

Lesson Overview

60



- **Lesson Objective**

Through participating in a simulation, students will gain an understanding of the role spies played in the American Revolution.

- **Time Required**

45 to 60 minutes

- **Materials Required**

A class list for each student, with space by each name for students to take notes during the simulation

Reproducibles:

“The Spying Game”

“The Spying Game Role Cards”

Background Information



Not everyone who helped the war effort was highly visible. Both the Continental and British armies used spies to gather information about what the other side was planning. Spies could be men, women, children, people who were white or black. It was important that a spy blended in with the surroundings. Spies could be messengers, personal servants, **peddlers** (people who traveled from place to place selling goods), innkeepers, cooks; basically anyone could be a spy, which made uncovering a spy that much more difficult.

Even though they often blended in, spies still had to be very careful to not get caught. If caught, spies were often jailed or killed. Code systems developed so spies and informants could recognize one another. Some codes included; wearing stockings with a particular pattern, whistling a particular tune or singing a special song in a crowded room or tavern, wearing one's hair in a certain style and so on. When carrying written messages, spies had to be particularly careful, because if someone found the note, it would become completely obvious that the messenger was a spy. Some spies had special boots made with a fake heel. A note was placed inside the heel and then the sole of the boot replaced. Others hid notes in their clothing. One Philadelphia mother even hid messages in her son's fabric covered buttons. Her son then walked to the camp where his older brother was a soldier under the premise of visiting. He “happened” to lose his button, which his brother “happened” to find; the button contained notes on the British's plans of attack. If a spy was caught, while carrying a note, he or she tried to destroy the note as quickly, but as slyly as possible. One spy even ate her note, rather than be caught with it.

Spies often worked alone and did their work as volunteers. They believed strongly in their cause and were willing to risk their lives for it.



Past Ports Connection

Students go on a spy mission to learn about the important role that spies played in the Revolution.



Curriculum Connection

Problem-solving Skills

Strategic Thinking

Skills

Questioning Skills



Other spies belonged to organized spy rings and had secret code names. These spies were often paid for their services. Women, children and African Americans were considered excellent candidates for being spies. A sad misperception of these groups existed at this time; many people thought that women, children and African Americans were less intelligent than white men. It was assumed that they understood less of what their messages meant and less about actual battle strategy than would a white man, so if they were caught, it was believed they would give away less information.

Did You Know?

We do not have an accurate count of how many spies served in the American Revolution ... after all, they were spies!



Activities

1. Make a copy of the reproducible, "The Spying Game Role Cards." Cut them apart. If you can easily see the print through the backside of the card, you may want to affix the card to an index card or heavier paper. Keeping identities concealed is very important to the success of the simulation.
2. Share the Background Information with students.
3. Tell students they will be doing a simulation to learn about spies.
4. Use the reproducible "The Spying Game" to set up and run the simulation.
5. After the simulation, discuss what happened. Some suggested questions can be found in the Journal Prompts and Processing Questions section. Also include your own questions.



Extensions

- Spies had to have good places to hide written notes. Write a story or create an illustration of how you would hide a note. Also include a description of what you would do with the note, if you were caught.
- Notes sent through spies were written with regular ink on paper. However, if you had an invisible ink, you could carry messages with less risk of getting caught and having the message discovered. Here's a recipe for invisible ink. Mix lemon juice with a bit of onion juice. You can buy bottles of onion and lemon juice in the spice section of the grocery store. Use a toothpick to write a message on paper. Let the juice dry completely. The words should disappear. Then hold the paper above a bright light bulb or iron the paper with a warm iron. The heat will cause a chemical reaction in the juice, causing it to reappear.



Who Were They?

- **Nathan Hale:** He lost his life for spying on the British.
- **Benedict Arnold:** Feeling disgruntled about being passed over for a promotion in the army, he became a spy for the British.

- **Lydia Darragh:** A Quaker woman, she and her family helped inform the Patriots of British activity in Philadelphia.
- **Anna Strong:** She was a member of a Patriot spy ring.
- **James Armistead:** Probably the most well known African American spy, he appeared to be serving as a spy for the British, when in fact he was a Patriot spy.



Journal Prompts and Processing Questions



- What was it like to know that there were spies in your group? What feelings and thoughts did you have during the simulation?
- What kinds of questions seemed most useful in trying to figure out who were the spies? What made these questions useful?
- What clues or hints did you use to determine who were the spies?
- If you were a spy, what was this simulation like for you? What feelings and thoughts did you have throughout?
- If you were a spy, what strategies did you use to try to keep your identity secret? How effective were these strategies?
- If you were a spy and you suspected another person of being a spy also, what did you do about it? Why did you choose to do what you did? If you did nothing, why?
- What sorts of feelings do you think real spies had? How might they be similar to your feelings? How would they be different?
- Imagine it's the late 1770's and you have been asked to serve as a spy. Would you do it? What would be the exciting or fulfilling parts of the job? What would be the dangers? Explain your thinking.
- Write a diary or journal entry as if you were a spy in the American Revolution.

