CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Spies and Espionage in the American Revolution

Classroom Activity 1

CONNECTING TO THE PAST Dr. Stewart Hobbs

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Core Theme: Revolutionary War/Spies and Espionage

Grade Level: 5-6th grade

Estimated Duration: Two (60 minute) classes

Objectives:

- a. Students examine a historical document to gather information and draw conclusions.
- b. Students will gain skill in analyzing documents as historical evidence.
- c. Students will develop an understanding of the various spy methods used during the American Revolution.
- d. Students will analyze a handwritten letter as an artifact, reading for information and inference.

Ohio Academic Standards Connection:

<u>History</u>-1: Create time lines and identify possible relationships between events. Social Studies Skills and Methods-3, 4, 5, 6:

- 3: Differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
- 4: Read information critically in order to identify:
 - a. The author
 - b. The author's perspective
 - c. The purpose
- 5: Compare points of agreement and disagreements among sources.
- 6: Draw inferences from relevant information

The Primary Source (s) used: documents are taken from a University of Michigan site which is no longer available. An alternate site is: http://clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/spies/

Summary Overview/Abstract:

During the Revolutionary War, spies for both England and America obtained and transmitted information concerning troop movements, supplies, fortifications, and political maneuvers. Like modern-day CIA, American and British spies used a number of methods for hiding and transmitting information, including invisible ink, coded letters, secret drop-offs, and even messages written on the inside of buttons sewn to the coat jackets of young transmitters or organized in laundry hanging on a clothesline.

This classroom activity introduces students to various spies from the American Revolution, the letters they wrote, and the secret methods used to transmit their messages. Students will not only read and analyze primary source documents, but they will develop an

understanding of why people were willing to risk their lives during this time period and what motivation each may have had in performing these acts.

The main objective of this classroom activity is to introduce students to the use and evaluation of primary source documents. Students will first learn what a primary source and first person testimony are, learn about history from individuals and compare how different primary sources teach about the same historic event in different ways.

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Pencils
- SMARTboard/Internet access
- Handouts of primary source documents
- Written document analysis worksheets

Modifications used in class for all IEP students are the following:

- Cueing is used to stay on task
- Directions clarified through repetition and written format
- Oral responses
- Scribe for written responses
- Grouping/ability—document analysis assignment will be based upon reading levels

Instructional Steps

Day 1

Building Background Knowledge: (Whole class instruction)

Step 1: Vocabulary: Introduce terms which will be used for this activity

- <u>Primary Source</u>—a document or object that was created by an individual or group as part of their daily lives. Primary sources include birth certificates, photographs, diaries, letters, embroidered samplers, clothing, household and property implements, and newspapers. A document that is a primary source may contain both first person testimony and second hand testimony.
 - First person testimony—the account of a person who actually participated in an event.
 - Second hand or hearsay testimony—an account repeated by someone who did not actually participate in the event.

Step 2: Introduction:

- Introduce the lesson with an explanation that during the American Revolution, the
 colonies were both the home front and the battlefield, drawing women from all
 backgrounds into the conflict. Spy networks were not limited to white men; women,
 children, and blacks served as eyes and ears for military leaders, providing invaluable
 intelligence information throughout the war.
- From the lesson introduction, ask students about specific individuals included in the 5th grade text book, such as Nathan Hale and Paul Revere.
- Discuss with the class why some individuals might not be known. Ask if spying started with the Revolution and if it is still practiced today.
- Discuss what type of person would be bested suited to be a military spy and why.
- Specifically ask students if women, children, and blacks were spies in the American Revolution.
- Use the website: http://clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/spies/ to establish background knowledge with the students concerning espionage and spy rings established during the American Revolution. Read and discuss the "story accounts" as a means of scaffolding the knowledge students know from their fifth grade textbooks and that concerning espionage during this time period which is addressed minutely in the text content.

Step 3: Document Analysis Modeling: Students will have a copy of the **Document Analysis Worksheet** (see attached document analysis worksheet) as I model this part of the activity. Use the **spiral questions** (see attached questions) as a means of class discussion concerning this primary source document.

