



REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS



HISTORY

OF

PHILIP'S WAR

COMMONLY

THE GREAT INDIAN

Revolutionary Ideals and Native Nations: Taking Sides in the American Revolution

GUIDING QUESTION:

Why did many young members of Native Nations challenge or defy their elders' orders to remain neutral or support a particular side during the American Revolution?

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► OVERVIEW

A key component of exploring the history of Native Nations is to help students understand why Native Nations chose to ally themselves with either the British or the American colonists or decided to remain neutral before and during the American Revolution. Like all groups of people, Native Nations discussed and dissented from some decisions made by their elders. In this lesson, students will learn more about the context of alliances between Native Nations and European colonists and explore the reactions to the American Revolution from an Indigenous perspective.

► OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- › Understand why Native Nations created alliances with the British;
- › Analyze reasons why some Indigenous youth challenged or defied their elders' positions during the American Revolution; and
- › Identify some of the concerns and needs of individual Native Nations during this time from the perspective of each Native Nation.

► STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- › D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- › D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- › D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

► DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Act creating the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, also known as the “Black Regiment,” 1778
Rhode Island Department of State, Rhode Island State Archives
<https://docs.sos.ri.gov/documents/civicsandeducation/teacherresources/Black-Regiment.pdf>

“Conference of the Commissioners for Indian Affairs with the Six Nations of Indians, at German-Flats, in August, 1776,” August 1776
Northern Illinois University Digital Library
<https://digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A97432>

Letter, “Letter to the Rev. Mr. Hawley at Onebughquageu, the Honorable William Johnson,” December 27, 1755 (excerpt)
Printed in *An account of conferences held, and treaties made, between Major-General Sir William Johnson, Bart. and the chief sachems and warriors [sic] of the . . . Indian nations in North America*
John Carter Brown Library
<https://archive.org/details/accountofconfere00grea/page/12/mode/2up?ref=ol>

Letter, “We are Told that the Americans have 13 Councils . . .,” July 28, 1783 (excerpt)
George Mason University
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7441>

Speech, Thayendanega (Joseph Brant), “The Disturbances in America give great trouble . . .,” 1776 (excerpt)
George Mason University
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071/>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Article, Nadia Dean, “A Demand of Blood: The Cherokee War of 1776,” Winter 2013 (excerpt)
American Indian
<https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/demand-blood-chokeee-war-1776>

Article, Joseph Lee Boyd, “Native Americans at Valley Forge,” November 10, 2020 (excerpt)
Journal of the American Revolution
<https://allthingsliberty.com/2020/11/native-americans-at-valley-forge/>

Students interested in this topic might be interested in researching the following for an NHD project:

- › Pontiac’s Rebellion (1763)
- › French and Indian War (1756–1763)
- › Battle of Newtown (1779)
- › Treaty of Holston (1791)
- › Battle of Timbers (1794)

► TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- › History of Native American Relations and Alliances with Europeans and Colonists Reading
- › Native Nations Taking Sides Primary Source Packet
- › Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart
- › Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart Answer Key
- › Perspective and Position Graphic Organizer

► ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- › Make one copy of the following for each student:
 - › History of Native American Relations and Alliances with Europeans and Colonists Reading
 - › Native Nations Taking Sides Primary Source Packet
 - › Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart
 - › Perspective and Position Graphic Organizer
- › Gather highlighters or pens for student use if needed.
- › Print one copy of the Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart Answer Key for teacher use.
- › Organize students into pairs.

► PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE (60 MINUTES)

- › Organize students into pairs. Distribute the History of Native American Relations and Alliances with Europeans and Colonists Reading to provide a brief historical context.
- › Direct students to underline or highlight key idea as they read.
- › Ask students to read silently, then conduct a quick review of key points with the class.
- › Explain to students they will be analyzing primary sources to explore the topic of Native Nations taking sides during the American Revolution. Their job will be to analyze the reasons why some Indigenous youth challenged or defied their elders' orders to remain neutral or support a particular side during the American Revolution.
- › Distribute the Native Nations Taking Sides Primary Source Packet and Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart to each student. Give each student a highlighter or pen to mark and annotate key information.
- › Project a copy of the Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart on the board.
- › Model the process using source one.
 - › Read the historical context aloud and the text of the primary source. Help students recognize and highlight the key ideas in the text.
 - › Help students infer meaning based on textual evidence and add it to the chart.
 - › Ask students what questions they have based on reading this source.
- › Direct pairs to repeat this process using sources two, three, and four.
- › Ask students to share their answers with the class, and complete the organizer on the board.
- › Ask students to respond to the guiding question, *Why did many young members of Indigenous Nations challenge or defy their elders' order to remain neutral or support a particular side during the American Revolution?*

