these cartoons are connecting the early European settlers' arrival in North America to immigration (often unauthorized immigration) today.

1. Describe what is happening in the cartoon with as much detail as possible. Pay attention to the choices the artist makes in depicting the cartoon elements (characters, setting, etc.).
2. What message is the cartoonist trying to send? What is the cartoonist's point of view?
3. Is there any room for different interpretations?

Have groups share out, giving students a chance to become familiar with all the cartoons and identify similarities.

DISCUSSION

Big question: Can the early European settlers in North America be considered “immigrants?”
Points to push students' thinking or add nuance:

- ▶ What defines an “immigrant?”
- ▶ What are the similarities and differences between early settlers coming to live in what was for them the “New World” and modern immigrants coming to live in the United States? (Think about the Native American nations already here and the settlers' relationships with them.)
- ▶ Do the political cartoons make an accurate or fair use of history to shed light on current events, or is it an oversimplification?

This could lend itself to a group discussion, a think-pair-share or even a short writing assignment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Immigrant Stories project comes with its own in-depth curriculum unit, [Teaching Immigration with the Immigrant Stories Project](#).

Library of Congress primary source resources: [Colonial Settlement, 1600s - 1763](#).

[History of immigration, 1620-1783](#). This article has more details about immigration from Europe and Africa during the 17th and 18th centuries.

[Analyzing Anti-Immigrant Attitudes in Political Cartoons by Re-Imagining Migration](#)

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Immigrant Stories

Watch the video with your group and complete the questions. You may need to play the video multiple times.

1. Name of immigrant:
2. Country of origin:
3. Year they came to the United States:
4. Summarize their story:
5. Identify the reasons why the person or family decided to immigrate:
6. Was their reason to immigrate similar to a reason that Europeans settled in the Americas?

Lesson Two

Early Immigration Law

EDUCATOR NOTES:

In this lesson, students will compare the United States' earliest immigration law, the Naturalization Act of 1790, with current immigration policies. Students will have the opportunity to interact with a primary source, which teachers of younger students may choose to scaffold by having students read only a portion of the text or by working through it as a class.

Students will learn about some current immigration policies, which can be very complex. This is a good opportunity to clarify misconceptions about immigration and appreciate how difficult, if not impossible, it is now for many prospective immigrants to gain citizenship. It's important for students to know that outside of a few specific categories, there is no "line" for the average would-be immigrant to get in with the goal of naturalization. This discussion should be focused on legal systems of immigration; if students seem eager to address unauthorized immigration, a subject which often comes with misinformation and high emotions, redirect the conversation and make a plan for how to address this another day.

The extension, particularly geared toward older students, asks students to grapple with some persuasive writing from various sources recruiting the founding fathers into the immigration debate. This intellectually diverse group of men held nuanced and evolving views on immigration, so in reality there is no one perspective they all collectively held. Comparing these articles gives students a chance to consider our modern society's dependence on the founding fathers and what role they still play in shaping national policy and opinion.

Lesson Plan:

Early Immigration Law

OBJECTIVES

- Students will summarize and pull key information from the primary source “Naturalization Act of 1790.”
- Students will compare and contrast the earliest and current U.S. immigration laws.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Grade 6-8

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9](#)

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Grade 9-10

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](#)

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Grade 11-12

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2](#)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9](#)

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

MATERIALS

- Immigration and Citizenship handout
- [Naturalization Act of 1790](#) (original) to display
- Naturalization Act of 1790 transcript and questions handout
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) guide [Thinking About Applying for Naturalization?](#)
- Paper for students to create a Venn diagram or compare/contrast organizer
- [“The Ways in Which Green Cards are Obtained”](#) graphic for display, and/or copies of [Explainer: How the U.S. Immigration System Works](#)
- Exit Ticket

ACTIVITIES

Opening:

Give students a few minutes to write down their thoughts on three questions:

1. What does it mean to be a citizen?
2. What do you know about how people become citizens of the United States in the present day?
3. How would you predict the United States’ founders felt about immigration?

Discussion and Vocabulary:

Discuss students’ answers to the first question, guiding them toward an understanding of citizenship in the legal sense. Introduced related terms if not already familiar to students.

- ▶ Citizen: a legal member of a country or state, either native-born or naturalized
- ▶ Naturalization: the process of becoming a citizen
- ▶ Alien: a person who is not a citizen of their country of residence

Discuss students’ answers to the third question and ask them to justify their predictions based on what they have already learned about the American Revolution and the founding of the United States. Tell students that in this lesson they’ll be reading the text of the very first immigration law of the United States, written just one year after the Constitution.

