**Title:** Battles of the American Revolution

**Subject:** 4th Grade Social Studies

**GPS:**

**SS4H4:** The student will explain the causes, events, and results of the American Revolution.

c. Describe the major events of the American Revolution and explain the factors leading to American victory and British defeat; include the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Saratoga, and Yorktown.

d. Describe key individuals in the American Revolution with emphasis on King George III, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Benedict Arnold, Patrick Henry, and John Adams.

**SS4G2d:** Explain how each force (American and British) attempted to use the physical geography of each battle site to its benefit (SS4H4c).

**Learning Goal(s):**

- Describe three important battles from the American Revolution (Lexington and Concord, Saratoga, Yorktown)
- Explain how each of these battles led to a victory by America
- Understand the importance of key historical figures, including George Washington, King George III, and Benedict Arnold

**Essential Question:**

What made George Washington a good leader of the Continental army?

What was the importance of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Saratoga, and the Battle of Yorktown?

Why is the Battle of Saratoga considered the “turning point” of the American Revolution?

How did the British and Continental armies attempt to use the geographical features to their advantage during each battle?

**Assessment:**

Battle Displays (see next page).

On the final day, presentations will be on display and students will have a chance to view other groups’ presentations museum style.
American Revolution Battle Display

You have been hired by a museum to create a display about one of the battles of the American Revolution. You may either choose the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Saratoga, or the Battle of Yorktown. You may work in groups of 2-4 people. Your display will have three parts.

**Illustration or Diorama**
You may either draw a picture (neatly illustrated and colored) or create a three-dimensional diorama of your battle. Your creation must show both the American and British soldiers, the landscape in which they were fighting, and the main event of the battle.

**Map**
You need to draw and label a map of the area where your battle was fought. Your map should include any important geographical features (rivers, oceans, mountains, etc.) that may have helped the soldiers. On your map, write two-three sentences about how the geography of this area helped the American soldiers against the British.

**Paragraph**
Write a paragraph describing your battle. It should tell the name of your battle, who won, and why this battle was important in the Revolutionary War. Paragraphs should be three-five sentences long. Paragraphs should be edited and written neatly. There should be few errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
### Battle Display Rubric

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Strong 5</th>
<th>Medium 3</th>
<th>Weak 1</th>
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| Illustration or 3-D diorama or battle     | All three of the following are included:  
  *Illustration or diorama shows both American and British soldiers.  
  *The landscape of the battle is clearly shown  
  *The main event of the battle is evident in the picture or diorama. | Two of the following are included:  
  *Illustration or diorama shows both American and British soldiers.  
  *The landscape of the battle is clearly shown  
  *The main event of the battle is evident in the picture or diorama. | Zero or one of the following are included:  
  *Illustration or diorama shows both American and British soldiers.  
  *The landscape of the battle is clearly shown  
  *The main event of the battle is evident in the picture or diorama. |
| Map of battle                             | All three of the following are included:  
  *Map shows the correct area of the battle.  
  *Important geographical features are included.  
  *A short paragraph explains how the geography helped the Continental Army. | Two of the following are included:  
  *Map shows the correct area of the battle.  
  *Important geographical features are included.  
  *A short paragraph explains how the geography helped the Continental Army. | Zero or one of the following are included:  
  *Map shows the correct area of the battle.  
  *Important geographical features are included.  
  *A short paragraph explains how the geography helped the Continental Army. |
| Description of battle’s importance        | Paragraph clearly explains why this battle was important to the American Revolution. | Paragraph explains the importance of this battle, but some information is missing or unclear. | Paragraph does not explain why this battle was important to the American Revolution. |

**Comments:**
Activate Learning:

Think-Pair-Share of how life would be different if the United States were still ruled by the British. Students will independently list the differences. Then, with a partner, they will come up with the one most significant difference. As a whole class, each set of partners will share their difference. After sharing, explain that because of the American Revolution, America became a separate nation from the British. Explain that in this unit, we will see how America won this war against the British.

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<th>Teaching Strategies:</th>
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**Day 1**

Look at pictures of George Washington and King George III. Talk about what looks similar and different about them.

As a class, complete a readers’ theater of “George vs. George” in relation to the battles of the American Revolution (provided). Pass out scripts and assign parts. Allow students several minutes to read over their parts and ask questions about any words they do not know. Read the script. Stop periodically to check for understanding.

After reading, students will choose one of the following activities:

- Create a venn diagram comparing/contrasting George Washington and King George III. Diagrams should include at least three similarities and three differences.

- Create an acrostic about George Washington using “WASHINGTON.” Write WASHINGTON down the side of the page, and write a sentence about him beginning with each letter of his last name. Descriptions should include characteristics that made him a good leader for the Continental army.