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- › Distribute one copy of the Perspective and Position Graphic Organizer to each student.
 - › Allow each pair to select one of the Native Nations featured in the Primary Source Packet.
 - › Ask students to research the role these Native Nations played in the American Revolution and what happened immediately after the war ended.
 - › Ask students to complete the organizer to reflect on the experiences of their selected Native Nation.
- › Ask students to research the challenges that a particular Native Nation faced during the period before and immediately following American independence.
- › Conduct a class discussion of the different perspectives presented in this lesson.

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to: nhd.org/RevIdeals.

History of Native American Relations and Alliances with Europeans and Colonists

History of Contact and Trade Alliances

In the early 1500s and 1600s, Europeans arrived in North America, where Indigenous nations, tribes, and cultures had lived for generations. They had developed communities, trade systems, towns, and lifeways. Europeans transformed the way Indigenous people lived their lives by introducing disease, products, and different ideas about social and political norms. By 1670, the relationship had become a complex web of alliances. Alliances were made, broken, and renegotiated.

Some settlers sought a different type of relationship with Native communities. In 1635, the newly formed Massachusetts Bay Colony expelled Puritan minister Roger Williams for preaching religious tolerance. In their search for refuge, Williams and his followers were helped by the Wampanoag people and found a new home among the Narragansett Nation. Narragansett leaders Miantonomi and Canonicus allowed Williams to create a settlement in what is now Providence, Rhode Island. Agreements for land were made. This relationship benefitted the Narragansett, who allied with the British for protection from the Pequot Nation, with whom they had long-standing territorial conflicts.

French and Indian War

As the British colonists expanded west to extend their influence in areas claimed by the French, conflicts developed between the two imperial powers. In 1753, war broke out over a struggle to control the frontier between the French and British settlements. The Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora Nations, all members of the Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee), or “People of the Longhouse”—known at the time as the Iroquois Confederacy—fought alongside the British. The French alliance included the Haudenosaunee’s enemies, the Algonquin and Huron Nations.¹

The Delaware Nation also allied with the French. The following excerpt from a letter from Reverend Mr. Hawley to British officer William Johnson, dated December 27, 1755, explains the alliance:

Very honored Sir,

The Sachems [Chiefs or Leaders] who went from hence with your message to the Delawares, just now returned from Tiaogo, and desire me to pen the following letter to your honor; in which you have a brief account how the quarrel between the English and Delawares began, and what has happened since . . .

¹“French and Indian War/Seven Years’ War, 1754–63,” Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, accessed September 26, 2022. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1750-1775/french-indian-war>.

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The English returned to the white people, and informed them that a great multitude of Indians of all nations were gathered at Wyoming. Then the English that way made their business to take as many of the Delawares who lived among, or near the white people, and made them prisoners, as they could lay hands on; the number they took, 'tis said, is 232 in all . . .

The Indians went to the white man and asked him whether he was alone; he told them, that three more, who were gentlemen, were coming to have a treaty with them: they soon arrived, and called the Indians together and informed them that they were sent to treat with them about building a fort there, that their squaws² and children might be protected from the French. The Indians desired to see their commission, they produced a certificate of it in writing . . . Now the old man, who had been taken by the English and made his escape said to the Indians don't you believe these men, they only mean to deceive you and make you prisoners or put you to the sword . . .

But, brother Johnson, some of our young men, a few days ago, went out against the English; we can't help it, though we have sent after them as soon as we heard from you, brother, to stop them, and call them back. Now, brother, you must take care of your side too; many of our people are now captives among the English, we must free every one of them and return again, or else it will not be well. We shall wait two months to see whether our captives are given up, and if we don't see them then, we don't know what we shall do; when we see our people again, then we shall contrive to make up the matter, and settle affairs, and not till then.²

Over the next 25 years, these alliances continued to shift as the American colonists began to resist efforts of the British to limit Westward expansion.

