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Grades 1-3

Storybook Nation by Ray Raphael - Chapter 5: Valley Forge

Topic: Valley Forge/Morristown

Theme: Significant moments in history often happen when ordinary people are faced with extraordinary situations.

Sub-Theme: At the Valley Forge and Morristown winter camps, ordinary American soldiers were faced with extraordinary situations.

California Standards (Grades 1-3)

- 1.2.4 - Describe how location, weather, and physical environment affect the way people live, including the effects on their food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and recreation.
- 1.3.3 - Identify American symbols, landmarks, and essential documents...and know the people and events associated with them.
- 1.4.3 - Recognize similarities and differences of earlier generations in such areas as work (inside and outside the home), dress, manners, stories, games, and festivals, drawing from biographies, oral histories, and folklore.
- 2.5 - Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives (e.g., from biographies...).
- 3.1 - Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environment in a spatial context.
- 3.4.3 - Know the histories of important local and national landmarks, symbols, and essential documents that create a sense of community among citizens and exemplify cherished ideals.
- 3.4.6 - Describe the lives of American heroes who took risks to secure our freedoms.

National Standards for History (Grades K-4)

- Standard 4B - The student understands ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.
- Standard 4C - The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.
- The student understands events that celebrate and exemplify fundamental values and principles of American democracy.

Timeline: This lesson is designed to take one or two days (2-3 hours). The teacher introduces the topic (with a "hook"), and then goes on to describe

the troops and conditions at the Valley Forge and Morristown winter quarters, encouraging class discussion and empathy.

#### Prior Content Knowledge and Skills

- Content - Students need to have a basic (elementary) knowledge of George Washington, his life and times, and the American Revolution: Using *George Washington* by James Giblin (or another similar contemporary Washington biography), briefly review George's early years, his early military service, his marriage to Martha Curtis (and the slavery issue), the conflict with Great Britain (England), his appointment to commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, the Revolutionary War, Washington's presidency, and his later years.
- Students will need to know how to read and do a simple analysis of a basic map of the United States, with the emphasis on the state of Pennsylvania.

#### Introductory "Hook"

Give each child a cup of ice water. Have him/her put one hand in the water, and then leave it there for 1-2 minutes. After 1-2 minutes, take the hands out of the ice water and dispose of the cups. Discuss with the students their idea of physical comfort.

Ask them the following questions:

- What feelings, thoughts and pictures do you think of?
- What physical place(s) do you think of?
- Have you ever been in a cold, snowy place with the wrong clothes? •Have you ever not eaten for a whole day? How would it feel?

Transition: "Today we are going to be discussing what it was like to be a soldier at Valley Forge and Morristown during the Revolutionary War..."

#### Lesson Content

##### Background Lesson Information and Discussion Questions

- At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the American (Continental) Army did well, and won a few battles (the one near Trenton, New Jersey, on Christmas night, 1776, being the most famous). However, after losing more than winning over the next year, George Washington marched 11,000 men to the winter quarters at Valley Forge in December, 1777. Two years later Washington marched his ragtag army to Morristown, PA, for its winter camp.
- Discuss the type of soldiers fighting in the army at the time of Valley Forge and Morristown: mostly young and/or poor (and hired). They were ragtag, with little training, discipline, community-support, proper clothing, shoes, food, pay, medicine or shelter.
- Discuss the conditions at Valley Forge (near Philadelphia, PA--to be located/evaluated on the class U.S. map): very cold, with snow (though not as cold as at Morristown), a headquarters (house) for Washington, but no cabins for the men until they were built (small 16x14, stone fireplace, cloth door, with 12 men/hut--see internet pictures from [memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov) and [nps.gov/vafo/structures](http://nps.gov/vafo/structures)), no bathrooms, no new supplies, a few farms in the

area.

- The primary document to be used is the memoirs of Joseph Plumb Martin (A Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier: Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of Joseph Plumb Martin). Joseph Martin was a young soldier of seventeen at Valley Forge (who had first volunteered to serve when he was only fifteen). He fought with the Continental Army for seven years, from the beginning to the end of the Revolutionary War. Read and discuss excerpts from his memoirs (<http://mrbooth.com/edu/diaries.html#2>) which describe the physical situation of the troops in December, 1777 and December, 1779.

