



FOUNDATION
AGAINST
INTOLERANCE
& RACISM

Unit Title: Introducing Crispus Attucks (3 lessons)

Recommended Grades: 6-8

FAIR Learning Standards:

DV.6-8.10; US.6-8.11; US.6-8.12

Recommended Pacing: Approximately 90 minutes for each lesson

Theme: Stories of Heroism and Hope

Era: Colonial and Revolutionary

Areas of Focus: Revolutionary War History

Who is Crispus Attucks?

Lesson 1 of 3

Grades: 6-8

Estimated Time: 90 minutes

Brief Description/Summary

This lesson explores the limited information known about the life of Crispus Attucks, a former slave and sailor who is credited as being the first person killed in contributing events leading to the Revolutionary War, the Boston Massacre. In exploring the life of Crispus Attucks, this lesson will provide an alternative representation of the life of a Black citizen living in America during colonization—a life that existed outside of slavery but was greatly impacted by the institution. In addition, this lesson will examine why Attucks is a historical figure, even though often missing from popularized historical memory.

Purpose:

- Articulate relevant knowledge about the life of Crispus Attucks

Guiding Questions:

- Who is Crispus Attucks? Why is he significant within American history?
 - How was Attucks' life significant outside of the major historical event he is aligned with?

Objectives: Students will search and identify relevant information about Crispus Attucks and examine the historical significance of his life when exploring the context of the Revolutionary War. Students will assess the role of slavery in the colonial period of American history and its role within the Revolutionary War.

Standard/Objective Code Number(s)

10 Diversity	Students will consider the development of American politics, history, and culture through the	
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	unique contributions of people of diverse backgrounds.	
11 Understanding	Students will analyze American historical debates and issues from multiple perspectives, cultivating a deep understanding of alternative arguments and respecting the human freedom that gives rise to disagreements.	
12 Understanding	Students will learn to think critically about their own opinions and to maintain an open-minded attitude in dialogue with others. They will encounter ideas, opinions, and arguments with which they disagree; learning how to study, analyze, and understand alternative opinions as well as their own.	

Vocabulary

- Colonist: a citizen living in one of the American colonies before these colonies gained independence from Britain.
- British: a soldier sent from Britain to collect taxes for King George III of England
- Musket: an early gun first popularized in the 16th century by the Spanish and heavily used in the Revolutionary War
- Sympathizer: a citizen of the American colonies who supports England assuming greater taxes from the colonies to cover English expansion in the Americas
- Antagonize: to agitate

Lesson Procedure

Background

When the Revolutionary War is described, often participants, both English and American, are presented as White in spite of the contributing efforts of both Indigenous Americans and Black Americans who fought vigorously on both sides of the war. One name often aligned with the start of the Revolutionary War, aligned with the fight of colonists, is Crispus Attucks, a black man who was a sailor, who was shot in the Boston Massacre.

Teacher Instructions

Opening

Ask students to identify all information that comes to mind in 60 seconds regarding the term Boston Massacre. They are welcome to explore their knowledge about the words Boston and massacre if they are unaware of the actual event. Students should work in pairs or small groups to write down their responses. After the 60 second group work, teachers should call on each group to share new thoughts about the Boston Massacre while responses are written in a space where all students can observe.

Inform students that they are going to learn about one of the events credited with beginning the Revolutionary War and specifically one of the men who participated in that event, Crispus Attucks. They will learn about the life of Crispus Attucks.

Activity

1. Inform students that they are going to learn more about Crispus Attucks. Based on the quotes below, which were made by varying historical figures in reference to Crispus Attucks, students should write down 5 hypotheses about Attucks? They should work in small groups (3-4 students) or a pair for this activity. Prompt to consider when making hypothesis: Who is Crispus Attucks? What did he do? What were the characteristics of his personality? What were some personal qualities and or traits that he seemed to possess? Does he seem similar to anyone that I know? What time period did he live within? Does he seem similar to other historical figures from this

time period? What, if anything, do I already know about Crispus Attucks?

"...and to honor Crispus Attucks who was the leader and voice that day: The first to defy, and the first to die, with Maverick, Carr, and Gray. Call it riot or revolution, or mob or crowd as you may, such deaths have been seeds of nations, such lives shall be honored for aye..."