Naturalization Act of 1790:

Display [a copy of the original Act](#) for students to see and distribute copies of the transcript. Give students time to work independently or in pairs to read through the Act and answer the two questions. For younger students, consider breaking up the text into two or three sections and having students work together to interpret each section.

Comparing to Current Naturalization Law:

Return to the opening exercise and ask students to share their answers to the second question, what they know about how people become citizens of the United States. Point out that many American-born students may never have really considered citizenship, as people born in the U.S. are automatically citizens, along with those born to outside the U.S. American parents and under-18 children of naturalized citizens ([more detail on children and citizenship here](#)).

Distribute to students copies of the USCIS guide [Thinking About Applying for Naturalization?](#) Give students time to read through and think about comparisons:

- ▶ Are any requirements for naturalization the same as they were in 1790?
- ▶ What requirements have been added or changed?

Consider having students record their observations in a Venn diagram or other style of graphic organizer.

Discuss students' observations. Point out that many of the current regulations can be traced back to the original law. For example, the 1790 requirement to be "a person of good character" has evolved into required reporting of all interactions with law enforcement.

Lawful Permanent Residency:

Students should notice the major systemic difference in the naturalization process is that only lawful permanent residents, or green card holders, are eligible for naturalization. In contrast to 1790, when getting to the United States (usually a long journey by boat) made one eligible to apply for naturalization, in current times actually being allowed to live in the U.S. is the major barrier on the path to citizenship.

[Explainer: How the U.S. Immigration System Works](#) from the Migration Policy Institute is an excellent resource and could be read with older students if time allows. To give students an idea of who is eligible for Lawful Permanent Resident status, display one or more of the graphics from the article, particularly "The Ways in Which Green Cards are Obtained."

Ask students what they noticed, what they already knew and what surprised them. What are the differences in the United States (or the world) from 1790 to the present that would lead to so much more restriction on who can enter?

This [Immigration History Timeline](#) is a useful (and thorough) resource for students to learn more about how immigration law evolved from 1790 to the present, if questions come up and time allows.

Exit Ticket:

Ask students to respond in writing to assess their understanding.

1. In the earliest years of the United States, who was eligible for naturalization?
2. What parts of the 1790 law are the same or similar today?
3. What is different today about eligibility or the process for becoming a citizen?

Extension:

The Founding Fathers on Immigration Policy

OBJECTIVE

Students will evaluate arguments for and against immigration restrictions using historical precedent.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Grade 9-10

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6](#)

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8](#)

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

Grade 11-12

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6](#)

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8](#)

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

MATERIALS

Copies of articles/blog posts (examples listed in activities)

ACTIVITIES

The “founding fathers,” or the men who largely get credit for bringing the United States to independence, are often brought into debates about major national topics such as immigration. Their views, however, are less monolithic and more nuanced than many people believe.

Divide students into groups and assign each group to read one of these articles or blog posts about the founding fathers and immigration.

For more open immigration:

- ▶ [America's Declaration of Independence was pro-immigrant](#)
- ▶ [Immigration, Nationalism and America's Founders](#)
- ▶ [The Founding Fathers favored a liberal immigration system](#)

For more restricted immigration:

- ▶ [Founding Fathers, trashing immigrants](#)
- ▶ [The Founding Fathers were immigration skeptics](#)

Have students identify the main and supporting arguments for their article, then share out with the class. Discuss, comparing the various arguments.

- ▶ Is there a clearly more convincing point of view, based on the arguments?
- ▶ If we could use a time machine to ask exactly what the founding fathers thought about immigration, what effect would, or should their opinions have on current immigration policy?
- ▶ Why are politicians and writers so eager to bring the founding fathers in on a current debate?

[This article](#) presents a comprehensive overview of the topic and may be helpful for teachers to review.

The Naturalization Act of 1790

Read the original text of the Act below and answer the questions.

United States Congress

“An act to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization,” March 26, 1790

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That any Alien being a free white person, who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for the term of two years, may be admitted to become a citizen thereof on application to any common law Court of record in any one of the States wherein he shall have resided for the term of one year at least, and making proof to the satisfaction of such Court that he is a person of good character, and taking the oath or affirmation prescribed by law to support the Constitution of the United States, which Oath or Affirmation such Court shall administer, and the Clerk of such Court shall record such Application and the proceedings thereon; and thereupon such person shall be considered as a Citizen of the United States. And the children of such person so naturalized, dwelling within the United States, being under the age of twenty one years at the time of such naturalization, shall also be considered as citizens of the United States. And the children of citizens of the United States that may be born beyond Sea, or out of the limits of the United States, shall be considered as natural born Citizens: Provided, that the right of citizenship shall not descend to persons whose fathers have never been resident in the United States: Provided also, that no person heretofore proscribed by any States, shall be admitted a citizen as aforesaid, except by an Act of the Legislature of the State in which such person was proscribed.