American Revolution Conflict Calls on Alliances

"The disturbances in America give great trouble to all our Nations." Mohawk war chief Thayendanegea (also known as Joseph Brant), March 14, 1776.⁴

Relationships between Native Nations and the British shifted after the French and Indian War. Some groups allied with the British and others with the American colonists. When the American Revolution broke out, both sides sought alliances with Native Nations, who wanted to maintain their independence. While many nations fought on one side or the other, others remained neutral.⁵

² Squaw was a term for a Native American wife or woman. While the term was used at the time, is it considered a slur today and should be not be used to describe a Native American woman.

³ Printed in *An account of conferences held, and treaties made, between Major-General Sir William Johnson, Bart. and the chief sachems and warriors [sic] of the Indian nations in North America* (London: A. Millar), 1756. John Carter Brown Library. <https://archive.org/details/accountofconfere00grea/page/12/mode/2up?ref=ol>.

⁴ Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), "The Disturbances in America give great trouble . . .," History Matters, George Mason University, accessed September 26, 2022, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071/>.

⁵ "Big Idea 5: Native American Soldiers and Scouts," Museum of the American Revolution, accessed September 26, 2022. <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/big-idea-5-native-american-soldiers-and-scouts>.

History of Native American Relations and Alliances with Europeans and Colonists

For example, the Delaware were neutral at the outbreak of the war, but in 1778, they allied with the colonists.⁶ The Tsalagi Nation, now known as the Cherokee Nation, and Chickasaw Nation split into factions, with some members supporting the British and others the Americans.⁷ The six nations of the Haudenosaunee split with the Oneida and Tuscarora siding with the Americans and the other nations with the British.⁸

Many nations saw divides between tribal elders and younger leaders. On August 13, 1776, Peter, the Chief Warrior of the Oneida Nation, stated:

. . . Brothers: We have restricted our young warriors from saying anything but what tends to peace, because you desired us to mind nothing but the affairs of peace; and if any of our young warriors should, contrary to the advice we have given them, interfere in your quarrel and fall, it will not disturb our minds; neither will we regard it, nor will it break the friendship that now subsists between us. We will not desire you to take the axe out of the heads of those that fall; for our young warriors know the danger of going to war, and if they fall, it is a thing not uncommon; what they have to expect, and what often happens. We shall think our young warriors are instigated by the devil if they intermeddle in your dispute, as they are all sensible of our agreements with you, and the friendship that subsists between us. As we have agreed to mind nothing but peace, we shall think it strange if any one injures our warriors while they remain in peace. But if anything fatal should happen, and any one should strike a hatchet into their heads, we expect that it shall be immediately removed.

Brothers: Possess your minds in peace with regard to us, as we do with regard to you. This is all we warriors have got to say. — (A belt of eight rows, with transverse lines throughout the whole.)⁹

⁶ "Treaty with the Delawares : 1778," Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, accessed September 26, 2022. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/del1778.asp.

⁷ Jason Herbert, "To Treat with All Nations: Invoking Authority in the Chickasaw Nation, 1783–1795," *Ohio Valley History* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 27–44. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/689417>.

⁸ Isaac Makos, "Roles of Native Americans During the Revolution," American Battlefield Trust, updated April 13, 2021, accessed September 26, 2022. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/roles-native-americans-during-revolution>.

⁹ "Conference of the Commissioners for Indian Affairs with the Six Nations of Indians, at German-Flats, in August. 1776," Northern Illinois University Digital Library, accessed September 26, 2022. <https://digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A97432>.

Source One: Tsalagi (Cherokee) Nation

Historical Context: Before European settlement of the Americas, the Tsalagi (Cherokee) Nation was the largest Native Nation in North America. The Tsalagi had a long history of peaceful interactions with British settlers, beginning when the two groups became trading partners in the late seventeenth century. Their economic partnership evolved into a military alliance. During the French and Indian War, the British recruited the Tsalagi to help them fight the French.

In 1775, the Tsalagi faced economic hardship. A group of elders met at Sycamore Shoals, along the Watauga River. They agreed to give American colonists a deal for 27,000 square miles of Tsalagi land in exchange for material goods. Young warriors such as Dragging Canoe (c. 1783–1792) opposed the deal, arguing that their land was far more valuable.