Undated Ann Bates Letter

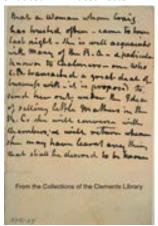


Photo Credit:

William L. Clements Library

Translation:

That a woman whom Craig / has trusted often? came to town / last night? She is well acquainted / with many of the R. A.? 2 particular / known to Chabmers? one who / C.B. transacted a great deal of / business with? it is proposed to / send her out under the Idea / of selling little Matters in the / R.C. she will converse with / Chambers: I will return whenever / she may have learned any thing / that shall be desired to be known.

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

Type of Document (check one):	
newspapermapadvertisementlettertelegrampamphletpatentpress releaseOthermemorandum	t
Unique Physical Qualities of the Document (Check one or more): Interesting letterhead Notations	
Handwritten"RECEIVED" stamp	
TypedOther	
Seals	
Date(s) of Document:	
A they for Courte As fills December	
Author (or Creator) of the Document	
Position (Title):	
For What Audience Was The Document Written?	
Document Information (There are many possible ways to answer A-E)	
A. List three things the author said that you think are important:	
a	
b	
c. B. Why do you think this document was written?	
a	
C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the doc to justify your response:	ument
a	
b	
D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was wr	itten.
a b.	
E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:	
a	

Spiral Questions

(Day1: Modeling Activity)

(Referenced to Ann Bates letter)

Level 1: Description

- 1. Who wrote this document?
- 2. What sort of information does the source supply?
- 3. What was America going through at this time?

Level 2: Interpretation

- 4. Why did Ann Bates write this letter?
- 5. Who is she writing about in the letter?
- 6. Who is RC? Who is Chambers? Who is RA?
- 7. What do you think she sells in reference to "little matters"?

Level 3: Analysis

- 8. Why do you think Ann Bates is writing in "coded language"?
- 9. What kind of emotions do you feel she is writing with as she writes this letter?
- 10. What motivated this creator to write this and what kind of impact does it have on the content?

Instructional Steps

(Day 2)

<u>Step 1: Anticipatory set</u>: I might say something to the effect of: "Let's review the information we covered yesterday, because today, you will be gathering data from other primary source documents. Today, you will be completing a new document analysis worksheet in the same manner we did as a class yesterday. <u>Objective:</u> Today your groups will work with other documents from American Revolution spies. Remember how we gathered our information yesterday as we analyzed the Ann Bates document. <u>Guided or monitored practice:</u> I will be circulating among your groups. Signal me if you have questions or assistance in finding the information I have asked you to locate.

Step 2:

Small Group Exercise:

Students will examine individual documents (see Appendix A-F) and address the following questions as a small group. They will record their data onto the "data analysis worksheet".

- 1. What is this document about?
- 2. What does the document tell you about the American Revolution and its spies?
- 3. Who produced this document?
 - a. Did they actually witness the events?
 - b. How reliable is the creator of the document? If not, why not?
 - c. What biases might the creator have had?
- 4. Who was the intended audience?
- 5. Why was this document created? What was the occasion?
- 6. What type of document is this? Is the document a primary source? Does it have first person or second hand testimony or both?
- 7. Evaluate the information using the data analysis sheet (modeled in class prior to this one) Is the evidence clear, reliable, first person or second-hand/hearsay?
- 8. Does the document help you understand the history of the American Revolution?

Step 3:

Whole Group Discussion:

Students will reconvene for whole class instruction and discussion concerning the primary document analysis activity which was completed in small groups.

1. One representative from each group will summarize their document for the class, touching on the main points from the data analysis worksheet.

- 2. The class, as a whole, discusses how the document impacted their knowledge concerning the American Revolution and why is this document valuable to a better understanding of the time and events of the American Revolution? Why is it important and valuable to use primary source documents to understand history?
- 3. What can students learn from uses multiple primary source documents in combination with the text content? What is the impact of having personal letters of the time period in understanding the American Revolution?

