

## Lesson Plans on the Revolutionary War - Questions for Patriots, by Gregory Edgar

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Chapter 1. Question 1. How did the arrival, from England, of the British Army change the lives of the Dunham family?

Chapter 3. Question 2. Like all the other British officers, Major Pitcairn has an opinion about the fighting ability of the "rebels" (patriots). He does not take them seriously. Do you think this attitude will help, or hurt, the British Army when the time comes to fight the Americans on a battlefield? Explain your answer.

Chapter 4. Question 3. Do you think the Pitcairns and the Dunhams would be friends if the Pitcairns were living in Boston and there was no Revolutionary War? Explain your answer.

Chapter 6. Question 4. Do the patriot militia seem like real soldiers in a real army? How do you think they will do against the experienced, well trained British regulars when the battle starts?

Chapter 7. Question 5. The British generals had a choice. They could have landed at Charlestown Neck and starved the rebels (patriots) out of their fort. But instead, they chose to boldly march up the hill to force the rebels to leave their fort. Why do you think the generals made this choice?

Chapter 9. Question 6. Imagine you are General George Washington. You have just arrived at Cambridge (patriot army headquarters), 3 weeks after the battle. You spend a few days observing the army and notice that the soldiers don't like to obey their officers' orders. And you learn that, on the day of the battle, some officers actually led their men in running away just before the British attacked. What should you do?

Chapter 14. Question 7. How important to a community do you think clergy (ministers/priests) were in colonial times? Do you think they could persuade people to take a stand in politics or war?

Chapter 16. Question 8a. Do you think General Howe's decision to burn Charlestown was wise? Explain how it might influence the thinking of each of these groups of Americans who watched the battle from their homes in Boston: 8b. the patriots, 8c. the loyalists, and 8d. those Americans who are still undecided.

Chapter 21. Question 9. Imagine you watched the battle from a Boston rooftop. Write a letter to your cousin who lives in Philadelphia. Tell him or her about the day's events. Make your letter descriptive and persuasive, because you know your cousin will probably lend it to the local newspaper editor (the "public printer") to publish in the newspaper. Before writing the letter, decide whether you and your cousin are patriots or loyalists.

Chapter 21. Question 10. Imagine you live in Pennsylvania in June, 1775. Like many people in your village, you are undecided about this new war. You want to live in peace with the mother country, but you don't like the British government telling Americans what they can and can't do. The Continental Congress has asked Virginia's George Washington to lead a new organization -- a Continental Army. Congress wants patriots from every colony to enlist in this new army.

A recruiter comes to your farm and asks you to enlist, and march to Massachusetts to fight against the British. Your neighbor says that Sam Adams and Joseph Warren and the other "Yankees" of New England started this war. You have never met a Yankee, but you've heard talk about their social leveling, which goes against what you believe in. So you are a bit prejudiced against them.

Explain how you would feel about enlisting in the Continental Army if .

- a. It's June 24, and you haven't yet heard about the Battle of Bunker Hill.
- b. It's June 25, and you just read in the newspaper a letter from a patriot who was at the battle.

Chapter 23. Question 11. a. Why were the British so hard on the American prisoners? b. If they were in a war against France, would they treat French prisoners this way?

## Lesson Plans on the Revolutionary War Answers to Questions for Patriots:

Question 1. Answer. Because of all the riots in Boston in the years leading up to the war, the British government decided to send soldiers ("regulars") to Boston to keep the peace. At the same time, the government passed a law forcing Americans to give the regulars a place to live. This Quartering Act of 1768 was one of the laws that we did not like being forced upon us. Americans were very angry about having the British soldiers over here.

Question 2. Answer. The British generals were very confident, and they underestimated the Americans' will to stand and fight. This would make a big difference in how they planned the battle, and how they would react to events during the battle. They would take too many risks, and be unwilling to adjust their battle plan.

Question 3. Answer. This question is intended to provoke a discussion of class differences and prejudices. For example, the prevailing attitude in England was very prejudiced. The influential writer, Samuel Johnson, expressed a commonly held belief, when he alluded to the thousands of British citizens who had chosen to immigrate to America as indentured servants rather than face prison terms: "The Americans are nothing but a race of convicts, and they deserve whatever we give them."

Question 4. Answer. All Americans (patriots and loyalists) wondered about this will the patriots stand their ground and fight against the British regulars, or will they instead turn and run away at the start of the battle.

Question 5. Answer. Because the British generals had very little respect for the Americans and our fighting ability. There were great differences in equipment, training, leadership, and discipline between American citizen-soldiers (militia) and the professional British regulars.