As conflicts grew between the British and American colonists, Tsalagi chiefs began to ally with the colonists, but some younger warriors disagreed. Dragging Canoe and hundreds of other Tsalagis moved south and west to establish new villages on Chickamauga Creek and allied themselves with Loyalist forces. The tribe soon became divided on the issue.¹

Young Warrior Dragging Canoe (Tsiyu Gansini) Speaks Against the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals to the Tsalagi (Cherokee) Council, 1775²

Whole Indian Nations have melted away like snowballs in the sun before the white man's advance. They leave scarcely a name of our people except those wrongly recorded by their destroyers. Where are the Delewares? They have been reduced to a mere shadow of their former greatness.

We had hoped that the white men would not be willing to travel beyond the mountains. Now that hope is gone. They have passed the mountains, and have settled upon Tsalagi (Cherokee) land. They wish to have that usurpation sanctioned by treaty. When that is gained, the same encroaching spirit will lead them upon other land of the Tsalagi (Cherokees). New cessions will be asked.

Finally the whole country, which the Tsalagi (Cherokees) and their fathers have so long occupied, will be demanded, and the remnant of the Ani Yvwiya, The Real People, once so great and formidable, will be compelled to seek refuge in some distant wilderness. There they will be permitted to stay only a short while, until they again behold the advancing banners of the same greedy host.

Not being able to point out any further retreat for the miserable Tsalagi (Cherokees), the extinction of the whole race will be proclaimed. Should we not therefore run all risks, and incur all consequences, rather than to submit to further loss of our country?

Such treaties may be alright for men who are too old to hunt or fight. As for me, I have my young warriors about me. We will hold our land. A-WANINSKI, I have spoken.

¹ Adapted from Jane Everett, "Cherokee," George Washington's Mount Vernon, accessed September 18, 2020. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/cherokee/>.

² Quoted in Nadia Dean, "A Demand of Blood: The Cherokee War of 1776", *American Indian*, Winter 2013: 37. <https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/demand-blood-cherokee-war-1776>.

Note: some sources attribute this statement to Dragging Canoe, and others reference Tecumseh. It is possible that they may have served together and known each other as young men.

Source Two: Mohawk Nation

Historical Context: The Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee), known at the time as the Iroquois Confederacy, originally consisted of five original nations: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. It became known as the Six Nations after the Tuscarora joined the Confederacy. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Confederacy played a strategic role in the struggle between the French and British for control of North America. The Haudenosaunee sided with the British during the French and Indian War, helping the British achieve victory. After the war they took a stance of neutrality to remain distant from British and colonist turmoil.

However, as the Revolution intensified, the Six Nations struggled to remain neutral. Mohawk chief Tigoransera (also known as Little Abraham) had a difficult time keeping his young warriors from his own tribe from attacking the Americans. Many young Mohawk warriors like Thayendanegea (also known as Joseph Brant) resented American encroachments on their land and saw in King George III a way to check the advance of American settlement westward.³

Speech, Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), "The Disturbances in America give great trouble . . .," 1776 (excerpt)
George Mason University
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071/>

Brother Gorah, We have cross'd the great Lake and come to this kingdom with our Superintendent, Col. Johnson, from our Confederacy the Six Nations and their allies, that we might see our Father, the Great King, and joyn in informing him, his Councilors and wise men, of the good intentions of the Indians our brethren, and of their attachment to His Majesty and his Government. Brother. The Disturbances in America give great trouble to all our Nations, as many strange stories have been told to us by the people of that country. The Six Nations who always loved the king, sent a number of their Chiefs and Warriors with their Superintendent to Canada last summer, where they engaged their allies to join with them in the defense of that country, and when it was invaded by the New England people they alone defeated them . . .

. . . Brother. We shall truly report all that we hear from you, to the Six Nations on our return. We are well informed there have been many Indians in this Country who came without any authority, from their own, and gave us much trouble. We desire Brother to tell you this is not our case. We are warriors known to all the Nations, and are now here by approbation of many of them, whose sentiments we speak.

Brother. We hope these things will be considered and that the King or his great men will give us such an answer as will make our hearts light and glad before we go, and strengthen our hands, so that we may joyn our Superintendent, Col. Johnson in giving satisfaction to all our Nations, when we report to them on our return, on our return; for which purpose we hope soon to be accommodated with a passage. Dictated by the Indians and taken down by Jo. Chew. Secretary

³Adapted from "Little Abraham (Tigoransera)," Jamestown Settlements & American Revolution Museum at Yorktown.

