

MODULE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION: What will my scholar learn about?

Essential Question: How does the narrator's point of view shape a text?

Topic

This module is the first opportunity for fourth graders to explore a historical era for an entire module. Students immerse themselves in reading about the American Revolution and questioning how point of view shapes the way historical events are presented. This is an important lens for reading history, and students are exposed to texts written from different perspectives.

Texts

Each text in the module brings to life the perspectives of various historical and fictional people in relation to the Revolutionary War. Students begin by reading *Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?*. This narrative informational text by Newbery winner Jean Fritz describes England's King George III as an individual and shares the English perspective on American colonial rebellion. Next, students read the picture book *George vs. George*, which compares the perspectives of King George III and George Washington on various issues and events from the Revolutionary War period. After this introduction, students dive into *Colonial Voices: Hear Them Speak*, which is a series of narrative poems from the perspectives of several individuals in a colonial village with different roles and thoughts about the fight for independence. Students finish their nonfiction reading with first- and second-hand accounts of the so-called Boston Massacre, written by people with vastly different perspectives and points of view about the event.

For the final three weeks of the module, students explore themes about freedom, personal choice, and courage through fictional texts. The picture book *Samuel's Choice* is treated as an interactive read-aloud, with students reading short sections on their own. This text portrays an enslaved boy who must decide whether to help the fight for freedom from England even though he is not free himself. The story makes the fight for freedom from England personal, while also foreshadowing the long fights for freedom from oppression that occur later in American history. Students finish the module by reading *Toliver's Secret*, a chapter book about a girl who spies for the Revolutionary Army while British soldiers board in her house.

Enduring Understandings

- There's more than one way to view history and its events, conflicts, and issues.
- People's life experiences influence their points of view and the decisions they make.
- During the time of the Revolutionary War, people had very different points of view about American independence.
- Colonists' unhappiness about British taxes and lack of representation in British government led to civil protests and eventually a war.
- We can more fully understand an event, conflict, or issue by investigating multiple points of view about it.

Focus Questions

- How did different people in England and America view the Revolutionary War?
- What are the different points of view about what happened at the Boston Massacre?
- What ways are there to work for freedom besides fighting?
- In your opinion, were the American patriots right to fight for their independence from Britain?

Reading Transferable Learning

As readers of nonfiction, students analyze how authors support their points with reasons and evidence, compare how different authors portray the same historical events, and integrate information from various sources—all skills that are extremely helpful in studying history. Finally, as students read the poetry and fiction of the module, they compare and contrast the perspectives and points of view of the various characters and speakers, and determine and analyze the themes developed in the various texts.

Writing Transferable Learning

In their first module of opinion writing, students write opinion texts from the perspective of an actual Revolutionary War leader and a fictional figure from this historical period. The writing opportunities provide students with additional context to shape their response to the essential question and allow students to choose specific reasons and evidence to support particular points, which builds from their analysis of how authors make such choices in reading lessons. Lessons focus on the qualities of opinion writing, such as drafting an introduction that clearly states an opinion and engages the reader and grouping reasons and evidence logically to support an opinion.

TEXTS

Texts include any content that students and teachers closely read or view in the classroom, whether accessed in print or electronically. The following texts will be read in class. Feel free to borrow these books from your local library and read with your student at home.

Text List

Books

- *Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?* by Jean Fritz
- *George vs. George* by Rosalyn Schanzer
- *Colonial Voices: Hear Them Speak* by Kay Winters
- *Samuel's Choice* by Richard Berleth
- *Toliver's Secret* by Esther Brady

Articles

- "The Boston Massacre, 1770: The British Perspective" (2009)
<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/bostonmassacre.htm>
- "Massacre in King Street" by Mark Clemens in Cobblestone Magazine
<https://www.kippshare.org/docs/DOC-21256>

Text Details

Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? by Jean Fritz

INFORMATIONAL TEXT/BIOGRAPHY		LESSONS 1–3, 9 FOCUS WRITING TASK 1
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This biography of King George III by an award-winning author and illustration team narrates King George's life as a young boy, leading up to his years as king of the British Empire. It tells the "other" side of the American Revolution. Young readers learn that King George wanted to be a "good" king. Because he saw himself as a "good" king, he never understood why the American colonists objected to his taxes and soldiers. He viewed the colonists as rebellious children who needed a firm father figure, and he refused to grant them their independence. Cartoon-style illustrations add humor and details about King George's life.	
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being king of England shapes King George III's point of view toward the Revolutionary War and the protesting American colonists.• King George thinks he is a good king and doesn't understand the colonists' anger. He finds the war annoying and thinks the colonists should be punished for rebelling.• It's important to learn many points of view about events or issues both in history and now.• Great leaders should try to be good people and good role models for the people they lead.	