Post-Assessment

Closure activity and Evaluation: Summarization and Exit Slips

- 1) As a means of summarizing the information learned in these activities we will have a whole class discussion, reiterating the importance of spy work within the framework of the American Revolution, as well as, the importance of using primary source documents as a means of bringing history alive in the context of the classroom setting.
- 2) Exit skill: Each student will list three things they learned in today's lesson on the exit slip and one thing that is still puzzling them.

Exit Slip
Name three things you learned today.
•
•
Name one thing that is still puzzling you and you want to
know more about.
•

Extension Activities:

- Explore photographs related to various spies, such as Abigail Adams, Anna "Nancy" Strong, "355", "Miss Jenny" etc.
- Make invisible ink and write a secret message to classmates
- Create a "coded message" and have other students attempt to decode it.
- Create a "mask" message and write a message to a classmate.
- Create a vignette based upon the life of a given spy.
- Extension web site which gives more information concerning the spy networks:
 - o https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/revolutionary-spies

Appendices

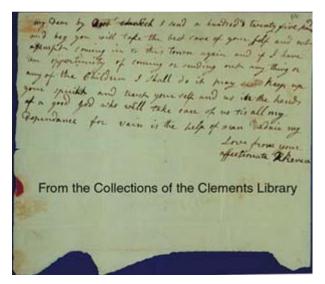
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Appendix A

April/May 1775 -- Rachel Revere to Paul Revere

From the Gold Star Collection

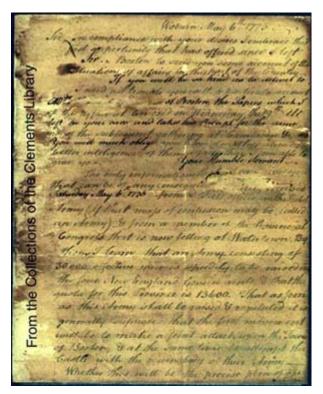


My Dear by Doctor Church I send a hundred & twenty five pounds / and beg you will take the best care of yourself and not / attempt coming in to this town again and if I have an / opportunity of coming or sending out anything or / any of the Children I shall do it pray **** keep up / your spirits and trust your self and us in the hands / of a good God who will take care of us tis all my / Dependance for vain is the help of man aduie my / Love from your /affectionate R. Revere

Appendix B

May 6, 1775 -- Benjamin Thompson to ? (Page 1 of 3)

From the Gold Star Collection



Invisible Letter

Sir / If you will be so kind as to deliver to / Mr. of Boston, the Papers which I / left in your care, and take his Receipt for the same, / You will much oblige / Your Humble Servant / (erased) / Saturday May 6th 1775

Visible Letter

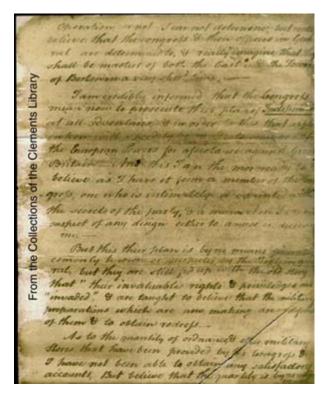
Woburn May 6th 1775 / Sir, In compliance with your desires I embrace this / first opportunity that has offered since I left / Boston to send you some account of the / Situation of affairs in this part of the Country-/ I need not trouble you with a particular account / of the affair at Concord on Wednesday the 19th [] / nor of the subsequent gathering at Cambridge [], as / you have doubtless already / better intelligence of them affairs than I am able to / give you.

