

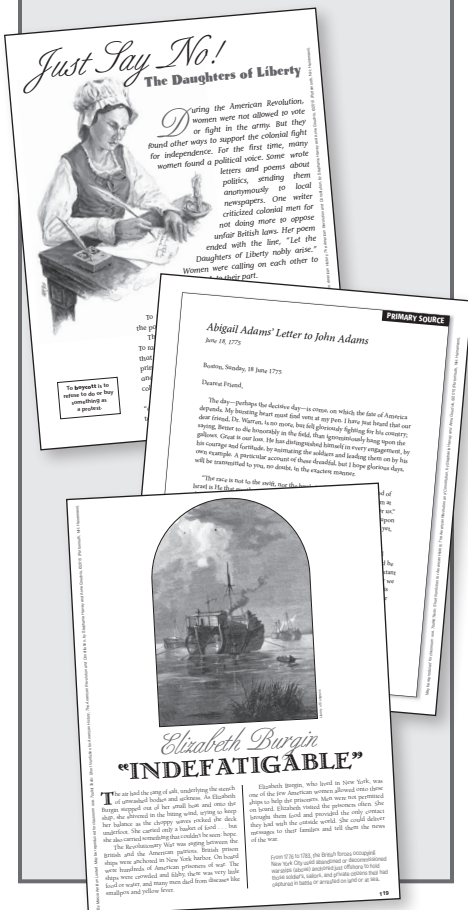
Compare Perspectives

Explore the different life experiences of historical figures

POSSIBLE TEXTS

This lesson requires texts that reflect varying perspectives on the same events or time period. The following articles and primary source text deal with the experiences of different women during the American Revolution.

- “Elizabeth Burgin: ‘Indefatigable’”
- “Just Say No! The Daughters of Liberty”
- “Following the Army”
- “Abigail Adams’ Letter to John Adams, June 18, 1775”



WHEN WE LEARN ABOUT HISTORICAL EVENTS or a time period, it is important to understand that historical time from a variety of different perspectives. History is very much about the “untold stories” of people whose perspectives and experiences may not get top billing in the history books and that too often go unrecognized. But history is about all of us, so an important goal of this resource is to include voices, people, and perspectives that can provide kids with a fuller understanding of historical times and the people who lived in those times. The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with opportunities to compare and contrast life experiences of people living in this period so as to better understand their perspectives.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- images of different people within a particular time period
- chart paper
- a three-column chart and matching Thinksheets for each student: Person/ Experiences & Perspective/My Thinking
- articles reflecting different experiences of several people

CONNECT & ENGAGE

- Introduce the idea of different perspectives.

[We post images of different people of the times—children, women, and men, for example.] Let’s take a look at these different people. Turn and talk about what you notice about these pictures. Who do you see? What do you think you know about some of these people? Who is not here?

Even though all these people lived at the same time, let’s consider how they might have experienced life in these times. Who has some background knowledge or some ideas about this? [We record kids’ background knowledge and thoughts on a chart, guiding them to understand that each person pictured experiences life in a different way.]

We’re going to read a variety of different articles today and compare and contrast the lives of different people who lived in this time period. We’ll consider what might be similar about peoples’ lives and what might be very different. Let’s read part of one account together and then you’ll read another account with a different perspective with a small group.

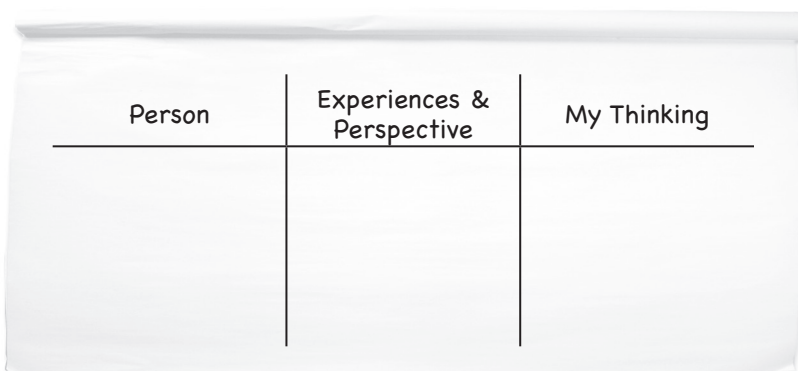
MODEL

- Record text evidence reflecting a person's experiences and perspective in a historical time.

[To prepare kids to compare and contrast different perspectives later in the lesson, we model how to think about a historical figure's experiences.]

I'm going to read this article that is written from the perspective of [person or people]. The authentic information here shows us what these people's lives were like.

I'll begin by identifying who this is about and then read this account aloud. I'll read to find out what important experiences he or she had and how these shaped the person's perspective, or point of view. Using evidence from the text and perhaps the historical record, I'll also jot down my thinking about their experiences and point of view. I can organize my thinking on this chart:



Person	Experiences & Perspective	My Thinking

GUIDE

- Guide pairs to jot down text evidence for important aspects of a person's experience.

[We hand out a three-column Thinksheet—Person/Experiences & Perspective/My Thinking—to each student.] Now I'll keep reading and ask you to work with someone sitting near you to ferret out more of these people's experiences as well as their perspectives on the times. You and your partner can discuss this and also record your thinking. Remember, the thinking column includes your interpretations and inferences as well as your questions from your reading.

COLLABORATE/PRACTICE INDEPENDENTLY

- Ask kids to work in small groups to study other historical people.

Now choose another article about a different person living in this same time period. Get together with three or four friends who are interested in the same article and record your thinking on your Thinksheets. As you read, think about how your historical characters' experiences affected their points of view, their perspectives on the times. Be sure to tie their experiences and perspectives to the text and also include your thinking.

SHARE THE LEARNING

- Invite students to talk about and compare individuals and their perspectives.

[Once students have surfaced a variety of perspectives, we reconvene the group to compare and contrast the different lives of the people they read about.] Now let's talk about the historical people in your articles. We consider how their experiences influenced their view of the world, and how people differ based on these life experiences. [Kids love to work big, and large posters can be very helpful for sharing out the experiences/evidence information that kids have gathered.]

Questions to guide sharing:

- What experiences did your person have?
- How did this person's experiences shape his or her perspective?
- How are his or her experiences like or different from other people we read about?
- Do you think this person's life experiences and perspective might have been, to some extent, "unrecognized" in general historical accounts of these times?
- Discuss why his or her perspective and life experiences are important to an understanding of people of this time period.
- Why do you think it might be important to consider a lot of different experiences and perspectives when studying history?



FOLLOW UP

- Provide additional groups of articles organized to highlight different viewpoints and perspectives on the same time period and engage students in comparing and contrasting different views.
- Ask students each to assume the role of a historical character they have read about. Put two or three different characters together and prompt them to discuss an event or condition of their time from the perspective of their character: What do you think about . . . ?
- Encourage students to conduct independent research on a lesser-known historical figure and craft a biography and portrait. Please see the student projects, "Unrecognized Revolutionaries", on pages L-31–L-32.