


## TEXT SET TOPIC: Black and Native American Perspectives During the American Revolution

**Grade Level Recommendation:** Grades 4–5

**Key Focus Areas for Design:**

**Counternarratives** Current Events Identity Language **Perspectives** Social Justice

**Topic:** This text set is about Black and Native American perspectives during the American Revolution.

**Curriculum Connection:**  *This text set can be done as is but is also suggested as a companion resource for any grades 4–5 curriculum unit that focuses on the American Revolution, such as:*

- [Teachers College, Reading Workshop, Grade 4, Unit 3](#)
- [EL Education, Grade 4, Module 3](#)
- [Wit & Wisdom, Grade 4, Module 3](#)

**Context/Rationale/Reflections:** In this unit, students build knowledge of the American Revolution, which often centers the dominant narrative of Loyalists vs. Patriots in published materials and resources. This narrative typically includes limited African American and Native perspectives (e.g., discussion of the enslavement of African Americans and the colonization of Native land).

**! Important teacher notes for this text set !**

- Consider language: Discuss with students using the term “enslaved” to acknowledge the humanity of enslaved people (see more from [Anthony Bogues](#)). Additionally, talk with students about Native peoples’ language preferences (see more at [Native Knowledge 360°](#)),
- Consider how to engage students in conversation about these topics, especially for students who relate to the identities centered in this text set. See [Let’s Talk: Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students](#) (Learning for Justice) for support.



**Resources to build teacher background knowledge:**

[Teaching Hard History](#), Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance): In particular, see [Objective 5](#), which centers on the roles that slavery, Native nations, and African Americans played in the Revolutionary War.

[An American Secret: The Untold Story of Native American Enslavement](#) (NPR): Andrés Reséndez discusses the history of as many as five million enslaved Native Americans.



**A note for multilingual students:**



Text Sets are meant to support knowledge building! Support opportunities for student [translanguaging](#) while using this text set by encouraging students to write, discuss, and present in their home language(s), English, or a combination while they are learning.

Text/ Resource	Author/ Creator	Brief Description/Notes	Why use this resource?	Considerations for using this resource
<a href="#">The Untold Story of Black Patriots</a>  <b>VIDEO</b>	Kareem Abdul Jabar	3-minute video centered on questioning why the dominant narratives about the American Revolution do not showcase the essential contributions or perspectives of African Americans.	Considers how which information is included or left out of historical retellings impacts our understanding of events.	
<a href="#">Excerpt from Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You</a>  <b>SHORT TEXT</b>	Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi	Book excerpt questions who was included in Thomas Jefferson’s notion of “all men are created equal.”	Expands on the narrative about Thomas Jefferson and freedoms.	You might use <a href="#">this video introduction</a> from one of the book’s authors, Jason Reynolds, to introduce the excerpt and connect to the author's purpose.
<a href="#">Created Equal</a> (0:00–9:15 only)  <b>VIDEO (THEATER)</b>	Colonial Williamsburg	A museum theater exploration of African American perspectives on the <i>Declaration of Independence</i> , including that “all men” were not really equal in the Founders’ eyes.	Complicates dominant narrative of the Founders/founding documents.	See also <a href="#">additional reflections</a> and a <a href="#">Q&amp;A</a> with the cast of Created Equal.
<a href="#">Fighting for Freedom at Any Cost</a>  <b>INTERACTIVE WEBSITE</b>	American Revolution Museum	Centered on the stories of five African Americans in Virginia. Includes first-person narratives and primary source documents.	Offers opportunities for students to consider decisions each person had to make (e.g., would you go fight for the British or not?).	Ask students to select particular stories to engage with, attending to identity and opportunities to engage in thinking about social justice through the decisions posed.

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<a href="#">Invasion of America</a>  <b>INTERACTIVE MAP</b>	Claudio Saunt	Interactive map demonstrating the seizing of tribal land from 1776–1867.	Expands on the idea that “the United States continued to take Indians lands by treaty and by force” (included in one of unit texts).	Use <a href="https://native-land.ca/">https://native-land.ca/</a> to identify which unceded land and territories the school community resides on today.
<a href="#">Native Americans in Colonial America</a>  <b>ARTICLE</b>	National Geographic	Discusses native resistance to the seizing of tribal land and impact of disease and enslavement.	Counters the often-shared idea that Native Americans passively accepted colonizers or supported the seizing of their lands; explains the challenges that impacted their ability to engage in resistance.	

### Options for culminating experiences:

- At the beginning of the unit, ask students to jot down things they may already think or believe about the American Revolution, in addition to surveying at least one family member, older sibling, or other member of the school community. Analyze the results of that initial survey as a class. After the unit/text set, ask students to create a “Did you know?” piece (e.g., writing piece, poster, podcast, presentation) to demonstrate some of their new understandings and reflect on which understandings from the initial survey were most present. Share these “Did you know?” pieces with families or school community members.
- Create a student-accessible bulletin board with the guiding question prompt: *“How does which information is included or left out of historical retellings impact our understanding? Whose perspective is included? Whose perspective is being left out?”* Invite students to post onto the bulletin board their ongoing reflections to this question/reactions to other students’ ideas and then to reflect at the end of the unit/text set.