-John Boyle O'Reilly

"He is one of the most important figures in African-American history, not for what he did for his own race but for what he did for all oppressed people everywhere. He is a reminder that the African-American heritage is not only African but American and it is a heritage that begins with the beginning of America."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

"the first to pour out his blood as a precious libation on the altar of a people's rights."

-Transcript: "The Trial of William Wemms, James Hartegan, William M'Cauley, Hugh White, Matthew Killroy, William Warren, John Carrol, and Hugh Montgomery, soldiers in his Majesty's 29th Regiment of Foot, for the murder of Crispus Attucks, Samuel Gray, Samuel Maverick, James Caldwell, and Patrick Carr, on Monday-evening, the 5th of March, 1770, at the Superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assize, and general goal delivery, held at Boston."

"When the Colonists were staggering wearily under the cross of woe, a Negro came to the front and bore the cross to the victory of the glorious martyrdom."

-George Washington

Debrief with students by discussing their perspectives aloud. Be sure to challenge students to justify their responses and avoid simply providing short phrases or one word responses to describe their perceptions.

2. Your class will break into four groups. Each group will explore each assignment/station for 20 minutes and become an "expert" on their particular group topic.

A. Review the video below and address 5 differences between your hypothesis about Attucks (based on the quotes) versus the information presented in the video. What have you learned about Attucks’ which provides greater insight about his life? Create a venn diagram which compares your assumptions to facts about Attucks life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHUfxIGffC4>

The video above provides insight about Crispus’ family origins. We gain insight about his family, life as a slave, and life post slavery.

B. Based on studying the video and article below, how does knowledge about Attucks’ life confirm or contradict your assumptions about the life of Black citizens living in colonial times?

Article 1	Article 2
https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/africans-colonial-america/	https://www.ushistory.org/us/6e.asp
Article about life for Africans in America; how servitude transitioned to slavery (indentured servants vs. slaves; white versus Black servants)	Life of free Black people in Colonial America

C. What is the Boston Massacre? After reviewing the video below, summarize within no more than 3 phrases an explanation of the Boston Massacre. What was Attucks’ role in that event?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1NRTmVOtV4>

D. What are contradictions regarding the life and experiences of Crispus Attucks? Read pages 35-38 of the article, “ The Revenge of Crispus Attucks; or, The Atlantic Challenge to American Labor History” by Marcus Rediker.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249876314_The_Revenge_of_Crispus_Attucks_or_The_Atlantic_Challenge_to_American_Labor_History

E. How was Attucks perceived by the King's military men who were attacked?

<https://www.famous-trials.com/massacre/207-transcript>

Discussion/Closing

3. One member from each group should form a brand new group. The new groups should consist of one question/topic expert from previous groupings. Your goal is to better understand the question: Who is Crispus Attucks?

Option 1: Students will now take peripatetic walks (Could you provide the alternative of small group discussion in case such walks are not possible?) for 15 minutes to discuss the newly acquired knowledge. Peripatetic walks reflect ways that tutors and students engaged in ancient Roman times. Rather than sit in classrooms to provide instruction, tutors would take walks with their pupils to discuss the lessons and topics of interest. At the conclusion of this peripatetic walk, students should be able to independently address the question: Who was Crispus Attucks and why is he historically significant? Students should make a flipgrid video (that is no more than 60 seconds) to address this question. Students should work independently to create this video.

Or

Option 2: One member from each group should stand in a different corner of the room. Each corner should consist of group members from each of the different research topics. Students should sit across from one another in doubles. Students should then engage in 3 minute speed dating "Crispus Attucks edition". For three minutes, one member of the double should speak about lessons learned from their research about Attucks. After 2 minutes, the silent partner should then begin sharing. After 4 minutes, one side of students should switch places. This process should continue until each student has been exposed to each of research topics involving Attucks.

4. Create a description of Attucks that spans no more than 100 words. This description might be one featured underneath the drawing of Attucks or a dedication to Attucks. As such, it should be short and concise. Below are some examples of dedications for Attucks.

