

Ten Crucial Days Lesson Plan

Grades: 4-8

Time Allotment: 30 minutes

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.3	Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7	Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4-8.2	Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4-6.7	Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4-5.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
CCSS.W.4-8.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand and explain what the Ten Crucial Days were and why they were a key point in the war.
- Understand and explain which areas the Ten Crucial Days took place in and be able to point it out on a map.

Materials

- Blank map worksheet provided
- Pencils
- Markers
- Highlighters
- Timeline in the Washington Crossing Historic Park brochure (available upon request from the park Visitor Center)

Anticipatory Set

- The teacher will ask the students whether they know the story of George Washington crossing the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War.
- After taking answers from some students, the teacher should explain the following information about the Crossing:
 - After many defeats in battle, George Washington wanted to plan a military victory for the Continental Army. This resulted in a secret attack that would occur on Christmas Day, when the opposing side's troops were not expecting it.
 - The Continental Army camped at the Pennsylvania border of the Delaware River. On December 25, 1776, George Washington led his troops across the Delaware River in freezing cold conditions.
 - From there, they marched ten miles to Trenton in the snow to attack troops. Often people cite it as a primary turning point within the war because it was an important victory that encouraged people not to give up on the war.
- The teacher will finish explaining the single event of the Crossing before explaining that the days after the crossing were also part of the turning point.

Teacher Presentation and Modeling

- The teacher will explain that the Crossing and nine days after it are called the Ten Crucial Days in the American Revolution. This means that they were ten of the most important days in the entire war and a turning point for the Continental Army.
- The teacher will explain the importance of the Ten Crucial Days to the students.
 - One of the reasons why it was so important was because of the morale boost it gave colonists. The army had lost many battles up until this point. Soldiers and colonists supporting the war effort wondered if they should be fighting after all. However, the Ten Crucial Days gave people hope and motivation again.
 - At the time of the Ten Crucial Days, weather conditions were bad, and the Continental Army didn't have all the supplies they needed. The fact that they won under these conditions showed the Army's strength.
 - Overall, the battles won during these days helped America win the war.
- The teacher will explain the following facts as a prelude to learning about the Ten Crucial Days.
 - All of the battles and events took place in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
 - The events occurred during December 1776 and January 1777. At the end of December 1776, soldiers could pick between continuing to fight in the war or leaving the army, so Washington could lose many soldiers at the end of the month if he does not convince them to stay.

- Before the Ten Crucial Days, they fought battles in New York and New Jersey, where they were defeated. After a lost battle in New Jersey, they retreated across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania.

Guided and Independent Practice

- The teacher will explain that they are now going to learn more in detail about the Ten Crucial Days through an activity. Depending on the age group, students can work in partner groups or individually.
- The teacher will hand out the Ten Crucial Days timeline and the blank map provided.
- Students will read the outline of each day in the Ten Crucial Days, highlighting important information about the days. The teacher should encourage them to highlight the locations mentioned, since this will be helpful for the next step of the activity.
- Once they finished reading the timeline, students should use pencils, markers and the blank map to create a visual of the Ten Crucial Days. Using the markers, the students can draw arrows from different towns and locations to illustrate the army's path. They can then choose to use a pencil and write the days next to arrows.

Closure

- The teacher will ask students to write on the back page of their map why the Ten Crucial Days were important to the cause of the Revolutionary War.
- Once students have written something down, the teacher should ask students to share their answers with a partner or with the class.
- The teacher will ask students what were major cities that battles took place in during the Ten Crucial Days.
 - Answers: Princeton and Trenton

Assessment

- The teacher will assess the students' short answer question to see if they understand the importance of the Ten Crucial Days to the Revolutionary War.
- The teacher will assess the student's map visual to see if they understand the geography and areas in which the Ten Crucial Days took place.

Extension of the Lesson

- Students can read *George Washington's Socks* by Elvira Woodruff and have a discussion group on it and the crossing.
- Students can write a newspaper article about the events of the Ten Crucial Days.
- Students can write a letter as if they were a member of the Continental Army.

Resources

George Washington's Socks by Elvira Woodruff