1. According to this law, who could become a citizen through naturalization, and what did eligible immigrants have to do to gain citizenship rights?

2. Who would have been excluded from citizenship through naturalization under this law?

Foreign-Born Heroes of the American Revolution

EDUCATOR NOTES:

This student-friendly resource summarizes the contributions of 10 foreign-born figures during the American Revolution. It is designed to be easily distributed directly to students but could also inspire a short research project in the form of a written, digital or oral presentation. Regardless of how these heroes' stories are explored, we encourage use of the discussion questions for a more dynamic and deeper engagement with the history.

It is important to note, or allow students to observe, that many of these famous figures were white men, as are the majority of the heroes who are remembered for their actions during the Revolutionary War. In the unequal society of the time, only white men were typically able to pursue careers that would earn them these accolades, but every one of them was supported by women, enslaved people and others without whom the war could not have been waged at all. Many of the people in these supporting roles also strove to directly support the cause for independence, stretching the constraints of their place in society, yet were not recognized by the writers of history. Note, for example, that there are no known images of Cuffee Wells. Asking students to critically examine society (both of the time period and now) and the way history is told will deepen their understanding of the content and its connection to the present day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Choose one of these influential figures. How might history have been different if that person had not come to the United States?
2. Though all of the people listed were born outside the United States, most were men of white, European descent.
 - ▶ What factors in the society of the time, and the recording or telling of history, led to this imbalance?
 - ▶ Are there other definitions of “hero” that would include those who worked less visibly for the nation’s founding?
3. None of these people were born on American soil, but not all might have considered themselves “immigrants.” What were the various groups populating the colonies during the Revolutionary War, and what groups could have been considered immigrants by today’s standards?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bernardo de Gálvez

- ▶ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/little-remembered-ally-who-helped-america-win-revolution-180961782/>
- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/bernardo-de-galvez>
- ▶ <https://www.historyisfun.org/learn/learning-center/bernardo-de-galvez-y-madrid/>

Alexander Hamilton

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/alexander-hamilton>
- ▶ <https://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/served/hamilton.html>

Johann de Kalb

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/johann-de-kalb>
- ▶ <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/de-kalb-johann/>

Tadeusz Kościuszko

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/tadeusz-kosciuszko>
- ▶ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/polish-patriot-who-helped-americans-beat-british-180962430/>

The Marquis de Lafayette

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/marquis-de-lafayette>
- ▶ <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/de-kalb-johann/>

Thomas Paine

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/thomas-paine>
- ▶ <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/thomas-paine/>

- ▶ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2016/09/17/americas-most-important-immigrant/>
- ▶ <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/thomas-paine-the-original-publishing-viral-superstar-2>

Casimir Pulaski

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/casimir-pulaski>

Esther de Berdt Reed

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/esther-de-berdt-reed>
- ▶ <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2010/12/esther-de-berdt-reed.html>
- ▶ <https://www.pennlive.com/life/2018/10/esther-de-berdt-reed-a-hero-in.html>

Baron von Steuben

- ▶ <https://www.history.com/news/openly-gay-revolutionary-war-hero-friedrich-von-steuben>
- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/baron-von-steuben>

Cuffee Wells

- ▶ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/cuffee-wells>
- ▶ <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/news/former-slave-doctor-cuffee-saunders-1781>

Handout: 10 Foreign-born Heroes of the American Revolution

Bernardo de Gálvez (Spain)

Bernardo de Gálvez was the governor of the Spanish province of Louisiana, and he aided the early war effort by smuggling vital supplies through the British blockade up the Mississippi River. Once Spain joined the war in 1779, Gálvez led a military campaign against the British on the Gulf Coast, including a critical win at Pensacola, West Florida. His actions kept the British troops tied up in the South and prevented them from traveling north and surrounding the Continental Army. Gálvez was commended by George Washington and the United States Congress for his aid and in 2014 was granted honorary citizenship as a hero of the American Revolution.



Alexander Hamilton (Nevis, West Indies)

Born and raised in the Caribbean on islands under British and Danish rule, Alexander Hamilton's intellectual gifts led him to pursue an education at King's College (now Columbia University) in New York. In 1775 he left school to join the military effort for independence. A skilled leader, Hamilton was promoted to lieutenant colonel and became a close confidante and aide-de-camp of General George Washington. He played a critical role in the Siege of Yorktown, the last major battle of the Revolutionary War. After the war, he was appointed one of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and later contributed to writing The Federalist Papers, arguing for ratification of the Constitution. Washington, now president, appointed Hamilton as the first Secretary of the Treasury, where he laid the groundwork for the new American economy.



