

Hamilton: Rapping the Revolutionary War

Christopher Mazzacane- ETA Jujuy, Argentina

Supplementary Workshop #1

Dates: May 2-3, 2018

Time: 5:30- 6:30 pm

Location: IES No. 4- Scalabrini Ortiz

Duration: 2 hours

Objectives: Build upon previous knowledge of the American Revolution by introducing students to the musical "Hamilton." Each of the six selected songs portray distinct historical events of the Revolutionary War period, and they are filled with valuable references and vocabulary.

Introductory Questions: Gauge the students' knowledge base

- 1) What do you know about the American Revolution?
- 2) Who were some of the **key players** in the American Revolution?
- 3) Have you read any of the founding documents from the United States?

Background on *Hamilton*:

- Broadway musical written by Lin Manuel Miranda that chronicles the life of Alexander Hamilton, one of America's **founding fathers**, and his role during the revolution.
- It is currently the most popular musical in the United States, and has won many **Tony awards**.
- It's popularity as a learning tool has grown exponentially. History teachers have started using it as a more engaging way of teaching the revolution.

Part One

- "The Schuyler Sisters"- [Lyrics](#) - *end at 1:55
 - **Context and Notes**
 - This song is the first time in the show we are given a glimpse into the lives of women during the colonial period.
 - **References**
 - *Common Sense*
 - *The Declaration of Independence*
 - **Vocabulary**
 - Compel- to make someone do something
 - Sequel- the second part of a series (ex. *Spiderman 2*)

- Loaded- extremely wealthy
 - **Questions**
 - What do you know about women’s rights during this time period?
 - What does it say about women, if anything, in the Declaration of Independence?
 - What do you get from the following line: “So listen to my declaration. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. But when I meet Thomas Jefferson, I’ll compel him to include women in the sequel.”
- “Farmer Refuted”- [Lyrics](#)
 - **Context and Notes**
 - This song highlights the often passionate and violent disagreements between the Tories and the Patriots. Throughout the song, we are introduced to arguments on both sides. Have students listen carefully so they can discuss them afterwards.
 - **References**
 - **Tories**- supported the British government; didn’t want a revolution
 - **Patriots**- wanted the revolution
 - **Vocabulary**
 - Bloodshed- an event filled with violence, injury, and death
 - Divisive- controversial; causing a disagreement
 - **Questions**
 - What were the arguments given in favor of independence?
 - What were the arguments given opposing independence?
- “You’ll Be Back”- [Lyrics](#)
 - **Context and Notes**
 - This song is sung after the colonists sign the Declaration of Independence announcing their separation from the British empire.
 - Have the students note the differences between the tone of the song and the meaning of the song. For example, the music is incredibly happy and very funny, but the lyrics themselves are very threatening. Make sure they can make that distinction.
 - **References**
 - King George III- ruler of England during the revolution
 - **Vocabulary**
 - Battalion- in this case, an army
 - **Questions**

- What plans are being announced?
- What do we know about the king's personality based on this song?
- Based on the title and lyrics of the song, how does the king feel about the prospect of war?
- A lot of words in English have a double meaning. What does the king mean when he says, "And no don't change the subject, cuz you're my favorite subject!"

Part Two

- "Right Hand Man"- [Lyrics](#) - *end at 2:56 and start again at 4:12
 - **Context and Notes**
 - For the first few years of the war, the American army was doing terribly. They were losing battles, they didn't have supplies, and they were incredibly disorganized. This song gives the listener an idea of what was going on within the Continental Army at the start of the war.
 - Make sure the students understand what the term "right hand man" means
 - **References**
 - George Washington
 - The Continental Army
 - **Vocabulary**
 - Rise up- take part in a rebellion; overcome a difficult situation
 - Right hand man- the person who is second in command
 - The element of surprise- doing something unexpected
 - **Questions**
 - At the start of the song, what major US city is being attacked by the British navy? Why is this important?
 - Using what you learned about the historical context of this event, what do the terms **outgunned**, **outmanned**, **outnumbered**, **outplanned** mean?
 - What is the tone of this song?
- "Guns and Ships"- [Lyrics](#)
 - **Context and Notes**
 - This song discusses the alliance between the American colonies and France.

- Marquis de Lafayette, a French general, went to America to fight with the colonists against the British. He was incredibly helpful and is still considered a hero in the United States to this very day.
 - **References**
 - Marquis de Lafayette
 - Betsy Ross's flag
 - Redcoats
 - Vocabulary
 - Rag tag- run down; not properly prepared
 - Henchman- someone who assists a villain or other bad person
 - **Questions**
 - Why did the colonies desperately need the help of another country?
 - Why would France decide to join forces with the Americans?
- "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)"- [Lyrics](#)
 - **Context and Notes**
 - The final battle of the American Revolution took place in Yorktown, Virginia in 1781
 - The British were forced to surrender and leave the new country
 - **References**
 - Yorktown
 - **Vocabulary**
 - Surrender- to give up
 - Bayonet- the metal weapon at the end of a rifle
 - **Questions**
 - Who were the key players here? Listen to the names that you hear in the song.
 - Think carefully about the following phrase, "Black and white soldiers wonder alike if this really means freedom." What does this mean?
 - Why do they continue to repeat the phrase, "The World Turned Upside Down"?