Source Three: Narragansett Nation

Historical Context: The Narragansett Nation had a long history with English settlers in New England. In 1635, Roger Williams was expelled from the newly formed Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the Narragansett allowed him to create a settlement in modern-day Providence, Rhode Island. Later, Williams created his own authority, on the land, garnering power within the colonies and legitimizing his legal standing to create a colony.

An alliance with the British and its colonists would be established and tested over time. During Metacom's War (also known as King Philip's War), the Narragansett attempted to remain neutral. On December 19, 1675, colonists attacked the Narragansett because they feared they would join Metacom's forces. In the attack on the fort at Great Swamp, many women, children, and elders who had fled to the fort to seek protection were massacred. After the war, many survivors were enslaved in the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and others were sold into slavery in the islands of the West Indies to work on plantations there.

Despite these historical traumas, many Narragansett and other Indigenous men enlisted in the Continental Army to protect their land and communities. Other enslaved Indigenous men served in the place of their slave owner or a family member in exchange for their freedom after the war.⁴

Diary entry, Albigence Waldo, January 4, 1788⁵

Albigence Waldo was a surgeon in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

"I was call'd to relieve a Solder tho't to be dying—he expir'd before I reach'd the Hutt. He was an Indian—an excellent Soldier—and an obedient good natur'd fellow. He engaged for money doubtless as others do;—but he has serv'd his country faithfully—he has fought for those very people who disinherited his forefathers—having finished his pilgrimage, he was discharged from the War of Life & Death. His memory ought to be respected."

Act creating the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, also known as the "Black Regiment," 1778 Rhode Island Department of State, Rhode Island State Archives
<https://docs.sos.ri.gov/documents/civicsandeducation/teacherresources/Black-Regiment.pdf>

Whereas, for the preservation of the Rights and Liberties of the United States, it is necessary that the whole power of the Government should be exerted in recruiting the Continental Battalions: And whereas his Excellency General Washington hath enclosed to this State the Proposal made to him by Brigadier-General Varnum to enlist into the two Battalions, raising by this State, such Slaves as should be willing to enter into the Service: And whereas History affords us frequent Precedents of the wisest, the freest, and bravest Nations have liberated their Slaves, and enlisted them as Soldiers to fight in the Defense of their Country; and also whereas the Enemy with a great Force have taken Possession of the Capital, and of a great Part of this State; and this State is obliged to raise a very considerable Number of Troops for its own immediate Defense, whereby it is in a Manner rendered impossible for this State to furnish Recruits for the said two Battalions, without adopting the said Measure so recommended.

It is Voted and Resolved, that every able-bodied Negro, Mulatto, or Indian Man Slave, in this State, may enlist into either of the said two Battalions to serve during the Continuance of the present War with Great-Britain: That every Slave, so enlisting, shall be entitled to, and receive, all the Bounties, Wages, and Encouragements, allowed by the Continental Congress, to any Soldier enlisting into their Service.

It is further Voted and Resolved, that every Slave, so enlisting, shall, upon his passing Muster before Col. Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from the Service of his Master or Mistress; and be absolutely FREE, as though he had never been encumbered with any Kind of Servitude or Slavery. And in Case such Slave shall, by Sickness or otherwise, be rendered unable to maintain himself, he shall not be chargeable to his Master or Mistress, but shall be supported at the Expense of the State.

⁴ Adapted from Lorén Spears, "Narragansett History," EnCompass, accessed September 26, 2022.
<http://library.providence.edu/encompass/narragansett-history/narragansett-history/>.

⁵ Quoted in Joseph Lee Boyd, "Native Americans at Valley Forge," *Journal of the American Revolution*, November 10, 2020.
<https://allthingsliberty.com/2020/11/native-americans-at-valley-forge/>. The quote was originally published in *The Historical Magazine* in June 1861.

Source Four: Chickasaw Nation

Historical Context: The Chickasaw Nation lived in modern-day northern Mississippi. In the past, they allied with the British to fight the French who were allied with the Choctaw Nation. During the American Revolution, they tried to be neutral. After the Revolution, when the British withdrew from the area, the Chickasaw found themselves caught between the Spanish and the new American government. In 1783, they sent a letter to Congress to try to stop settlers from coming on their land and establish trade ties to help supply their people.

They held in check the French and Choctaws with their allies and trading partners, the British. The American Revolution ended that balance of power. The Chickasaws sought neutrality but also felt allegiance to the British due to their long-held ties.

