
MISSION 1: “For Crown or Colony?”

Engaging Students in Multimedia Projects

A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR:

These activities can be used at any time while you are using “For Crown or Colony?” with your students, as there is unlimited flexibility in how you and your students develop multimedia projects related to the mission and their experiences playing it. The MISSION US “For Crown or Colony?” multimedia projects are intended to inspire students to think about how the themes and issues faced by characters in the game relate to contemporary issues in students’ own lives.

Multimedia projects have multiple benefits for students, providing them with the opportunity to use their imaginations and be creative in ways not always possible in traditional classroom instruction. By working together to produce a final product, students build teamwork and communication skills. There are several opportunities for cross-curricular extensions, particularly with ELA and visual arts classes. And, perhaps most importantly, students have the opportunity to explore and understand the historical concepts of the game in new and interesting ways.

When it comes to deciding what kind of multimedia project to do, the possibilities are endless. Your students can work individually, in groups, or as a class. As the teacher, you can choose an appropriate level of involvement. Students can play to their individual strengths, as there are many roles in any given project: acting, writing, camera and/or microphone operation, video/sound editing, web design, etc. Student projects might include short films or videos, podcasts, websites, recorded songs, etc. Projects should incorporate audio, video and/or Internet.

“FOR CROWN OR COLONY?” MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS

Students: Read through all of the topics, and choose ONE on which to base your multimedia project. Projects can directly address one of the questions presented below, or you can use the topics as inspiration for new ideas. Be creative – you can write and perform original skits, present reenactments of historical or current situations, record podcasts, create websites – the sky is the limit, as long as your projects are audio, video, or Internet-based.

FINDING YOURSELF IN AN UNFAMILIAR SITUATION

We all find ourselves in new and potentially unfamiliar situations at different points in our lives. At the beginning of “For Crown or Colony?” Nat Wheeler leaves his family, moves to a new town, and starts a new job. He is completely unfamiliar with the new people and places, yet still must find a place for himself in the community.

Think about a time in your life when you were in a new and unfamiliar situation, like moving to a new town, attending a new school, or starting a new job. What did you do to adjust and get used to your new surroundings? What if you go to a college that is far away from your family, friends, and hometown – what might that experience be like?

Several million people from around the world immigrate to the United States of America each year. Do you know – or are you part of – a family that has recently immigrated to America? What was it like to move to this country and experience new cultures, new customs, and a new language, in addition to starting school or work and meeting new people?

MOVEMENTS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The foundations of our modern government in America were just beginning to form in pre-Revolutionary times, as Nat sees during his time in Boston. As the colonies grew more and more dissatisfied with British rule, they began to figure out what kind of government they wanted for themselves.

Does your school or class have its own government? Who is the president? Who are the other officers? Would you consider running for class office? Why or why not? Imagine that your class president has decided on a new rule for your grade: class officers will take the place of homeroom teachers, and will assign detentions as they see fit. Is that fair? Does it change your opinion of running for class office? Why or why not? How would you react to this new rule?

Often times, citizens of a country do not agree with the decisions that their government makes, and will share their views in a variety of ways. Do you know anyone who has been involved with protests against the government? What were their experiences? Did the protest convince the government to change its policies? What issues are the most divisive in the United States today? How do people show their support or objections to these issues?

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

As seen in “For Crown or Colony?,” freedom was a controversial topic in pre-Revolutionary America. From the slave Phillis Wheatley, to freedman Solomon Fortune, to apprentices Nat and Royce, individual levels of freedom vary greatly from person to person. On a larger scale, many colonists felt British rule of the colonies took away their freedom.

Do you feel like you are “free” in your own life? Can you go anywhere and do anything you wish, at any time? What are some of the rules and laws affecting what you are free to do at home, at school, and in public places? How do these rules and laws affect your freedom?

Our founding fathers attached a document to the Constitution called the Bill of Rights, outlining basic freedoms granted to all American citizens. Do you agree all Americans deserve those rights? What about citizens in other countries, such as France, South Africa, Afghanistan, Brazil, or Japan. . .do they have the same basic rights that American citizens have? Do you consider citizens of those countries to be free? Why or why not?

STANDING UP FOR YOUR BELIEFS

Many of the characters in “For Crown or Colony?” have very strong beliefs about the situation in Boston, and express those beliefs in different ways. Mrs. Edes will not buy goods from importers, Royce participates in protests, and Theophilus Lillie will not sell an ad to the *Boston Gazette*. By the end of the game, Nat has to stand behind his beliefs and decide the path he will take following the Boston Massacre.

How do you express and support your own beliefs on an everyday basis? What pins or patches do you wear on your backpack? What is written on the cover of your notebook? What groups do you belong to on Facebook? Imagine that you saved up the money to buy tickets to go see your favorite band in concert. At the concert, you buy a t-shirt with the band’s logo, and wear it to school the next day. A group of students approach you and start making fun of you, saying that your favorite band is terrible, and that you wasted your money on the concert and the shirt. How would you respond to them? Would you tell your friends or a teacher? Would you yell at them, or make fun of them for something? Would you punch them, or throw snowballs?

In the spring of 2010, Arizona passed a controversial law surrounding immigration and immigrants into the United States of America. Many American citizens felt that this was an unfair law, and in response refused to buy products from companies headquartered in Arizona. Do you think that this is a fair way to show one’s disagreement with the law? Since this is a state law and not a federal law, do you feel that citizens outside the state of Arizona should be participating in the boycott?

INTERPRETING CONFLICTING OPINIONS

When Nat arrives in Boston, he is faced with many different opinions about the British, King George, and colonial independence. It is up to Nat – and you, as the player – to decide on your own viewpoint.

There are always many decisions to make in life, and you may get different advice and opinions from different people about how you should act. What if you were told that you had to choose one extracurricular activity to join after school, and didn't know which one to pick? Your English teacher thinks that you read aloud well in class, and would be perfect for the school play, but your gym teacher thinks you are a natural soccer talent and should be on the team. How would you decide which activity to join? What information would you need to make your decision? Would you choose a different activity all together, like the debate team? Think about a time in your life when you were influenced by two (or more) different opinions.

In the United States, there are at least two candidates in most elections, one from the Democratic Party and one from the Republican Party. Sometimes, additional party candidates participate in the election, such as the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, and the Independent Party. Imagine that are registering to vote, and must identify with a political party as part of your registration. How will you choose which political party to join? What information would you need about each party? Would you talk to current party members, or read books written by people in each political party? With which party do your friends and family identify, and would that affect your decision?