



Day 20 American Revolution
45-60 Minutes

Loyalists vs Patriots

Lesson Title

Loyalists vs. Patriots: Choosing Sides in the American Revolution

Time

60–70 minutes

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students examine the major differences between Loyalists and Patriots during the American Revolutionary War. Using a differentiated article as the anchor text, students explore the political, economic, and personal reasons colonists chose sides. They then apply this understanding in an interactive drag-and-drop activity and a creative writing task that highlights how political differences could divide even families.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the main beliefs of Loyalists and Patriots
- Identify language and reasoning that reflects Loyalist or Patriot viewpoints
- Analyze how political differences affected personal relationships during the Revolution
- Apply historical understanding in both interactive and written formats

Materials

- Differentiated **Loyalists and Patriots** article (anchor text)

- **Loyalists vs. Patriots Interactive Module**
- Printable score report from the interactive module
- Printable activity: “**The Last Conversation**”
- Writing utensils or digital writing tools

Introduction (5–10 minutes)

Begin by explaining that the American Revolution was not a conflict where everyone agreed. Tell students that colonists were divided, sometimes sharply, over whether to support independence or remain loyal to Great Britain. Ask students to consider how difficult it might be to live in a community—or even a family—where people strongly disagreed about such an important issue.

Anchor Activity: Differentiated Article (15 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/people-of-the-revolutionary-war/loyalists-vs-patriots>

The teacher may read the article aloud, assign students to read independently, or use a combination of both. Teachers may choose the full version or the simplified version depending on student needs.

As students read, encourage them to focus on:

- Why Patriots wanted independence
- Why Loyalists wanted to remain part of the British Empire
- The risks faced by people on both sides

Briefly review key ideas as a class, clarifying vocabulary and reinforcing the idea that the Revolution was also a civil conflict.

Interactive Application: Loyalists vs. Patriots Module (15–20 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/people-of-the-revolutionary-war/loyalists-vs-patriots> (scroll to the bottom)

Students next work on the **Loyalists vs. Patriots interactive module**. In this activity, students analyze **16 historical-style quotes** and decide whether each quote reflects Loyalist or Patriot thinking. Quotes focus on themes such as loyalty to the king, fear of chaos, natural rights, taxation, and freedom.

Students drag and drop each quote into the correct category. When finished, they receive a **detailed score report** showing which quotes were correctly or incorrectly identified. This report can be printed and used for reflection or assessment.

Writing Activity: “The Last Conversation” (20 minutes)

Distribute the printable activity “**The Last Conversation**.” Explain that the task is based on the real historical conflict between **Benjamin Franklin** and his son **William Franklin**, whose opposing political beliefs permanently damaged their relationship.

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/fun-printables-of-the-revolutionary-war/the-last-conversation-between-benjamin-and-william-franklin>

Students write a scripted conversation in which:

- Benjamin speaks as a Patriot
- William speaks as a Loyalist
- Each side clearly explains and defends its beliefs
- The conversation shows growing tension and disagreement

Students must use ideas from the article and the interactive module to ensure historical accuracy.

Closure (5 minutes)

Conclude by discussing how political beliefs during the Revolution affected not only governments, but families and friendships. Ask students to reflect on how difficult it must have been to choose a side—and what that choice might have cost.