Question 6. Answer. Washington, being an aristocrat, was disgusted by the New Englanders' social leveling; Yankees did not like to show proper deference to their economic or military superiors. He was also an admirer of the courage and discipline shown by the British regulars. Washington court-martialed the officers who ran away, and he established strict rules for behavior in and out of camp. As one soldier noted in his diary, soon after Washington and a few other Virginian generals arrived, "New lords, new laws."

Question 7. Answer. Letters written by British soldiers and American loyalists often reflected the writer's resentment toward rebel pastors for firing up their parishioners into what was then called the rage militaire, a French term for what we now remember as the "spirit of '76".

Questions 8 and 9. Answer. These questions are intended to make the students think about what they've learned from reading the story, and place themselves back in time to see how the Revolutionary War impacted people in personal ways. Anything the students write to answer these questions should be satisfactory.

Question 10. Answer. This question can be answered on paper, or it can be a group activity to act out these scenes.

Two or more farmers meet at a crossroads and stop to discuss the predicament that the New England "Yankees" have put all the colonies in. A recruiter rides up and gives them a sales pitch about a new regiment forming up. They listen and talk to the recruiter, but end the conversation by telling him they'll think about it.

The next scene is the next day. The farmers again meet at the crossroads and begin discussing the pros and cons of enlisting in this new Continental Army to "go meet the British". Suddenly, an express rider arrives, shouts "Hark! News from the North!" and throws them a newspaper, then rides off. It's a special edition just printed that morning. The paper includes a letter (written by students) just received from Massachusetts, describing the Battle of Bunker Hill. The farmers renew their discussion, more animated this time, and make their decisions.

Question 11. Answer. During the Revolutionary War, the British government refused to recognize us as a separate nation, even after we declared our independence. They considered the American colonists to be "rebels" because we were rebelling against our king, an unlawful act. Therefore, the British felt that captured Americans were not true "prisoners of war." Instead, they saw us as traitors, so we did not deserve the good treatment that the British would have given to French prisoners of war.

Synonymous terms: regular/redcoat; patriot/rebel; tory/loyalist

## **Lesson Plans on the Revolutionary War Questions for *Gone to Meet the British*, by Gregory Edgar**

Chapter 1. Question 1: Why did the British think controlling the Hudson River would eventually end the Revolutionary War?

Chapter 2. Question 2: Was the British general, John Burgoyne, smart or foolish to hire Indians as his allies? How did it affect those Americans who were trying to stay neutral and not become involved in the Revolutionary War?

Chapter 4. Question 3: Molly Cameron was one of many "camp followers" attached to General Burgoyne's army. Why were women and children in the British Army?

Chapter 4. Question 4: Why did King George III have to supplement his army by hiring Hessians, Tories and Indians?

Chapter 5. Question 5: How could the Reverend Allen be so domineering over the Pittsfield captain and his militia?

Chapter 6. Question 6: Despite knowing that the militia outnumbered Baum's forces, Duncan Cameron told his daughter "they're just rebels and, up against Regulars, do not stand a chance." Why'd he have this attitude?

Chapter 8. Question 7: Why would Duncan Cameron find the wilderness attractive, and consider settling in it?

Chapter 8. Question 8: Why did the Americans, but not the British and Hessians, fight "Indian style"?

Chapters 9 and 11. Question 9: Why did the rebels (patriots) and loyalists (tories) hate and fight each other with such passion?

Chapter 13. Question 10: You notice that patriot militia don't like to obey orders from generals outside their own state. And they don't want to stay longer than the number of days they enlisted for. Do you think this will hurt the American chances to win the war?

Chapter 16. Question 11: Were you surprised by the way Major Dearborn and his men talked to each other?

Chapter 23. Question 12: Why do you think most historians refer to Saratoga as "the turning point of the Revolutionary War"?

## **Lesson Plans on the Revolutionary War Answers to Questions for Gone to Meet the British:**

Question 1. Answer: Massachusetts provided more men than any other state, and Connecticut more supplies, to General Washington's main army outside Philadelphia. Only a few roads led out of southern New England to the Hudson River. Upon reaching the river, wagons had to be unloaded, and the cargo put in boats to cross the river, then reloaded onto wagons on the other shore. British warships sailing up and down the river would have time to spot such activity before this could be finished. Thus, General Washington's main supply line would be cut off. This would be so discouraging that people might ask the Continental Congress to start negotiations with Great Britain for a peaceful end to the Revolutionary War.

Question 2. Answer: The British plan to use Indians as allies backfired, for several reasons. Militarily, the Indians were not effective, since they only wanted to plunder and scalp, and they would not stay around for the battles. Their slaughter of civilians (rebels, neutrals and loyalists alike) persuaded many neutrals and lukewarm loyalists to join the rebel (patriot) forces and fight against Burgoyne's British Army.