<https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/crispus-attucks-playground/history>
https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC3CAKH_yesterdays-news-crispus-attucks-bridge?guid=a8c280f2-4a5b-4ba9-ae4d-6e2b80b45820

Resources

Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America

Is Crispus Attucks a Hero?

Lesson 2 of 3

Grades: 6-8

Estimated Time: 90 minutes

Brief Description/Summary

This lesson explores the contributions of African Americans within the Revolutionary War. In exploring contributions, we will also explore if Attucks indeed is a hero and if he should be included in historical memory about the Revolutionary War through the the Socratic method.

Purpose:

- Reflect on the role and purpose of a hero
- Correlate between the role of slavery and the Revolutionary War

Guiding Questions:

- Is Crispus an American hero?
 - What is the role of African Americans in the Revolutionary War?

Objectives: Students will explore whether or not they think Crispus Attucks is a hero as they explore the contributions of varying African American contributors of the Revolutionary War.

Standard/Objective Code Number(s)

10 Diversity	Students will consider the development of American politics, history, and culture through the unique contributions of people of diverse backgrounds.	
11 Understanding	Students will analyze American historical debates and issues from multiple perspectives, cultivating a deep understanding of alternative arguments and respecting the human freedom that gives rise to disagreements.	

<p style="text-align: center;">12 Understanding</p>	<p>Students will learn to think critically about their own opinions and to maintain an open-minded attitude in dialogue with others. They will encounter ideas, opinions, and arguments with which they disagree; learning how to study, analyze, and understand alternative opinions as well as their own.</p>	
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Lesson Procedure

Background

This lesson explores the contributions of African Americans within the Revolutionary War. In exploring some of these contributions, we will also explore if Attucks indeed is a hero and if he should be included in historical memory about the Revolutionary War.

Teacher Instructions

Opening

1. Define hero through the use of a board rotation. To do this, place students in groups of 3-4 and provide a large piece of paper to each group. Ensure that each group selects someone to write down responses on the paper. Each group will have 5 minutes to do the following:
 - Define “hero”.
 - Identify one hero by name.
 - Explain why this person was selected as a hero (must be a human being and not, for instance, an animal that acted in a valiant fashion defending its family)
 - Explicitly explain how this person evidenced characteristics aligned with the generated definition of a hero
2. Once completed, the large pieces of paper should be hung around the classroom. Within their original hero group, students will cycle around the room, spending 3 minutes at each hero paper writing either a check mark or an x by statements generated on documents by other groups indicating that they either agree or disagree with the definition and example of hero. After groups have visited each hero paper and provided feedback, the teacher should collect all group papers and, as a class, generate a definition of hero. In addition, the teacher should lead a conversation about who is missing from examples of

heroes? For example, are the heroes illuminated on hero papers diverse (ex: race, sex, sexual orientation, region, language, etc.). If not diverse, challenge students to consider why examples are not diverse within their small groups. As a class, debrief briefly about responses.

3. Does the definition of hero change if we explore American heroes as opposed to just hero? Explore this within your small group by writing down changes on a sheet of paper. Provide 5 minutes for this discussion. As a class, discuss how the term changes, if we explore American hero as opposed to hero.

Activity

4. Now that you explored the life of Crispus Attucks (in the previous lesson), you will begin to learn about the lives of other African-American contributors within the American Revolution. Inform students that they will learn about other heroes from the Revolutionary War. After reading the article below, create a chart highlighting the names and accomplishments of each person featured in the article. Students should work independently for this activity. They should be provided with about 30 minutes to complete this activity.

<https://www.history.com/news/black-heroes-american-revolution>

This reading may be further complimented by the video below:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?469822-1/crispus-attucks-american-memory%0D>

Note that this read and video stands in contrast one of the texts read in the previous lesson:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249876314_The_Revenge_of_Crispus_Attucks_or_The_Atlantic_Challenge_to_American_Labor_History

5. Once completed, place students in small groups to discuss for 5 minutes. Encourage students to take notes from their group discussion that may be applied to the impending Socratic conversation.
6. Now engage in a whole class discussion, using the Socratic method, to determine if Attucks is or is not a hero and if he should be a part of historical memory. What is the benefit of calling Attucks a hero? Do you consider

Attucks to be an American hero? Be sure to explore how heroism from his life might extend beyond those events of the Boston Massacre.