The only information that I can give you / that can be of any consequence ... lately received / from a Field officer in the Rebel / Army (if that mass of confusion may be called / an Army) & from a member of the Provincial / Congress that is now setting at Watertown. By / them I learn that an Army consisting of / 30,000 effective men is speedily to be raised in / the four New England Governments, & that the / quota for this Province is 13600. That as soon / as this Army shall be raised & regulated, it is / generally supposed that the first movement / will be to make a feint attack upon the Town / of Boston & at the same time to attempt the /

Castle with the main body of the Army-/ Whether this will be the precise plan of operation

May 6, 1775 -- Benjamin Thompson to ? (Page 2 of 3)

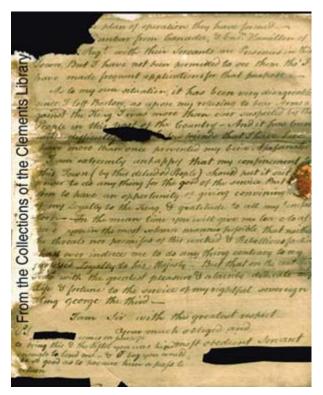
From the Gold Star Collection



operation or not I cannot determine, but really / believe that the congress & their officers in Gene- / ral are determined to, & really imagine that they / shall be masters of both the Castle & the Town / of Boston in a very short time- / I am credibly informed that the Congress / mean now to prosecute their plan of Independence / at all adventures & in order to this that appli- / cation will speedily be made to someone of / the European Powers for assistance against Great / Britain- And this I am the moreready to / believe as I have it from a member of the congress, / one who is intimately acquainted with / the secrets of the party, & a man whom I can not / suspect of any design either to amuse or deceive / me. -/ But this their plan is by no means [generally-?] / comonly known or suspecte by the People in gene / -ral, but they are still fed up with the old story / that "their invaluable rights & priviledges are / "invaded". & are taught to believe that the military / preparations which are now making are in defence / of them & to obtain redress- / As to the quantity of ordnances other military / stores that have been provided by the Congress & / I have not been able to obtain any satisfactory / accounts. But believe that the quantity is by no means equal.

May 6, 1775 -- Benjamin Thompson to ? (Page 3 of 3)

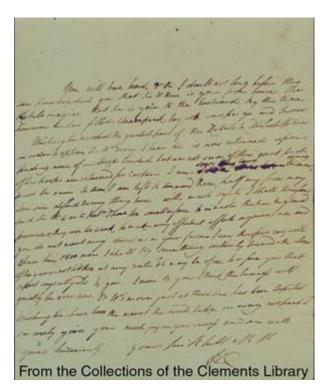
From the Gold Star Collection



...plan of operation they have formed – / ...[D]unbar from Canada, & Ens. Hamilton of / ...Reg [?] with their servants are Prisoners in this / Town, But I have not permitted to see them tho' I / have made frequent applications for that purpose – / As to my own situation, it has been very disagreeable / since I left Boston, as upon my refusing to bear Arms a-/ gainst the king I was more than ever suspected by the / People in this part of the Country -And it has been / with difficulty ... few friends that I have here / have more than once prevented my bein asassinated. / I am extremely unhappy that my confinement to / this Town (by this deluded people) should put it out ... / power to do any thing for the good of the service But ... / soon to have an opportunity of giving convincing ... / of my Loyalty to the King, & gratitude to all my benefac- / tors - in the mean time you will give me leave to as- / sure you in the most solemn manner possible, that neither / the threats nor promises of this wicked & Rebellious faction / shall ever induce me to do any thing contrary to my / professed loyalty to his Majesty – But that on the contrary / I do with the greatest pleasure & alacrity dedicate my / Life & fortune to the service of my rightful sovereign / King George the third - / I am Sir with the greatest respect / Your much obliged and / Most obedient Servant / (name cut out) / P.S. (name cut out) comes on purpose / to bring this & the Pistol you was kind / enough to lend me - I beg you would / be so good as to procure him a pass to / return

Appendix C

August 10, 1777 -- Henry Clinton to John Burgoyne (Page 1 of 3) From the Gold Star Collection



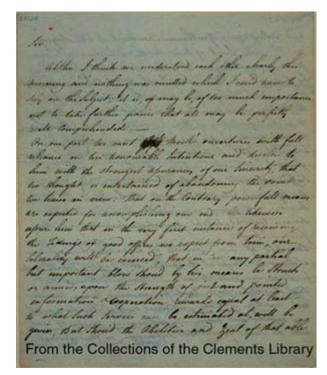
You will have heard, Dr Sir I doubt not long before this / can have reached you that Sir W. Howe is gone from hence. The / Rebels imagine that he is gone to the Eastward. By this time / however he has filled Chesapeak bay with surprize and terror.