- Create a character sketch for either George Washington or King George III. In the center of the page, draw a picture of that person. Around the border, write descriptive words or facts about that person.

**Day 2**

On UnitedStreaming, watch the segment entitled “1776-1777: War in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania” from the video “The American Revolution: From Colonies to Constitution: The War for Independence.” This will provide some background about some of the early battles of the Revolutionary War.

Let students read about the Battle of Saratoga independently or with a partner. After
reading, discuss how the Continental Army used the land to help them win the battle. Complete the Battle Log for the Battle of Saratoga.

After reading, students will complete a diary entry from a Continental soldier to a family member back home. Entries should include details about the battle, how they defeated the British, and the resulting support from France.

Day 3

Display the map of Virginia provided. Ask students how George Washington or General Cornwallis (leader of the British army) might use the geography to help them win a battle.

Complete a shared reading about the Battle of Yorktown. Explain that this was the last big battle of the American Revolution, and it ultimately led to the British surrender.

Complete the Battle Log for the Battle of Yorktown.

Using the Timeline Tool from www.readwritethink.org, students will create a timeline to show the order of events that led to the British surrender.

Culminating Activity

In groups of three, students will complete a display for the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Saratoga, or the Battle of Yorktown. Displays will include a picture of the battle itself, a map of the area with a short explanation of how the geography of the area helped the Continental army win, and a short description of why this battle was important in the ultimate success of the Americans.

On the final day, presentations will be on display and students will have a chance to view other groups’ presentations museum style.

Resources

Images of George Washington and King George III

“George vs. George: The Revolutionary War as Seen by Both Sides” by Rosalyn Schanzer

Battle Log

Battle of Saratoga reading

Map of Virginia

Battle of Yorktown reading

George Washington

WASHINGTON
IN 1772.

I certify that the painting of Washington in 1772, executed by Anson Dickinson, taken from the original picture by Peale, in my possession, is a faithful resemblance of the original, the only original of the Father Patriae, prior to the revolution.

Washington House, July 8, 1832.

[Signature]
His Majesty

George the Third

London Published by Henry Colburn Conduit Street March 1 1838
American Revolution Battle Log
Name __________________________

Name of Battle __________________________________________

Year ____________________  Who Won? _______________________

Why was this battle important? ___________________________________
________________________________________________________________

One other interesting fact ________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

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Name of Battle ______________________________________________

Year ____________________  Who Won? _______________________

Why was this battle important? ___________________________________
________________________________________________________________

One other interesting fact ________________________________________
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Year ____________________  Who Won? _______________________

Why was this battle important? ___________________________________
________________________________________________________________

One other interesting fact ________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
**Battle at Saratoga**

After the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Revolutionary War broke out in full. The Continental Army, or the army of the United States, was led by General George Washington, who would later become the first President of the United States. Following the Declaration of Independence, there were several battles between the British soldiers and the Continental Army, including Brandywine, Germantown, Trenton and Princeton. The British seemed to be winning, but they could not quite defeat Washington’s army.

In June 1777, the British began a new attack from Canada. They were led by General John Burgoyne, and they headed towards New York. The Americans, however, prepared to stop them near Saratoga, New York. The Americans were helped by a man named Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who set up a long wall of earth and logs on a hill so that the Americans could fight from behind it. The Americans won, and they forced Burgoyne and nearly 5,000 British soldiers to surrender (give up). Benedict Arnold was a hero of this battle.

Before this battle, Benjamin Franklin had been trying to get help from France to win the war. France did not think America would win, so they did not want to help them. After the battle of Saratoga, however, they realized that America had a chance. They sent money, soldiers, and a navy to help the Continental Army. This was considered a turning point in the American Revolution because the Continental Army now had the help of France, and they had a much better chance at winning the war against Britain.
Battle at Yorktown

In the summer of 1781, General Cornwallis, the leader of the British Army, led his troops to Yorktown, Virginia. Yorktown was located on a peninsula between the York and James Rivers. A peninsula is a large piece of land that sticks out into a body of water. Cornwallis believed this location would help him because British troops and supplies could reach him by sailing up the rivers.

When George Washington, leader of the Continental (American) Army, learned where Cornwallis was, he marched his army from New York to Virginia. Ships from the French Army sailed to meet him there. France had decided to assist the Continental Army after a previous battle. Cornwallis was surprised by Washington and his troops. The Americans and French fired their cannons at the British day and night.

At first, Cornwallis thought he would be rescued by British ships from New York City. However, the French Navy blocked Yorktown harbor so the ships could not get through. Cornwallis was trapped on the peninsula with no way to get out.

On the morning of October 19, 1781, the British army surrendered at Yorktown. To surrender means to give up. This was the last big battle of the Revolutionary War.
Map of Virginia

Battle of Yorktown