- Because of all of the hardships and types of personnel, while some men suffered patiently, many other soldiers complained, protested, stole food and provisions from the nearby farms (sometimes with Washington's okay), died of disease and exposure, and some even deserted. Discuss the reasons for these "unpatriotic" or "bad" things happening, and encourage empathy with the situations, referring back to the "hook." Discuss the idea that all the men were patriotic in their own ways or degrees. •Spring did come each winter, the situations did improve, and the soldiers became stronger and more competent. The war lasted many more years, and the

hardships returned or stayed with most of the soldiers for much of the time, especially in the winters. However, despite all of this, most of the soldiers continued to persist and fight.

- Our country went on to win the war officially in 1783 at Yorktown, and then Washington became president for two terms, 1788-1796. After less than three years of retirement at Mount Vernon as a plantation owner, Washington died of a throat infection on 12-14-99, at the age of 67. In his will, he freed his slaves (~300) upon Martha's death.

- After fighting as a soldier (private) for the entire Revolutionary War, Joseph Plumb Martin settled down as a farmer on the Maine frontier after the war. He also served as a selectman, justice of the peace and town clerk. When he was seventy years old, he wrote his memoirs. He died in 1850 at the age of 89.

#### Conclusion

- Ask the students to explain describe the "typical" type of soldier at Valley Forge/Morristown in detail.

- Ask students to explain the physical conditions at Valley Forge/Morristown, in terms of weather and living conditions.

- Ask students to explain how they would feel personally about surviving at Valley Forge/Morristown during the winter.

- Is it ever okay to steal?

- Can anyone be brave? Is it wrong to be scared?

- Were all the soldiers at Valley Forge/Morristown patriotic?

#### Evaluation

•See the attached traditional test, geared to the 2.5 grade level. •Students are to imagine they are soldiers in the Continental Army at Valley Forge. Then they are to write a 3-10 sentence (depending on the grade level) report (with a title and detailed illustration) explaining how they are feeling (both physically and emotionally) and what is happening to them.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Valley Forge/Morristown Test

1. The commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary War American army was

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. What did soldiers stop doing when they were at "winter quarters?"

\_\_\_\_\_

2. List three things that were the same about Valley Forge and Morristown:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. List three things about the soldiers at Valley Forge and Morristown:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did the ordinary soldiers (like Joseph Plumb Martin) of Valley Forge and Morristown accomplish that was extraordinary?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you have wanted to be at Valley Forge? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What happened to George Washington after the Revolutionary War?

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7. What happened to Joseph Plumb Martin after the war?

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**TAH2 Raphael Lesson Plan**  
**Grade Level 11-12**

**Dal Lemmon**

Chapter 5 *The Winter at Valley Forge*

**Topic:** Valley Forge and Morristown Hardships

**Theme:** Patriotism can mean different things to different people.

**California Standards:**

11.1 Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.

11.1.2. Analyze the ideological origins of the American Revolution, the Founding Fathers' philosophy of divinely bestowed unalienable natural rights, the debates on the drafting and ratification of the Constitution, and the addition of the Bill of Rights.

**National Standards**

1C

The student understands the factors affecting the course of the war and contributing to the American victory.

Appraise George Washington's military and political leadership in conducting the Revolutionary War. [Assess the importance of the individual]

2

The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society.

**Timeline :** This lesson is designed to take one to two class periods.

**Prior Content Knowledge and Skills:**

**Content –** Students will need to know how to read primary sources. Students will read Chapter 5 of Ray Raphael's book for a homework assignment before the lesson begins.

**Introductory "Hook":** Start class with a discussion of what patriotism is. Write answers on board.

- Write the definition on the board.

- Definition: Love of and devotion to one's country.

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-Ask students how they think people can demonstrate love and devotion for their country

Hopefully students will come up with a wide variety of ideas. If they do not, they may need to be helped along by suggesting ideas.

-Ask if the following are patriotic acts

- Fighting in a war that your country is participating in.
- protesting against a war that your country is involved in (women in black)
- avoiding a draft (Vietnam)
- conscientious objectors(WWII)
- writing/showing a patriotic description of history even though it may not be totally accurate (picture of Washington crossing the Delaware)
- Ask: If a man is a soldier and has a family, what should be his priority? Is the country or the family more important?
  
- It might be a good idea to show a clip of *The Patriot* where Mel Gibson has to make a decision to leave his family and fight in the Revolution.

### **Lesson Content**

Give a brief lecture to students about the background of the Continental Army at Valley Forge. If you haven't already done so, go over the Battle of Saratoga and General Howe's takeover of Philadelphia. Use map of the campaigns in the Pennsylvania area at

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/pennsylvania\\_1777-1778.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/pennsylvania_1777-1778.jpg).

