

Role-Playing US History

Exploration *to* Civil War
Second Edition

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Welcome to Role-Playing US History

This book is an exciting collection of role-playing
simulations for Social Studies classrooms.

These open-ended simulations involve students in events
from colonial times up through the Civil War.

Students are actively engaged in assuming the roles of
decision makers at crucial junctures in history, using critical
thinking and group decision-making skills to resolve
conflicts. Although most of the simulations are written for
US History, some of them would work equally well in other
social studies classes. All of these simulations will
work in classes ranging from junior high to high school and
at ability levels ranging from sheltered classes to honors.

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National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Simulation Title	National Standards Number	Description
Native American Fictional Story Writing	K–4th grade standards: Topics 1–3	Communities, now and long ago History of students’ own state or region Peoples from many cultures who contributed to America’s heritage
Map Along with an Explorer	5–12th grade standards: Era 1 Standard 2	Early European exploration and colonization
Colonial Charter	Era 2 Standards 1–3	How the values and institutions of European economic life and government took root in the colonies
Tory, Patriot, or Neutral?	Era 3 Standards 1–2	Causes of the American Revolution, and its impact on politics, economy, and society
“Dear King George...”	Era 3 Standards 1–2	Causes of the American Revolution, and its impact on politics, economy, and society
War of 1812	Era 4 Standard 1	How United States territorial expansion affected relations with external powers and Native Americans
Early American Inventors Patent Application	Era 4 Standard 2	How the Industrial Revolution changed the lives of Americans
California Gold Rush	Era 4 Standard 1	How the westward movement changed the lives of Americans
Reformer Resume	Era 4 Standard 4	The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period
Antebellum Newspaper	Era 4 Standard 2 Era 5 Standard 1	The causes of the Civil War The rapid expansion of slavery changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions.
US History Counterfactuals	Eras 1–5	“What if . . . ?” questions covering all eras of early US history

Lesson 4

"Dear King George..."

Objective

- To understand the grievances of the American colonists that led up to the American Revolution

Duration and Complexity

- 1 hour
- Level 1: Easy

Materials

- A copy of the Declaration of Independence or similar documents from the Continental Congress, paraphrased into modern English, for each student

Procedure

1. Each student will choose one grievance of the Continental Congress and rephrase it in the form of a single sentence beginning with "Dear King George" and ending with a specific complaint. For example, "Dear King George, your taxes are too high."
2. Each student will write his or her sentence on an index card and pass it to a neighbor for peer editing.
3. After the partner returns the card with edits, the student rewrites the sentence if necessary.
4. The pair comes to the front of the classroom together. One will be seated as King George, the other will kneel as a royal petitioner.
5. The petitioner says aloud his "Dear King George" sentence.
6. The student playing the role of the king replies with an excuse as to why he won't listen to their complaint. For example, if the petitioner says, "Your taxes are too high" he might say, "It is only fair that you pay for your own protection from the French and Native Americans."
7. The king dismisses the petitioner and thanks them for their time. The students return to their seats.
8. Each new pair of students does the same until all are done.

Teacher Recommendations

1. Provide help as necessary if the students are having difficulty understanding the complaints of the colonists.
2. Keep the grievances simple. Limit them to one sentence, if possible.
3. You may want to provide some props to make the simulation more fun such as a royal robe and/or crown, a scroll, etc.
4. **Optional exercise:** Using any of the sentences which students composed during the Dear King George simulation, each student can draft a letter to King George using proper spelling, grammar, and format for a modern business letter. They may also learn how to address an envelope and send it to another class that is studying the same unit, if possible. As a follow up, have the students write and send a real letter to the president or to their representative concerning some of their current day concerns or grievances.

Evaluation

Follow up with a class discussion that summarizes the grievances of the colonists. Discuss why the king was so unwilling to listen. Discuss why this led to war. You may want to conclude with a written quiz on this material.