In 1779, the Virginians sent threatening messages warning them of dire consequences if they did not make peace. The once defiant Chickasaw leaders sought to inaugurate a new relationship with the new United States by sending this message to Congress in the spring of 1783. They desired a halt to encroachments on their land and regular access to supplies in order to appease their belligerent young warriors.⁶

Letter, "We are Told that the Americans have 13 Councils . . .," July 28, 1783 (excerpt)
George Mason University
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7441>

July 28, 1783

To His Excellency The President of the Honorable Congress of the United American States

Friend & Brother,

. . . Brother, When our great father the King of England called away his warriors, he told us to take your People by the hand as friends and brothers. Our hearts were always inclined to do so & as far as our circumstances permitted us, we evinced our good intentions as Brothers the Virginians can testify-It makes our hearts rejoice to find that our great father, and his children the Americans have at length made peace, which we wish may continue as long as the Sun and Moon, And to find that our Brothers the Americans are inclined to take us by the hand, and Smoke with us at the great Fire, which we hope will never be extinguished.

Brother, Notwithstanding the Satisfaction all these things give us we are yet in confusion & uncertainty. The Spaniards are sending talks amongst us, and inviting our young Men to trade with them. We also receive talks from the Governor of Georgia to the same effect-We have had Speeches from the Illinois inviting us to a Trade and Intercourse with them-Our Brothers, the Virginians Call upon us to a Treaty, and want part of our land, and we expect our Neighbors who live on Cumberland River, will in a Little time Demand, if not forcibly take part of it from us, also as we are informed they have been marking Lines through our hunting grounds: we are daily receiving Talks from one Place or other, and from People we Know nothing about. We Know not who to mind or who to neglect. We are told that the Americans have 13 Councils Compos'd of Chiefs and Warriors. We Know not which of them we are to Listen to, or if we are to hear some, and Reject others, we are at a loss to Distinguish those we are to hear. We are told that you are the head Chief of the Grand Council, which is above these 13 Councils: if so why have we not had Talks from you,-We are head men and Chiefs and Warriors also: and have always been accustomed to speak with great Chiefs & warriors-We are Likewise told that you and the Great men of your Council are Very Wise-we are glad to hear it, being assured that you will not do us any Wrong, and therefore we wish to Speak with you and your Council, or if you Do not approve of our so Doing, as you are wise, you will tell us who shall speak with us, in behalf of all our Brothers the Americans, and from whare and whome we are to be supplied with necessaries in the manner our great father supplied us-we hope you will also put a stop to any encroachments on our lands, without our consent, and silence all those People who sends us Such Talks as inflame & exasperate our Young Men, as it is our earnest desire to remain in peace and friendship with our Br: the Americans for ever . . .

⁶ Adapted from "We are Told that the Americans have 13 Councils . . .," George Mason University, accessed September 26, 2022.
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7441>.

Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart

Why did many young members of Indigenous Nations challenge or defy their elders' order to remain neutral or support a particular side during the American Revolution?

	What key ideas can you infer from reading this source?	List two or three questions about this source.
Source One Tsalagi Nation British Allies		
Source Two Mohawk Nation British Allies		
Source Three Narragansett Nation American Allies		
Source Four Chickasaw Nation American Allies		

Perspective and Position Graphic Organizer

Why did many young members of Indigenous Nations challenge or defy their elders' order to remain neutral or support a particular side during the American Revolution?

Native Nation: _____	
Needs	Concerns
What happened to this Native Nation during and immediately after the American Revolution?	
How might younger members of this Native Nation react to these situations? How would this influence their perspective in the late 1700s and early 1800s?	

Source One: Tsalagi (Cherokee) Nation Answer Key

Historical Context: Before European settlement of the Americas, the Tsalagi (Cherokee) Nation was the largest Native Nation in North America. The Tsalagi had a long history of peaceful interactions with British settlers, beginning when the two groups became trading partners in the late seventeenth century. Their economic partnership evolved into a military alliance. During the French and Indian War, the British recruited the Tsalagi to help them fight the French.