Washington marched the greater part of the Rebels to Philadelphia / in order to oppose Sir Wm's. army. I hear he is now returned upon / finding none of our troops landed but am not sure of this, great part / of his troops are returned for certain. I am sure this countermarching / must be ruin to them. I am left to command here, half of my force may / I am sure defend everything here with much safety. I shall therefore / send Sir W. 4 or 5 Bat [talio] ns. I have too small a force to invade the New England / provinces; they are too weak to make any effectual efforts against me and / you do not want any diversion in your favour. I can, therefore very well / spare him 1500 men. I shall try some thing certainly towards the close / of the year, not till then at any rate. It may be of use to inform you that / report says all yields to you. I own to you that I think the business will / quickly be over now. Sr. W's move just at this time has been capital. / Wahingtons have been the worst he could take in every respect. / sincerely give you much joy on your success and am with / great Sincerity your [] / HC

Appendix D

May 10, 1779 -- John André to Joseph Stansbury (Page 1 of 4)

From the Clinton Collection

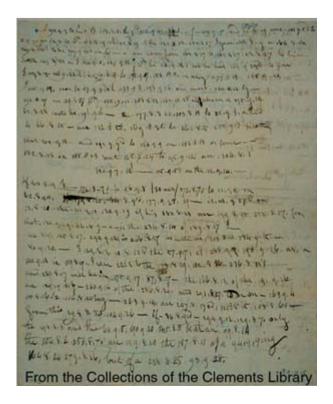


Sir, / Altho I think we understood each other clearly this / morning and nothing was omitted which I cou'd have to / say on the Subject; it is, or may be, of too much / importance not to take further pains that all may be perfectly / well comprehended-- / On our part we meet ArnGen Monk's ouvertures with full / reliance on his honourable Intentions and disclose to / him with the strongest assurances of our Sincerity, that / no thought is entertained of abandoning the point / we have in view. That on the Contrary powerfull means / are expected for accomplishing our end. We likewise / assure him that in the very instance of receiving / the Tidings or good offices we expect from him, our / liberality will be evinced, that in case any partial / but important blow shou'd by his means be Struck / or aimed, upon the Strength of just and pointed / information & cooperation, rewards equal ar least / to what Such Service can be estimated at, will be / given, But Shou'd the Abilities and Zeal of that able

Appendix E

July 12, 1780 -- Benedict Arnold to John André (Code)

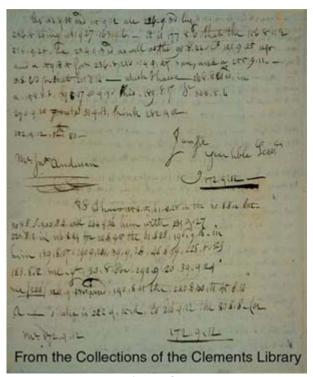
From the Clinton Collection



I 293.9.7 to C_t. B. 103.8.2. the 7th 152.9.17. that , a F__ 112.9.17. and 22.8.29 were 105.9.50 to / 4 9.71 in 62.8.20 with , 163.8.19 A 22.8.19 at with 230.8.13. 263.8.17 I gave Mr. S---y a 164.8.16 / 147.8.261 to be 209.9.216 in C----a and have from 163.8.17 to .163.8.17 .58.8.27 to him. / Such 147.8.21 as I 164.9.5 147.9.16 s which he 24.9.125 me has 169.9.23'd to you / I 129.8.7 .46.9.22'd no 19.8.29 to 175.9.17 . 158.8.8 - or any 177.8.13 . 168.9.13 . ----- / I 105.9.5. soon to 57.9.7 .at 288.9.8, 198.9.26, and most . 230.8.12. by --- / 291.8.27 an 149.8.27 with ---255.9.11. 148.8.22, 182.4.28 in whom a 175.9.12 / 67.8.28 could be .196.9.16 --- the 177.8.8 is .103.8.19 to 22.9.3, and / to 66.8.15 -- are 182.8.28, 169.8.25 be . 260.8.5 , 205.9.3 near / that 209.9.18. --- and 192.9.9'd to 224.9.9 on ,188.8.13 or some ---- / 182.8.28 on 188.8.13 sent 185.6.24 to 95.9.124 an .104.8.1

