

Women and Revolutionary Politics Lesson Plan

Lesson #2 of the Women & The American Revolution Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why would women be interested in politics during the Revolutionary War Era? How did they influence men's political decisions or make their voices heard?

OVERVIEW

Women had influence in politics, though often through their husbands. Women like Abigail Adams, the wife of Massachusetts Congressional Delegate John Adams, influenced politics as did Mercy Otis Warren.

It was Abigail Adams who famously and voluminously corresponded with her husband while he was in Philadelphia, reminding him that in the new form of government that was being established he should "remember the ladies" or they too, would foment a revolution of their own.

Warren, just as politically astute as Adams, was a prolific writer, not only recording her thoughts about the confluence of events swirling around Boston but also dabbling in playwriting. She was a fierce devotee to the patriot cause, writing in December 1774, four months before the war broke out at Lexington and Concord, "America stands armed with resolution and virtue, but she still recoils at the idea of drawing the sword against the nation from whence she derived her origin."

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - Explain the limitations and new opportunities that women experienced with politics during the Revolutionary War era.
 - Discuss the contributions and legacies of Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren during the American Revolution.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Read through primary and secondary source documents and consider the political and legal issues that were important to some women during the American Revolution.
3. Evaluation
 - Consider how the American Revolution affected women's lives and political interests and if they led the way for future political achievements and rights for American women in other decades.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduces Essential Questions and lays foundational knowledge about the topic.
2. Students will learn about Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren and compare their findings.
3. Allow or assign students to study either Adams or Warren and distribute [the primary source worksheet](#).
4. Students will read a short biography article (Secondary Source) about the woman they are studying and fill out the biographical notes on the worksheet.
 - a. [Abigail Adams](#)
 - b. [Mercy Otis Warren](#)
5. Students will read a Primary Source written by the woman they are studying and fill out the primary source notes on their worksheet.
 - a. [Adams – “Remember the Ladies”](#)
 - b. [Warren – “Much Interested”](#)
6. As a group, discuss the similarities and differences between Adams and Warren’s experiences and opinions as reflected in these primary sources. (A Venn Diagram or other comparison chart on a teaching board might be helpful for showing the students’ answers during the discussion.) Students can refer to their answers on their worksheets, and the discussion can be guided by the worksheet questions.
7. Some follow-up reflection questions are:
 - a. How did living during the American Revolution shape Adams and Warren’s opinions and hopes?
 - b. Did their ideas change society at the time? Did change come after their lifetimes?
 - c. How were Adams and Warren viewed during their lifetimes?
 - d. How are they remembered today?
 - e. What lessons can we learn from their legacy?
 - f. How do Adams and Warren’s opinions relate to present-day issues?
 - g. If Adams or Warren were alive today, what issues might she focus on?

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the “Common Core and NCSS Standards for Social Studies” to view the details.

RESOURCES

[Visit the Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You’ll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Primary Source Summary Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Write Some Influence

Women who could write sometimes penned essays or pamphlets about issues that mattered to them, including politics before and during the American Revolution. Invite the students to consider how politics are influenced now, and people are informed today.

Choosing either a historical political topic related to the Revolutionary War or a modern issue have the students write either a traditional persuasive essay (like the historic pamphlets) or a drafted series of social media posts, persuasively related to the chosen topic.

Option 2: Daughters of Liberty

Students can research the Daughters of Liberty and how this group had political opinions and influence, giving women a way to participate in the 1770s.

[The Daughters of Liberty](#)

[Who were the Sons and Daughters of Liberty?](#)

Then have the students design posters that would encourage women in the 1770s to join the Daughters of Liberty. Focus on the threats of the era and the benefits of supporting causes of liberty.

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