Question 3. Answer: European soldiers were in the army for life, or until old age or disability forced them out. Naturally, many of the men had families, but a soldier's pay was too small to support a family back home. So the wife and children would sometimes come along as camp followers. They had duties to perform, such as cooking, washing, gathering firewood, and stealing chickens and other food from civilians. Each woman was allowed a half ration of food per day, and each child a quarter ration. As the war dragged on, year after year, the army would sometimes camp in one town for a long time. Soldiers met and fell in love with local women. Soon the number of women and children in the army grew. During the Revolutionary War, American girls' infatuation with the red-coated British officers was called "scarlet fever."

Question 4. Answer: Not enough British citizens wanted to enlist in the army. It was not an attractive career. And they considered American colonists to be fellow Englishmen, so most people did not want to fight them in the Revolutionary War.

Question 5. Answer: People were very faithful churchgoers then, and ministers were strong community leaders. Some preached against British policies during the years leading up to the war. Loyalists and British officers, writing in their journals and letters, often blamed these preachers, especially the Congregational Church ministers of New England, for inciting the people to rebellion and starting the Revolutionary War.

Question 6. Answer: European soldiers were professional, highly trained and disciplined, with superior equipment and experienced officers. The militia had none of these qualities. Prejudice was also a factor. Many Europeans felt that Americans were "country bumpkins, almost as barbaric as the savages."

Question 7. Answer: Except for their officers, the European soldiers were from the lowest classes of society. They were amazed at the opportunities in America, where almost any white man could own land and better himself. Of the 30,000 Hessians who came over here in the British armies, about 12,000 of them stayed here after the war, and became Americans. In fact, the first decorated Christmas tree in America was in a Connecticut house where a Hessian prisoner of war was living in 1777. After bringing in the tree, he told his hosts that it was a holiday custom back home in Germany.

Question 8. Answer: From the earliest colonial days, Americans learned about farming and war from the Indians. Where enemies could take cover behind trees, it was very important to learn how to shoot straight and hit your target. By 1777, most of Europe was treeless, the forests having been cut down and burned to heat homes many years before. So, European armies learned to fight on open fields, the soldiers firing together in a mass volley (aiming was not necessary), and follow it up with a bayonet charge.

Question 9. Answer: Each side considered the other to be traitors to their country. Other than actions involving Indians, almost all the atrocities committed during the Revolutionary War involved Americans killing Americans. This was especially true in New York and the Carolinas, where there were nearly as many loyalists as patriots.

Question 10. Answer: The reluctance of soldiers to serve under, and obey the orders of officers from other states was a problem that General Washington struggled with throughout the entire war. Also, they liked to return home when their enlistment period expired, rather than "tarry" (stay longer than they had to). Both these problems made it very difficult for General Washington to plan battles against the British during the Revolutionary War.

Question 11. Answer: When Danny and Molly arrived in camp, the soldier cooking at the campfire referred to Major Dearborn as "Henry." Also, the relationship between the major and Big John seemed to be on a first-name basis. New England had a more egalitarian society than the other colonies, which tended to be more class conscious. Yankees (New Englanders) were looked upon suspiciously as "social levelers." Even the wealthiest Yankees were scorned as "pumpkin gentry" by people outside New England. This social leveling, with its lack of deference by soldiers toward officers, was a frustration to George Washington. He was a Virginia aristocrat, and firmly believed that a proper subordination between the ranks was necessary to develop the discipline needed in an army.

Question 12. Answer: The French king was reluctant to ally his country with a people who were for republicanism (in fact, he would lose his own crown in 1789 to such a movement, in the French Revolution). However, he wanted to weaken the British Empire. Losing its 13 American colonies would weaken Britain's economic power. Helping us in our Revolutionary War would also allow France to capture some of the British "sugar islands" in the Caribbean. But he did not want to risk becoming our ally until we could prove we had a good chance to win the war. Our victory at Saratoga, and Washington's bold attack against the British outside Philadelphia the same month, persuaded the French king. Eventually, with France's help, we were able to win the Revolutionary War.

### **Essay Questions for Gone to Meet the British:**

Danny, Eben, Molly and Duncan met many different people during this story. They also had many different experiences, thoughts and feelings. Think back on all of this when answering the questions below.

1. Who was your favorite character, and why?
2. Pick one of the four main characters, and explain how his or her attitude about "the enemy" changed during the story.
3. What do you think will happen to each of the four main characters in the next few years, after the story's ending? Do you think it would make a good story?

Teachers if you have any questions about these Lesson Plans on the Revolutionary War, click 'Contact' at <http://revolutionary-war-books.com/> to see how to get in touch with author/school presenter Gregory Edgar.