



Day 32: American Revolution

Monmouth Courthouse and Molly Pitcher

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## The Battle of Monmouth Courthouse: Practice, Leadership, and Legend

**Time:** 60–70 minutes

**Grade Range:** Upper elementary–middle school

**Unit:** American Revolution

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### Lesson Overview

This lesson examines the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse as a critical moment when the Continental Army proved that training and discipline could transform performance on the battlefield. Using a teacher-led PowerPoint as the anchor, students analyze leadership, preparation, and perseverance, and then explore the legend and mystery of Molly Pitcher through an interactive historical investigation.

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### Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how training at Valley Forge improved the Continental Army
- Describe the key events and outcome of the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse
- Analyze the role of leadership during crisis
- Distinguish between historical fact and legend using evidence

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### Materials

- **PowerPoint: Battle of Monmouth Courthouse & Molly Pitcher** (anchor)
- Article: **Battle of Monmouth Courthouse**
- **Molly Pitcher Interactive Module**
- Activity: *Molly Pitcher — What We Know vs. What We Don't Know*

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## Hook: Practice Makes Perfect (10 minutes)

Begin with a discussion students can immediately relate to.

### Teacher Prompts:

- Have you ever practiced something for a long time and noticed real improvement?
- Can practice turn someone who struggles into someone who succeeds?
- Does practice always show results right away?

Explain that after the terrible winter at Valley Forge, the Continental Army had **practiced relentlessly**. The Battle of Monmouth Courthouse would be the first real test to see if that practice made a difference.

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## Anchor Activity

### PowerPoint Presentation: Battle of Monmouth Courthouse & Molly Pitcher

[https://learnaboutamerica.com/revwar/monmouth\\_courthouse.pptx](https://learnaboutamerica.com/revwar/monmouth_courthouse.pptx)

**Time:** 30–35 minutes

Below is a **highly elaborative slide-by-slide teacher script**.

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### Slide 1 – Battle of Monmouth Courthouse (1778)

#### Teacher Script:

“This battle mattered because it showed whether the Continental Army had truly improved. After months of training, this was the moment to see if practice really made perfect.”

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## Slide 2 – After Valley Forge

**Teacher Script:**

“At Valley Forge, soldiers didn’t just survive—they trained. Under Baron von Steuben, they learned how to march, fire efficiently, and fight as a unified force. Monmouth would test those lessons.”

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## Slide 3 – British Evacuate Philadelphia

**Teacher Script:**

“The British left Philadelphia because they feared a French naval blockade. Their long march back to New York created a rare opportunity for attack.”

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## Slide 4 – Washington Sees an Opportunity

**Teacher Script:**

**George Washington** recognized that a marching army is vulnerable. He knew this was the best chance to strike the British in open combat.”

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## Slide 5 – The Attack Begins

**Teacher Script:**

“Washington ordered 5,000 troops to attack the British rear guard. The goal wasn’t to win immediately, but to slow the British until the main army arrived.”

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## Slide 6 – General Charles Lee’s Failure

**Teacher Script:**

“General Charles Lee hesitated and gave confusing orders. His attack collapsed into a retreat, threatening to undo all the army’s hard work.”

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## Slide 7 – Washington Takes Command

**Teacher Script:**

“When Washington encountered the retreating troops, he took control immediately. His leadership calmed the soldiers and restored order in the chaos.”

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## Slide 8 – A Brutal Day of Fighting

### Teacher Script:

“The battle was fought on one of the hottest days of the war. Soldiers collapsed from heat exhaustion, and many died without ever firing a shot.”

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## Slide 9 – Molly Pitcher

### Teacher Script:

“The legend of **Molly Pitcher** emerged here. She carried water to soldiers and, according to tradition, took over a cannon when her husband fell.”

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## Slide 10 – An Encouraging Draw

### Teacher Script:

“Although neither side won decisively, the Patriots proved they could hold their ground against British regulars—something that had not happened before.”

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## Slide 11 – Why Monmouth Mattered

### Teacher Script:

“This battle wasn’t about territory—it was about confidence. The Continental Army proved that training and discipline could match British strength.”

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## Slide 12 – Aftermath and Legacy

### Teacher Script:

“Monmouth was the last major battle in the North. From this point on, the British shifted their focus south, while Americans believed in themselves more than ever.”

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## Guided Reading: Battle of Monmouth Courthouse (10–15 minutes)

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

Students read the **Battle of Monmouth Courthouse article** (independent or paired).

### Focus Questions:

- How was this battle different from earlier American defeats?
- Why is Monmouth considered a success despite being a draw?

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## Interactive Investigation: Molly Pitcher (15–20 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/people-of-the-revolutionary-war/molly-pitcher>

Students explore the **Molly Pitcher Interactive Module** and complete the activity:

### ***Molly Pitcher: What We Know vs. What We Don't Know***

#### **Student Task:**

- Identify facts supported by historical evidence
- Identify parts of the story that are legend or uncertain
- Decide why stories like Molly Pitcher's matter even when details are unclear

Encourage discussion about **how historians separate fact from tradition**.

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## Closure (5 minutes)

Return to the hook:

- Did practice really make a difference at Monmouth?
- Why is Monmouth remembered as a turning point for the army?

Reinforce the idea that **training, leadership, and perseverance** can transform failure into confidence.

## Optional Reading Comprehension Activities

- [Battle of Monmouth Courthouse Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1200
- [Battle of Monmouth Courthouse Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 800
- [Battle of Monmouth Courthouse Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1200
- [Molly Pitcher Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1000
- [Molly Pitcher Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 800
- [Molly Pitcher Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1000