In 1775, the Tsalagi faced economic hardship. A group of elders met at Sycamore Shoals, along the Watauga River. They agreed to give American colonists a deal for 27,000 square miles of Tsalagi land in exchange for material goods. Young warriors such as Dragging Canoe (c. 1783–1792) **opposed the deal, arguing that their land was far more valuable.**

As conflicts grew between the British and American colonists, Tsalagi chiefs began to ally with the colonists, but some younger warriors disagreed. Dragging Canoe and hundreds of other Tsalagis moved south and west to establish new villages on Chickamauga Creek and **allied themselves with Loyalist forces.** The tribe soon became divided on the issue.¹

Young Warrior Dragging Canoe (Tsiyu Gansini) Speaks Against the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals to the Tsalgi (Cherokee) Council, 1775²

Whole Indian Nations have melted away like snowballs in the sun before the white man's advance. They leave scarcely a name of our people except those wrongly recorded by their destroyers. Where are the Delewares? They have been reduced to a mere shadow of their former greatness.

We had hoped that the white men would not be willing to travel beyond the mountains. Now that hope is gone. They have passed the mountains, and have settled upon Tsalagi (Cherokee) land. **They wish to have that usurpation sanctioned by treaty. When that is gained, the same encroaching spirit will lead them upon other land of the Tsalagi (Cherokees). New cessions will be asked.**

Finally the whole country, which the Tsalagi (Cherokees) and their fathers have so long occupied, will be demanded, and the remnant of the Ani Yvwiya, **The Real People, once so great and formidable, will be compelled to seek refuge in some distant wilderness. There they will be permitted to stay only a short while, until they again behold the advancing banners of the same greedy host.**

Not being able to point out any further retreat for the miserable Tsalagi (Cherokees), the **extinction of the whole race will be proclaimed.** Should we not therefore run all risks, and incur all consequences, rather than to submit to further loss of our country?

Such treaties may be alright for men who are too old to hunt or fight. As for me, **I have my young warriors about me. We will hold our land.** A-WANINSKI, I have spoken.

¹ Adapted from Jane Everett, "Cherokee," George Washington's Mount Vernon, accessed September 18, 2020. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/cherokee/>.

² Quoted in Nadia Dean, "A Demand of Blood: The Cherokee War of 1776", *American Indian*, Winter 2013: 37. <https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/demand-blood-cherokee-war-1776>.

Note: some sources attribute this statement to Dragging Canoe, and others reference Tecumseh. It is possible that they may have served together and known each other as young men.

Source Two: Mohawk Nation Answer Key

Historical Context: The Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee), known at the time as the Iroquois Confederacy, originally consisted of five original nations: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. It became known as the Six Nations after the Tuscarora joined the Confederacy. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Confederacy played a strategic role in the struggle between the French and British for control of North America. The Haudenosaunee sided **with the British during the French and Indian War, helping the British achieve victory**. After the war they took a stance of neutrality to remain distant from British and colonist turmoil.

However, as the Revolution intensified, the Six Nations **struggled to remain neutral**. Mohawk chief Tigoransera (also known as Little Abraham) had a **difficult time keeping his young warriors from his own tribe from attacking the Americans**. Many young Mohawk warriors like Thayendanegea (also known as Joseph Brant) **resented American encroachments on their land and saw in King George III a way to check the advance** of American settlement westward.³

Speech, Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), "The Disturbances in America give great trouble . . .," 1776 (excerpt)
George Mason University
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071/>

Brother Gorah, We have cross'd the great Lake and come to this kingdom with our Superintendent, Col. Johnson, from our Confederacy the Six Nations and their allies, that we might see our Father, the Great King, and joyn in informing him, his Councilors and wise men, of the good intentions of the Indians our brethren, and of their attachment to His Majesty and his Government. Brother. The Disturbances in America give great trouble to all our Nations, as many strange stories have been told to us by the people of that country. The Six Nations who always loved the king, sent a number of their Chiefs and Warriors with their Superintendent to Canada last summer, where **they engaged their allies to join with them in the defense of that country, and when it was invaded by the New England people they alone defeated them** . . .

. . . Brother. We shall truly report all that we hear from you, to the Six Nations on our return. We are well informed there **have been many Indians in this Country who came without any authority, from their own, and gave us much trouble**. We desire Brother to tell you this is not our case. We are warriors known to all the Nations, and are now here by approbation of many of them, whose sentiments we speak.