See a reference regarding Socratic method below:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ajSUsZBqJk01ISZ0BI8wSNEs6GoDOc5z4w_yH-JF-DM/edit

7. Create an obituary for Crispus Attucks. The obituary must be no longer than 200 words. It should feature information about Attucks' accomplishments, characteristics, interests, as well as your perception of whether or not he is a hero. Below are several examples of obituaries of other notable figures from the Revolutionary War era.

<https://www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/world-early-america/famous-obits/obituary-george-washington>

<https://www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/world-early-america/famous-obits/obituary-john-adams>

<https://www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/world-early-america/famous-obits/boston-massacre-obituary>

Why is Crispus Attucks missing from some accounts of the Boston Massacre?

Lesson 3 of 3

Grades: 6-8

Estimated Time: 90 minutes

Brief Description/Summary

This lesson explores reasons why African American contributors to the Revolutionary War, such specifically Crispus Attucks, is often missing from accounts leading up to and surrounding the Revolutionary War.

Purposes:

- Explore reasons why Crispus Attucks may be missing from some historical accounts of the events leading up the Revolutionary War.
- Investigate the significance of marginalization and argue if Crispus Attucks is or is not a victim

Guiding Questions:

- Who does it benefit to include Crispus in the historical record?
- Who does it benefit to exclude Crispus in the historical record?

Objectives: Students will explore why African American contributors, such as Crispus Attucks, are missing from some historical events about the Revolutionary War and how they may help to address this omission.

Standard/Objective Code Number(s)

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<p style="text-align: center;">12 Understanding</p>	<p>Students will learn to think critically about their own opinions and to maintain an open-minded attitude in dialogue with others. They will encounter ideas, opinions, and arguments with which they disagree; learning how to study, analyze, and understand alternative opinions as well as their own.</p>	
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1. Watch the video below. Ask students to identify which facts are both included and missing, based on their reading and exposures from the previous days.

<http://www.crispusattucksmuseum.org/boston-massacre-video/#prettyPhoto>

The video above gives insight about the Boston Massacre. It does not mention Attucks by name but does provide some context about how the Boston Massacre occurred.

2. After showing the video, the teacher should generate a list based on students observations: what was included and missing in the video.
3. The teacher should then inform students that within this lesson, they will be considering why Attucks' role in the Boston Massacre was not included in this video and many other historical records.
4. Place students within five groups. Create four stations (groups of desks) within your room. Provide 5 minutes for each group to discuss the topic at their particular station. Each station should feature one of of the following prompts:
 - a. create a list of at least 3 reasons why Attucks should be included in the historical record. Be sure to explain each of your responses.
 - b. Create a list of at least 3 reasons why Attucks should not be included in the historical record. Be sure to explain each of your responses.
 - c. Who does it benefit to include Crispus in the historical record? Identify at least 3 different parties who benefit from this. Be sure to explain each of your responses.

- d. Who does it benefit to exclude Crispus in the historical record?
Identify at least 3 different parties who benefit from this. Be sure to explain each of your responses.
 - e. Define the term marginalize. What does marginalization look like in real world terms? Identify at least 3 examples of marginalization (try to consider historical occurrences that are underexplored, underrepresented, discussed).
5. As a class, explore how knowledge of Attucks either supports or counters their current understanding about the Revolutionary War? Discuss specific examples of how it either supports or counters current understandings about history.
6. Identify the publisher of the history textbook used in class. Explore how your textbook addresses Attucks. If he is mentioned, is he presented in a way reflective of your research about Attucks? What information is included and or excluded from the representation of Attucks? Compare this representation to that of the video seen at the beginning of class. What are similarities between what information is presented and which is excluded between the video and your textbook. Explore why these commonalities and differences exist.
7. After exploring the representation of Attucks in your textbook, write a letter to the publisher based on your perspectives regarding how Attucks is presented. Your letter should explicitly address whether or not you agree with the current representation of Attucks in the text and a justification of your thoughts. Be sure to include any changes than you believe should be made regarding the representation of Attucks.