120.9.7, W------ 105.9.5's on the .22.9.14.--- / of 163.8.19 F---- 172.8.7s to 56.9.8 | 30.000 | 172.8.70 to 11.94. in / 62.8.20. If 179.8.25, 84.8.9'd, 177.9.28. N---- is 111.9.27.'d on / 23.8.10. the 111.9.13, 180.9.19 if his 180.8.21 an .179.8.25., 255.8.17. for / that, 180.9.19, 44.8.9 --a-- is the 234.8.14 of 189.8.17. I --- / 44.8.9, 145.8.17, 294.9.12, in 266.8.17 as well as, 103.8.11, 184.9.15.--- / 80.4.20. --- I149.8.7, 10.8.22'd the 57.9.71 at 288.9.9, 198.9.26, as, a / 100.4.18 in 189.8.19-- I can 221.8.6 the 173.8.19, 102.8.26, 236.8.21's--- / and 289.8.17

will be in 175.9.7, 87.8.7--- the 166.8.11, of the .191.9.16 / are .129.19.21 'of --- 266.9.14 of the .286.8.20, and 291.8.27 to be an --- 163.9.4 / 115.8.16 -'a .114.8.25ing --- 263.9.14. are 207.8.17ed, 125.8.15, 103.8.60--- / from this 294.8.50, 104.9.26 -- If 84.8.9ed -- 294.9.12, 129.8.7. only / to 193.8.3 and the 64.9.5, 290.9.20, 245.8.3 be at an, 99.8.14 . / the .204.8.2, 253.8.7s are 159.8.10 the 187.8.11 of a 94.9.9ing / 164.8.24, 279.8.16, but of a .238.8.25, 93.9.28.



[Decoded letter in Jonathan Odell's hand]

As 158.9.25 and 115.9.12 are 226.9.3'd by. / 236.8.20ing , 131.9.21, 163.9.6 -- it is 177.8.6 that the 156.8.11'z / 236.9.28. be 234.9.3ed as well as the .98.8.22s | 128.9.25 up, / and a 159.8.5 for 236.8.21's 149.27 'on, and a 255.9.11.-- / 13.8.6'd for that 211.8.14 ----- which I have 168.8.20ed, in / a 158.8.8, 189.6.17, 10.9.9. This .189.8.17 Sir .300.8.4 / 290.9.20 7 not, I 31.9.13 think 282.9.12. / 152.12.12th.80--- / I am Sir, / Your Humble Servant,

Mr. John Anderson / 172.9.12---- / P.S. I have 125.8.15, 61.8.28. in the 30.8.8er, but / 30.8.8. S. 300.8.4 will 264.9.26 him with 231.9.27 / 223.8.1 in 116.8.19 He 14.8.9's the 61.8.28, 196.9.16. in / him 189.8.17, 294.9.29, 39.4.24, 48.8.19, 228.8.23 / 183.8.2. me. The 30.8.8'er .290.9.20 .39.9.24 / me |200| 126.9.141s, and .190.8.11 the .220.8.50. to 45.8.10 / A----- s, who is 222.9.15ed, to 216.9.22. the 80.8.8 for / Mr. 172.9.12 / 172.9.12

I wrote to Captn B[eckwith]-on the 7th of June, that a F[rench]--- fleet and army / were expected to act in conjunction with the A[merican]--- army. At the same time / I gave Mr. S[tansbury]-a manifesto intended to be published in C[anad]---a, and have / from time to time communicated to him such intelligence as I thought / interesting, which he assures me he has transmitted to you. I have / received no answer from my Letter, or any verbal Message - I expect soon / to command W[est] P[oin]t and most seriously wish an interview with some / intelligent officer in whom a mutual confidence could be placed. The / necessity is evident to arrange

and to cooperate - An officer might / be taken Prisoner near that Post and permitted to return on parole, / or some officer on Parole sent out to effect an exchange.

