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Alternate Assessment: Historiography

**Summary/Purpose**:

In this best practice, students look at how historical accounts of the same event from different countries’ perspectives. In this assessment we will examine the Build up to the American Revolutionary War.

**Goal**:

Through this activity students will quickly see that there are many interpretations of an event. They will identify numerous disagreements between their own perspectives on history, their current history textbook, and historical accounts from other countries involved in the event. This assignment allows students to see and discuss the impact that interpretation, bias, and perspective all play in how people learn about and understand history.

**Standards**:

Grade 6: Social Studies

Government**:** *Role of Government*

1. Explain reasons for the creation of governments such as:

a. Protecting lives, liberty and property;

b. Providing services that individuals cannot provide for themselves.

**Process**:

1. Using a Topic Web have students explain/discuss what they know about the Revolutionary War in small groups (each student has 5 post-it notes to write facts on). Have students focus on the 5 W’s: Who, What, Where, When, Why.
2. Show a map of the U.S. and the 13 original colonies from the time of the Revolutionary War. One can be found at the site: <http://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/2600/2685/2685.htm>
3. Students can read the textbook chapter on the American Revolution (written from the American perspective) found electronically at <http://www.rc255.will.k12.il.us/rcms255/textbooks/documents/chap06_001.pdf>
4. Discuss with the class the authors' interpretation of what caused this war and then compare it to their own perspectives.
5. Next, have students read and/or listen to the NPR interview with an author who has done much research on the English’s perspective of the American Revolution and who has published the book titled *Iron Tears: America's Battle for Freedom, Britain's Quagmire, 1775-1783* on that topic. Also, give students the option of reading another British account of the event on <http://www.redcoat.me.uk/>
6. Discuss with the class the authors' interpretation of what caused this war and then compare it to their own perspectives.
7. Have students create a list or Venn diagram in order to identify the similarities and differences between these two different perspectives of the American Revolution.
8. At the end of this activity, ask students about why they think history changes depending on who is writing it.

**Resources**:

Red Coat. "The Loyalists." *U.S. History Online Textbook*. Thumbshots, 2012. Web. 28 Jul 2012. <http://www.redcoat.me.uk/>.

"The American Revolution." McGraw Hill-Glencoe. Web. 28 Jul 2012. <http://www.rc255.will.k12.il.us/rcms255/textbooks/documents/chap06\_001.pdf>.

"The Colonies and the Revolutionary War." *Maps Etc*. Florida Center for Instructional Technology, 2009. Web. 28 Jul 2012. <http://etc.usf.edu/maps/pages/2600/2685/2685.htm>.