



Day 17 American Revolution
60-75 Minutes

Bunker Hill

The Battle of Bunker Hill

Detailed Lesson Plan with PowerPoint Script

Grade Level: 5–8

Time: 60–75 minutes

Unit: Early Battles of the American Revolution

Lesson Overview

This lesson examines the Battle of Bunker Hill and explains why it is considered a **pyrrhic British victory**—a victory won at an enormous cost. Using a teacher-led PowerPoint presentation as the anchor, students analyze the events of the battle, British miscalculations, and Patriot resistance.

A central component of the lesson is the **British Officers and Strategy interactive module**, which demonstrates how British leaders learned from Bunker Hill and **pivoted their military strategy** after suffering heavy losses. Students also engage with a differentiated article and multiple reading comprehension exercises to reinforce understanding.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the causes and events of the Battle of Bunker Hill
- Explain why the battle is considered a pyrrhic victory
- Compare British and Patriot strategies during the battle
- Analyze how British strategy changed after the battle

- Evaluate why Bunker Hill mattered despite being a British win

Essential Question

How can a victory still signal serious problems for the side that wins?

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation: *The Battle of Bunker Hill*
- Differentiated article on the Battle of Bunker Hill
- British Officers and Strategy interactive module
- Integrated online or printable scavenger hunt
- Reading comprehension exercises

Lesson Sequence

1. Hook and Context (5 minutes)

Begin with the prompt:

Can an army win a battle but still lose confidence?

Briefly review the siege of Boston following Lexington and Concord. Explain that Bunker Hill was the first large-scale battle of the war.

2. PowerPoint Anchor Instruction (25 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/revwar/bunkerhill.pptx>

Use the PowerPoint presentation as the instructional anchor.

The following **script aligns directly with the slides in the Battle of Bunker Hill presentation.**

PowerPoint Script

The Battle of Bunker Hill

Slide 1 – The Battle of Bunker Hill

The Battle of Bunker Hill took place early in the American Revolution and showed that the conflict would be far more difficult than British leaders had expected.

Slide 2 – After Lexington and Concord

After Lexington and Concord, Patriot militias blocked British land access to Boston. Although the British still controlled Boston Harbor, the city was effectively under siege.

Slide 3 – British Commanders Arrive

On May 25, 1775, British generals William Howe, John Burgoyne, and Henry Clinton arrived in Boston. Their goal was to break the Patriot siege and regain control of the surrounding area.

Slide 4 – Why the Hills Mattered

High ground around Boston was extremely important. Bunker Hill, Breed's Hill, and Dorchester Heights overlooked the city and harbor, making them valuable military positions.

Slide 5 – Patriot Fortifications

On June 15, 1775, Patriots learned of the British plan and rushed to fortify Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill on the Charlestown Peninsula before the British could act.

Slide 6 – British Underestimate the Patriots

British leaders underestimated the determination of the Patriot militias. John Burgoyne dismissed them as "untrained rabble," leading British commanders to choose a direct assault.

Slide 7 – The First British Assault

On June 17, around 3:00 in the afternoon, British troops marched up Breed's Hill in tight formations. Patriot gunfire repelled the assault and caused heavy casualties.

Slide 8 – The Second Assault

British forces regrouped and attacked again. Once more, Patriot defenders inflicted devastating losses on the advancing British troops.

Slide 9 – The Third Assault

The British launched a third assault focused on Breed's Hill. Patriot defenders continued firing until ammunition ran out, forcing hand-to-hand combat.

Slide 10 – The Patriot Retreat

With no ammunition left, Patriots staged an organized retreat. Most soldiers escaped capture, preserving the fighting force despite losing the hill.

Slide 11 – A Pyrrhic British Victory

The British gained control of the Charlestown Peninsula, but at a terrible cost. More than 1,000 British soldiers were killed or wounded, compared to about 450 Patriot casualties.

Slide 12 – Why the Victory Was Costly

Eighty-one British officers were among the casualties. The scale of the losses shocked British leadership and exposed serious flaws in their strategy.

Slide 13 – Strategic Changes

After Bunker Hill, British commanders became far more cautious. They realized that frontal assaults against fortified Patriot positions were dangerous and ineffective.

Slide 14 – A Shift in British Strategy

British leaders concluded that additional military strength was needed. This realization led to the hiring of more than 30,000 Hessian soldiers to reinforce British forces.

Slide 15 – Impact on the Patriots

For the Patriots, Bunker Hill was a psychological victory. The militia proved capable of standing up to the British army, greatly boosting confidence and morale.

Slide 16 – Why the Battle Matters

The Battle of Bunker Hill showed that the war would be long and costly. It changed British strategy and strengthened Patriot resolve.

3. Core Reading Activity (15 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/battles-of-the-revolutionary-war/battle-of-bunker-hill>

Students read the **differentiated article on the Battle of Bunker Hill**, selecting an appropriate reading level.

Guided reading focus:

- Why the British chose a direct assault
- How Patriot defenses worked
- Why the battle mattered despite British control of the hill

Students complete selected reading comprehension exercises.

4. Interactive Module: British Officers and Strategy (15–20 minutes)

Students explore the **British Officers and Strategy interactive module**, which is a **crucial part of this lesson**.

Through the module, students learn:

- Who the British commanders were
- How British strategy failed at Bunker Hill
- How British leaders adjusted tactics after the battle

Students complete the **integrated online or printable scavenger hunt**, focusing on:

- Strategic mistakes
- Lessons learned by British officers
- Why the battle forced a change in approach

Teacher emphasis:

Bunker Hill was a British victory, but it forced the British to rethink how the war would be fought.

Optional: Online or Printable Scavenger Hunt inside the module.

5. Literacy Reinforcement

Students complete additional **reading comprehension exercises**, which may include:

- [Battle of Bunker Hill Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1200
- [Battle of Bunker Hill Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1200
- [Battle of Bunker Hill Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 800
- [Battle of Bunker Hill Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 800

These activities may be used for centers, homework, or assessment.

Closure (5 minutes)

Discussion prompt:

Why might British leaders have been more worried after winning the Battle of Bunker Hill than before it?

Exit ticket options:

- One reason Bunker Hill was a pyrrhic victory
- One way British strategy changed after the battle

Optional Extension

Learn about the Bunker Hill battle flag and other iconic Revolutionary War flags at:

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/flags-of-the-revolutionary-war>

Students can print out coloring pages of each flag.