Evaluation



Content: As this is a simulation lesson, it may be more difficult to evaluate student's content learning. Here are some things to look for: level of appropriate participation in the simulation, thoughtfulness of responses in discussion and application of content material to discussion questions.

Process: Note students' abilities to use questioning strategies and deductive reasoning to determine who the spies were in the simulation.

Did You Know?

Nathan Hale's words, just before he was put to death for spying, were, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

The Spying Game

Running the Simulation

1. Share the plot line of the simulation with students.
2. Each student has a role in the simulation. Distribute role cards, asking that students do not disclose their roles to each other. As the facilitator, you should know which students are the spies.
3. After students have their roles, they will then talk with each other, asking questions to try to determine who were the spies.
4. The role cards should help guide students' interactions.
5. Brainstorm ideas for the types of questions that would be most useful.
6. Encourage students to use the class list to keep track of information they are learning about each person.
7. After a period of time (15 to 25 minutes) stop the simulation.
8. If spies have not yet been "found out" have students guess which students were the spies.
9. Use the questions in the Journal Prompts section for facilitating a discussion about the simulation and its connections to the spies of the American Revolution.

Variation: Spies often altered their physical appearance slightly as a clue to their informants that they were a spy. The students who are the spies may wish to alter one minor thing about their appearance. Students all close their eyes or put their heads down allowing spies to make alterations without disclosing their identities. Students can then practice their observation skills to see if anyone looks different than earlier.

The Plot

(This plot is based on history)

Your class is a group of Loyalists. For months now you have been planning to kidnap George Washington and turn him over to British troops. You hope that he will be tried for war crimes and that this mess will all come to an end. You have worked very hard to keep the plan secret and to work out every detail to help make the plan successful. On the night before the planned kidnapping, Washington moved his camp to an unknown location. Word had leaked to the Patriots of the kidnaping plan. How could Washington have found out about the plan? You suspect there are spies among you...

The Spying Game Role Cards

Cut out the role cards and affix them to index cards or other heavy paper.

<p>You are a spy. Your brother is in Washington's regiment. You told him the plan.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. You are a highly respected thinker in your crowd of Loyalists.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. You are a housekeeper for a Loyalist family involved in this plan.</p>
<p>You are a spy. You work for a spy ring. You have been hired as a personal servant to a highly respected loyalist and spend all day with this person.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. However, in the past others have suspected you were. Your sister is a Patriot and others wonder if you are too.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. You used to be a Patriot, but you now think the Loyalist cause makes the most sense. Besides the British seem to be winning at this point.</p>
<p>You are not a spy. You are a highly respected Loyalist leader. You are one of the original people who hatched the kidnapping plan.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. You did not like the plan to kidnap Washington. You thought it was a waste of time, because you weren't convinced it would bring an end to the fighting.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. You are a cook in a leading Loyalist family's house. You live in a neighborhood where there are lots of Patriot families.</p>
<p>You are not a spy. You recently moved to America from England. You believe that English rule is the best thing for these colonists.</p>	<p>You are not a spy. You were not in favor of the kidnapping plan as you believed it might actually heighten the conflict.</p>	<p>You are a spy. You pretend to be a dedicated Loyalist, so that you can be involved in many meetings and then report information to your Patriot friends.</p>



You are not a spy.
You tend to be a pretty quiet person. You gave your support to the kidnapping plan, but didn't have a lot to say about it.

You are not a spy. Your entire family are Patriots. They have stopped talking to you because you are a Loyalist. You've had some trouble being accepted by the Loyalist crowd.

You are a spy. You used to be a Loyalist, but then realized that you would never truly be free under British rule. You continue to pretend to be a Loyalist and then you share your information with your Patriot cousins.

You are not a spy.
You are planning to move back to England, because you are so fed up with the Americans. You thought the plan was a great idea.

You are not a spy.
You tend to follow the crowd, so when your friends cooked up this idea of kidnapping Washington, you went along with it.

You are not a spy.
You are a highly respected Loyalist business owner, who has funded many such projects like the proposed kidnapping.

You are not a spy.
You are the carriage driver for a wealthy Loyalist. You overhear many conversations while taking your boss from place to place.

You are a spy.
You are hired as a cook for one of the Loyalist families, so you hear many of their plans.

You are not a spy.
You have provided, in your home, living space for British officers. You think whatever measures are needed for ending this mess should be taken.

You are not a spy.
You are known for your hot temper. You cannot believe someone revealed the plan to the Patriots. All that hard work down the drain!

You are not a spy.
You think the war is a waste of time and money, but you haven't been too invested in doing much about it. Your friends are often angry about your unwillingness to get involved.

You are not a spy.
You wholeheartedly endorsed the plan to kidnap Washington. You believe that if he could be removed from the picture, the Continental Army would fall apart.