Johann de Kalb (Germany)

Baron Johann de Kalb of Bavaria, a veteran of the French Army, sailed for the American colonies in 1777 with the Marquis de Lafayette. He was appointed a major general by the Continental Congress and served under General George Washington during several key battles. In 1780, de Kalb participated in the Battle of Camden against British commander Lord Cornwallis. The Continental forces were led by General Horatio Gates, who fled the field when many of his troops panicked and ran. De Kalb and his infantry remained to stand against Cornwallis for a counterattack before finally being overwhelmed. De Kalb was repeatedly wounded and taken prisoner by the British, succumbing to his wounds three days later.



Tadeusz Kościuszko (Poland)

Tadeusz Kościuszko joined the American Revolution in 1776 as an engineer. He aided the army by building and strengthening fortifications that helped secure a crucial victory at the Battle of Saratoga and protected West Point, which George Washington called the “key to America.” The Continental Congress named Kościuszko chief of the engineering corps and sent him to support the army in the South until the end of the war, when he was also granted U.S. citizenship in gratitude for his service. Kościuszko, a believer in liberty, employed Black men throughout his life, and he wrote in his will that his friend Thomas Jefferson should use all of Kościuszko’s American assets for buying the freedom and education of enslaved Africans.



Early in the Revolution, the young aristocrat Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, disobeyed French royal decree and journeyed overseas to join the Patriots, soon proving his worth in battle and becoming a close confidante of General George Washington. After earning multiple commendations by the Continental Congress, Lafayette traveled back to France and played a pivotal role in securing French aid for the Continental Army. Back in the United States, Lafayette commanded the force that was able to surround the British commander Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781, the battle that would mark the end of the Revolutionary War.

The Marquis de Lafayette (France)

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Thomas Paine (England)

Thomas Paine came to the colonies from England only a year before the start of the Revolutionary War. Already an intellectual and political advocate, when Benjamin Franklin invited Paine to come to Pennsylvania, he eagerly made the journey. With tensions simmering in the colonies over King George's treatment of his colonial subjects, Paine made the case for independence and democracy in a 47-page pamphlet called "Common Sense," which was printed nearly 500,000 times and owned by an estimated 20 percent of colonists. Paine continued to publish influential and inspiring writings, several of which George Washington used to boost the morale of troops throughout the war. His writings rallied soldiers, politicians and common citizens alike to fight for their freedom.



Casimir Pulaski (Poland)

Casimir Pulaski, now known as the "Father of the American Cavalry," was recruited to the cause of American Independence by Benjamin Franklin and quickly became instrumental to the war effort. Without waiting for official approval, he threw himself into the Battle of Brandywine where a desperate General George Washington gave him command of a small, mounted force. Pulaski's counterattack on the British Army allowed the Continental Army an orderly and safe retreat and may have saved Washington's life. Pulaski went on to create an independent cavalry unit of both American and foreign-born soldiers, and later died in battle in Georgia. In 2009, the United States posthumously granted him honorary citizenship.



Esther de Berdt Reed (England)

Esther de Berdt Reed moved to Philadelphia from London with her husband shortly before the beginning of the Revolutionary War. She embraced the Patriots' cause of independence and, in 1780, while caring for her mother and children with her husband away at war, wrote a popular broadside called "The Sentiments of an American Women," calling on women to do what they could to help the Continental Army. To this end she founded the Ladies' Association of Philadelphia, which raised more than \$7,000 (or about \$30,000 today) for the American troops. After hearing from General George Washington that what they needed the most was clothing, the women used the money to buy cloth and sewed over 2,000 shirts for the Patriot soldiers.



Baron von Steuben (Germany)

At the beginning of the Revolution, the Continental Army possessed nowhere near the organization and skill of the highly trained British troops. In 1778, Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin, the Baron von Steuben, arrived and began training the Continental soldiers serving under George Washington in modern military tactics, sanitation measures and combat techniques, giving them a fair chance in battle against the British Army. Von Steuben also wrote the first military manual for the American armed forces, which was used by the U.S. Army until 1814.



Cuffee Wells (Guyana)

As a child, Cuffee Wells was enslaved under a doctor in Hartford, Connecticut. In 1777, Wells enlisted in the Continental Army as a private, where his medical skills were quickly noticed. He was reassigned as assistant to Dr. Philip Turner, the Surgeon General of the Eastern Department, and earned the nickname “Doctor Cuffee.” In 1778, he was transferred to Valley Forge, supporting the army as a medical assistant. In return for his service, Cuffee was emancipated following the war and worked in a hospital for Dr. Turner, becoming a respected medical professional.