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**American Experience: Patriots and Loyalists**

**Writer:** Sarah Russell, Social Studies Teacher

**Grade Level:** 9–12

**Related Big Picture Concepts:** Identity, Meaning*,* Perception

**Subject Areas:** American History, Social Studies, Visual Arts

**Essential Question:** How does art offer evidence of the contemporary experiences and perspectives of Americans during the Revolutionary era? How does art help us understand contemporary perspectives on historical events in general?

**Abstract:** Students will explore the views of opposing sides during the American Revolution through the examination of diverse sources, including classical portraits of contemporaries, popular lyrics, and scholarly perspectives.

**Duration:** 1–2 class periods

**Focus Works of Art:**

[](http://68.169.57.134/sites/default/files/Copley,%20Mrs.%20James%20Russell%20(Katherine%20Graves),%2092_9.jpg)

John Singleton Copley (American, 1738-1815)

**Mrs. James Russell (Katherine Graves) (1717-1778), 1770**

Oil on canvas

50 1/4 x 40 in. (127.6 x 101.6 cm)

[www.artnc.org/node/342](http://www.artnc.org/node/342)

[](http://68.169.57.134/sites/default/files/Copley,%20Sir%20William%20Pepperrell%20and%20His%20Family,%2052_9_8_0.jpg)

John Singleton Copley (American, 1738-1815)  
**Sir William Pepperrell (1746-1816) and His Family, 1778**Oil on canvas  
90 x 108 in. (228.6 x 274.3 cm)  
[www.artnc.org/node/293](http://www.artnc.org/node/293)

**North Carolina Standards Correlations:**

Visual Arts: I.V.1.4, I.CX.1.1, I.CX.1.2, P.CX.1.1, A.CX.1.1

United States History: USH.H.1.2.4, USH.H.1.3.1, USH.H.1.3.2, USH.H.1.4.2, USH.H.1.4.3

**Student Learning Objectives:**

* Students will analyze visual and written primary documents and assign meaning based on prior knowledge.
* Students will construct a creative interpretation of a historical event and support it with historical evidence.
* Students will understand that works of art can document history and are shaped by culture.

**Activities:**

1. Assign the class to examine *Mrs. James Russell (Katherine Graves)* and *Sir William Pepperrell and His Family.* Students should list on the board some characteristics of Mrs. James Russell and Elizabeth Royall (Lady Pepperrell) based on evidence in the paintings. Encourage students to read the paintings for themselves. Examples of characteristics and biographical details are:  
   Mrs. James Russell: dignified, [affluent](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22248%22)), educated, daughter of a [puritan](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22282%22)), wife of a [magistrate](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22266%22)), mother of 11  
   Elizabeth Royall: attractive, aristocratic, blessed with a great fortune, mother of a male heir

Ask the students to think about the terms on the board as they examine the paintings. Assign students to watch John Coffey’s lecture or read the [background information](http://68.169.57.134/node/224) [www.artnc.org/node/293](http://www.artnc.org/node/293) on these works of art.

Within a class discussion, use the following questions to examine how the women’s portraits reveal their respective Patriot and Loyalist ideals:

*What is each woman wearing?*

*What is each woman doing?*

*What do her clothing and her activity tell you about this woman?*

1. Assign students to examine the lyrics to the “Address to the Ladies” written by John Renfro Davis in 1769. Within another (shorter) class discussion, use the following questions to develop students’ understanding of the values associated with apparel during the Revolutionary era.

*According the songwriter, what kinds of clothes should good Patriot women be wearing?*

*What shouldn’t they wear? Why?*

*Do the outfits of Mrs. James Russell and Lady Pepperrell reflect the values expressed in the lyrics? Why or why not? Is there a difference between the clothing of the two women?*

1. Assign students to read the *Chronicle of the Revolution* about the Boston Tea Party and the excerpt on Boston in 1775. Using that description, their knowledge of the revolutionary era in Boston, the information they have gathered from Davis’s lyrics and their analysis of the portraits of the two women, assign the students to consider how each of these women would have reacted to the Boston Tea Party in November 1773. Assign students to write a diary entry (one paragraph for each woman) that responds to this event from the point of view of each of these women.
2. Artists add specific details or features to the portraits they paint to signify information about their subjects and the world in which they live. Assign students to consider the following questions to prepare for homework.

*What is the setting of each painting?*

*Why might the artist have selected those settings for this person?*

*How does the artist’s choice of specific details (the activities of the subjects and their settings) inform the viewer’s perceptions about these women?*

Assign students to imagine themselves as artists working on a self-portrait.

Assign students to write a paragraph describing the setting, clothing, and props they would include in their self-portraits to guide their viewers to a specific perception about themselves and the times in which they live.

**Assessments:**

* Active participation in group discussions will demonstrate students’ ability to:
* Analyze works of art through careful deconstruction of the images and composition.
* Evaluate the history, society, politics, and economics of the Revolutionary era by examining contemporary works of art.
* Interpret art through the historical context of the paintings’ subjects.
* Analyze and integrate information from visual, literary, and musical sources.
* Clearly written, effectively and correctly detailed diary entries will demonstrate students’ comprehension of the issues and the multiple perspectives of various peoples of the past, as well as their ability to support interpretations with historical evidence.
* Thoughtful and detailed paragraphs on elements that students would include in their own portraits will demonstrate students’ ability to interpret visual arts from a personal, cultural, and historical context.
* Students will understand the role of art in documenting historical events, specifically as a means to understand the culture of the United States in historical context.

**Resources:**

Vocabulary:

attribute

affluent

Puritan

magistrate

aristocratic

Loyalist

perception

Links:

*Learn More, Teach More* lecture by John Coffey

http://www.dlt.ncssm.edu/lmtm/docs/af\_american/activities.pdf

*Chronicle of the Revolution* “High Tea in Boston Harbor”(Liberty Series, PBS)

<http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle_boston1774.html>

“Boston, 1775” (Loyalist perspectives) National Postal Museum

<http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/outofthemails/lloyd.html>

Songs of the Revolution—Song 9. “Address to the Ladies” by John Renfro Davis (1769), Carpenter’s Hall Web site

<http://www.ushistory.org/carpentershall/edu/songs.htm>

Pennsylvania historical markers

<http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-16A>

Painting of Esther De Berdt Reed by Charles Willson Peale

<http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-2D5>