Continental army- The colonists responded to the British by calling the First Continental Congress, held in 1774, which issued a petition of grievances, and attempted to create committees to bring the colonists together. Fighting had already occurred between the colonists and the British when, in 1775, the Second Continental Congress met and established an army under Commander-in-Chief George Washington

Battle of Saratoga- See <http://www.saratoga.org/battle1777/>

General Howe- On July 23, General Howe sailed from Staten Island with 15,000 troops. Howe sailed to Chesapeake Bay and landed at Head of Elk, Maryland and began marching northward on August 28, 1777. On September 11, he defeated General Washington at the Battle of Brandywine. On September 16, he began moving north again. Rain prevented another engagement between the two generals at Warren Tavern, Pennsylvania. Howe now outmaneuvered Washington along the Schuylkill River and occupied Philadelphia on September 26, 1777 without a fight. Howe repulsed Washington's attack at the Battle of Germantown on October 4, 1777. Although some minor operations continued in the vicinity, Howe began preparing for quartering at Philadelphia for the winter.

General Burgoyne blamed Howe for his defeat since Burgoyne's plan had counted on the support of another force from New York City. Instead of moving



north in support of Burgoyne, Howe had undertaken his own campaign to the south.

Show picture of George Washington in prayer at Valley Forge. (find a copy of a picture at <http://www.flash.net/~bob001/backgrnd.htm>) Ask the students why this picture is so enduring even though teachers and historians know it does not reflect what really occurred at Valley Forge.

Form heterogeneous groups of 2-4. Pass out worksheet #1 and have students work together to find answers. Allow students 10-15 minutes to find answers.

Discuss student answers as a class.

Read the following portion of the letter Washington sent to Henry Laurens, President of Congress, at York, Pa. on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1777.

"It is with infinite pain and concern, that I transmit [to] Congress. . . Letters respecting the State of the Commissary's department. If these matters are not exaggerated, I do not know from what cause this alarming deficiency or rather total failure of Supplies arises; But unless more Vigorous exertions and better regulations take place in that line, and immediately, this Army must dissolve. I have done all in my power by remonstrating, by writing to, by ordering the Commissaries on this Head. . .but without any good effect, or obtaining more than a present scanty relief."

You'll find the letter and commentary at <http://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/history/commissary.html>.

Ask:

1. Why did Washington write this letter?
2. What will happen if the problems of supplying the army are not taken care of?
3. Do you think this was a threat or do you think Washington would have followed through with his threat?
4. Should Washington's priority have been with his men or with the Revolution? Are they one and the same?
5. Why have historians placed so much emphasis on this letter even though it was obviously meant to cause specific actions from Congress? Why do historians ignore similar letters from Morristown (see Raphael text)?

## **Conclusion**

Ask students whether it would have been all right for men under Washington's command to desert or mutiny under such dire circumstances (they appeared to be forgotten by the Continental Congress. Is the right to self-preservation greater than the duty the men had to stay with their commander? Which is more "patriotic"?)

### **Evaluation**

Test of student knowledge

1. What General was the commander of Valley Forge?
  - a) Knox
  - b) Greene
  - c) Washington
  - d) Arnold
  
2. In which of the following encampments did American soldiers mutiny?
  - a) Morristown
  - b) Valley Forge
  - c) Philadelphia
  - d) Saratoga
  
3. The author Ray Raphael states that maybe the story of Valley Forge wasn't accurate for which of the following reasons?
  - a) the winter was not as bad as it was in other years
  - b) men "foraged" off the land (stole)
  - c) conditions were worse in Morristown
  - d) all of the above
  
4. Were the actions of the soldiers that deserted at Valley Forge and Morristown patriotic? Why or why not?
  
5. When you read about "the true story" rather than the traditional stories that we get in grammar school, how does it make you feel? Are we better off knowing the true story or just the traditional story? Is there ever a time when we shouldn't know the whole story? Explain.

Alternative assessment:

Create two front-page stories for a newspaper with a headline about Valley Forge. One story should be positive and show the men and commanders as heroes, the other should be negative and depict the men and commanders as ordinary. Both stories must be factual.

## Chapter 5 *The Winter at Valley Forge* Worksheet

Group members: 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2.. \_\_\_\_\_  
3.. \_\_\_\_\_  
4.. \_\_\_\_\_

Using Chapter 5 of Ray Raphael's book, fill in the chart below. Find actions/writings of the soldiers, writers, commanders of the Revolution and determine how their actions can be considered patriotic **and** not patriotic.

	Action	Patriotic	Not Patriotic
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			