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This text is ideally suited to examining perspective in the historical telling of the Revolutionary War. An ALA Best Book of the Year, Schanzer helps readers explore important events of the American Revolution from the perspectives of two opposing leaders, George Washington and King George III. Readers experience an unbiased presentation of facts that they can use to interpret a variety of other primary and secondary sources. After the introduction of each leader and the British government (both in England and the American colonies), the text covers the causes of the American Revolution and most of the major battles during the war. Cartoon-style illustrations add humor, details, and quotes from real people involved in the events.
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's important to understand historical events from many perspectives, such as American colonists and the British government.• The colonists wanted freedom. The British wanted loyalty. Both felt they were right to fight for what they wanted.• Americans were very motivated to fight for the idea of their own free country. Not all British soldiers cared as much about winning.• In the end, Americans "won" the conflict and created a new country.

NARRATIVE POETRY/HISTORICAL FICTION		LESSONS 10–11, 13
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This text a series of short, narrative poems and detailed illustrations to portray different perspectives held by colonists about the Revolutionary War. The printer’s errand boy, Ethan, connects all the characters, whom he visits when delivering notice of an important meeting. These characters share many different views about the colonial world and its important events. Portraying a variety of colonists from trades and servitudes helps readers understand the connection between people’s occupations and their views on the acts leading up to the American Revolution. 	
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sons of Liberty organized American colonists to protest British rule and taxes charged without their agreement. People involved in history often have very different views about it. The story shows that some American colonists supported revolution against British rule. Others wanted to continue under that rule. Native Americans and enslaved Africans had little to gain from a revolution, so these characters have different perspectives on events. The way information travels changes over time in important ways: Ethan’s printed notices are the main way people learned about important events, because modern technology didn’t exist. The way people work changes over time: some colonial jobs still exist. Others do not or have changed into something else. 	

“The Boston Massacre, 1770: The British Perspective”

INFORMATIONAL TEXT/PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT		LESSONS 15–18
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This article includes an account told by Captain Thomas Preston, a British soldier who witnessed the events of the Boston Massacre in 1770 first-hand. It introduces students to the British perspective during the Revolutionary War and provides more information on the Boston Massacre and the events that might have contributed to the outbreak of violence. 	
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our perspective shapes our view of events. Captain Thomas Preston is on trial for murder after a fight with protesting colonists in Boston. He wants to prove his innocence and that shapes his account. Events sometimes get out of control because of many small misunderstandings. Preston believes the fight was an unfortunate misunderstanding. The townspeople call it a “massacre.” The historical details in the introduction match those in Preston’s account. This suggests he is telling the truth. 	

“Massacre in King Street” by Mark Clemens

INFORMATIONAL TEXT/HISTORY		LESSONS 17–18
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This nonfiction article from Cobblestone Magazine describes the events leading up to what history calls the Boston Massacre. It explains how and why the Sons of Liberty used propaganda strategies to blame the British soldiers for the deaths of five colonists. The details in the text offer a less biased report of the event. Primary source illustrations from the time add meaning and information about the context in which they were created. 	
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our opinions and goals shape the way we describe events. American colonists and British had different goals in describing the Boston Massacre. The colonists wanted to blame the soldiers for an unfair attack. The soldiers believed they were defending themselves. The Sons of Liberty wanted more colonists to support the revolution so they encouraged people to see the fight in Boston as a “massacre.” People who disagree may not be objective about each other’s actions. The Boston Massacre happened because there was tension and distrust between the colonists and the British. Both sides saw actions as intending harm that possibly didn’t. 	

Samuel’s Choice by Richard Berleth

HISTORICAL FICTION		LESSONS 16–19 FOCUS WRITING TASK 2
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This long picture book tells the story of Samuel, an enslaved boy in Brooklyn who is in a position to help the revolutionary forces and has to decide if he should or not, and what the fight for Colonist’s freedom has to do with him. Samuel tells the story as a first-person narrator, which gives readers insight into the events he witnesses and the choices he must make. 	
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samuel discovers that choosing which side to support in a war can be very hard, especially if the two sides have different chances of winning. American soldiers were untrained while the British army was made of professional soldiers. Samuel’s actions help people see and respect him as a man, not just as an enslaved person. Samuel discovers that it feels better to work hard for something you believe in than something you’re forced to do. Liberty comes at a price. People want to be free to make their own choices about their lives and work for themselves. 	

Toliver’s Secret by Esther Wood Brady

HISTORICAL FICTION		LESSONS 19, 20–27, 29, 31–33
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This historical fiction chapter book tells the story of 10 year-old Ellen Toliver, who takes her grandfather’s role of smuggling secrets to the Revolutionary Army after he is injured. There is a mystery element that will appeal to many students. Gender equity, bullying, and courage are all thematic topics in the text. 	
Key Text Understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ellen’s wants freedom so she wants to help fulfill Grandfather’s mission. Ellen views the British redcoats as enemies and Grandfather and General Washington as heroes. Ellen discovers that ordinary young people can help change their communities and contribute to important events in their world. Personal experience shapes our view of current events, people, and issues. 	

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

The lessons teachers will facilitate include the following literary terms. Reinforce these terms with the definitions that are included.

Colonies: one of the 13 areas of land on the east coast of North America that later became the United States.

Independence: the time when a country becomes politically independent

Loyalist: someone who fought with the British during the American Revolutionary War.

Patriot or rebels: people who rejected British rule during the American Revolution and declared the United States of America as an independent nation in July 1776.

Tyrant: a cruel and oppressive ruler.