General W[ashington]--- expects on the arrival of the F[rench]--- Troops to collect / 30,000 Troops to act in conjunction; if not disappointed, N[ew]. York is fixed / on as the first Object, if his numbers are not sufficient for that Object, / Can-a- is the second; of which I can inform you in time, as well as of / every other design. I have accepted the command at W[est]. P[oint]. As a Post in which / I can render the most essential Services, and which will be in my disposal. / The mass of the People are heartily tired of the War, and wish to be on / their former footing - They are promised great events from this / year's exertion -- If - disappointed - you have only to persevere / and the contest will soon be at an end. The present Struggles are / like the pangs of a dying man, violent but of a short duration---

As Life and fortune are risked by serving His Majesty, it is / Necessary that the latter shall be secured as well as the emoluments / I give up, and a compensation for Services agreed on and a Sum / advanced for that purpose - which I have mentioned in a letter / which accompanies this, which Sir Henry will not, I believe, think / unreasonable. I am Sir, your humble Servant. / July 12, 1780 J. Moore / Mr. Jn Anderson / P.S. I have great confidence in the Bearer, but beg Sir Henry / will threaten him with his resentment in case he abuses the con- / fidence placed in him, which will bring ruin on me. / The Bearer will bring me 200 Guineas, and pay the remainder to / Captn A----- who us requested to receive the deposit for Mr. Moore

Appendix F

May 29, 1781 -- George Washington to Dr. Baker

From the Gold Star Collection



New Windsor May 29, 1781 / Sir, / A day or two ago I requested / Col. Harrison to apply to you for a pair / of Pincers to fasten the wire of my teeth. --I hope / you furnished him with them.-- I now wish / you would send me one of your scrapers / as my teeth stand in need of cleaning, and / I have little prospect of being in Philadelph. / soon.-- It will come very safe by the Post-- / & in return, the money shall be sent so soon as / I know the cost of it.-- / I am Sir / Y Very H Serv [Your Very Humble Servant] / G. Washington

Appendix G

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

Type of Document (check one):		
newspaper	map	advertisement
letter	telegram	pamphlet
patent	press release	Other
memorandum	. (2)	
Unique Physical Qualities of the Doo		
Interesting letterhead	Notations	
Handwritten	"RECEIVED" stamp	
Typed	Other	
Seals		
Date(s) of Document:		
Author (or Creator) of the Document		
nation (or election) of the bocament		
Position (Title):		
For What Audience Was The Docume	ent Written?	
Document Information (There are ma	any possible ways to answer A El	
•	said that you think are important:	
C.		
B. Why do you think this docum	nent was written?	
a		
C. What evidence in the docum	nent helps you know why it was written	? Quote from the document
to justify your response:		
a		
b		
D. List two things the document	t tells you about life in the United States	s at the time it was written.
a		
b		
E. Write a question to the author	or that is left unanswered by the docum	nent:
a		

Appendix H

Post-Assessment

Closure activity and Evaluation: Summarization and Exit Slips

- 3) As a means of summarizing the information learned in these activities we will have a whole class discussion, reiterating the importance of spy work within the framework of the American Revolution, as well as, the importance of using primary source documents as a means of bringing history alive in the context of the classroom setting.
- 4) Exit skill: Each student will list three things he/she learned in today's lesson on the exit slip and one thing that is still puzzling them.

Exit Slip
Name three things you learned today.
•
•
Name one thing that is still puzzling you and you want to
know more about.
•