Brother. We hope these things will be considered and that the King or his great men will give us such an answer as will make our hearts light and glad before we go, and strengthen our hands, so that we may joyn our Superintendent, Col. Johnson in giving satisfaction to all our Nations, when we report to them on our return, on our return; for which purpose we hope soon to be accommodated with a passage. Dictated by the Indians and taken down by Jo. Chew. Secretary

³Adapted from "Little Abraham (Tigoransera)," Jamestown Settlements & American Revolution Museum at Yorktown.

Source Three: Narragansett Nation Answer Key

Historical Context: The Narragansett Nation had a long history with English settlers in New England. In 1635, Roger Williams was expelled from the newly formed Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the Narragansett allowed him to create a settlement in modern-day Providence, Rhode Island. Later, Williams created his own authority, on the land, garnering power within the colonies and legitimizing his legal standing to create a colony.

An alliance with the British and its colonists would be established and tested over time. During Metacom's War (also known as King Philip's War), the Narragansett **attempted to remain neutral. On December 19, 1675, colonists attacked the Narragansett because they feared they would join Metacom's forces. In the attack on the fort at Great Swamp, many women, children, and elders who had fled to the fort to seek protection were massacred.** After the war, many survivors were enslaved in the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and others were sold into slavery in the islands of the West Indies to work on plantations there.

Despite these historical traumas, **many Narragansett and other Indigenous men enlisted in the Continental Army to protect their land and communities.** Other enslaved Indigenous men **served in the place of their slave owner or a family member in exchange for their freedom after the war.**⁴

Diary entry, Albigence Waldo, January 4, 1788⁵

Albigence Waldo was a surgeon in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

"I was call'd to relieve a Solder tho't to be dying—he expir'd before I reach'd the Hutt. He was an Indian—an excellent Soldier—and an obedient good natur'd fellow. **He engaged for money doubtless as others do;**—but he has serv'd his country faithfully—**he has fought for those very people who disinherited his forefathers**—having finished his pilgrimage, he was discharged from the War of Life & Death. His memory ought to be respected."

Act creating the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, also known as the "Black Regiment," 1778 Rhode Island Department of State, Rhode Island State Archives
<https://docs.sos.ri.gov/documents/civicsandeducation/teacherresources/Black-Regiment.pdf>

Whereas, for the preservation of the Rights and Liberties of the United States, it is necessary that the whole power of the Government should be exerted in recruiting the Continental Battalions: And whereas his Excellency General Washington hath enclosed to this State the Proposal made to him by Brigadier-General Varnum to enlist into the two Battalions, raising by this State, such Slaves as should be willing to enter into the Service: And whereas History affords us frequent Precedents of the wisest, the freest, and bravest Nations have liberated their Slaves, and enlisted them as Soldiers to fight in the Defense of their Country; and also whereas the Enemy with a great Force have taken Possession of the Capital, and of a great Part of this State; and this State is obliged to raise a very considerable Number of Troops for its own immediate Defense, whereby it is in a Manner rendered impossible for this State to furnish Recruits for the said two Battalions, without adopting the said Measure so recommended.

It is Voted and Resolved, that **every able-bodied Negro, Mulatto, or Indian Man Slave, in this State, may enlist into either of the said two Battalions to serve during the Continuance of the present War with Great-Britain:** That every Slave, so enlisting, shall be **entitled to, and receive, all the Bounties, Wages, and Encouragements, allowed by the Continental Congress, to any Soldier enlisting into their Service.**

It is further Voted and Resolved, that **every Slave, so enlisting,** shall, upon his passing Muster before Col. Christopher Greene, **be immediately discharged from the Service of his Master or Mistress; and be absolutely FREE, as though he had never been encumbered with any Kind of Servitude or Slavery.** And in Case such Slave shall, by Sickness or otherwise, be rendered unable to maintain himself, he shall not be chargeable to his Master or Mistress, but shall be supported at the Expense of the State.

⁴ Adapted from Lorén Spears, "Narragansett History," EnCompass, accessed September 26, 2022.
<http://library.providence.edu/encompass/narragansett-history/narragansett-history/>.

⁵ Quoted in Joseph Lee Boyd, "Native Americans at Valley Forge," *Journal of the American Revolution*, November 10, 2020.
<https://allthingsliberty.com/2020/11/native-americans-at-valley-forge/>. The quote was originally published in *The Historical Magazine* in June 1861.

Source Four: Chickasaw Nation

Historical Context: The Chickasaw Nation lived in modern-day northern Mississippi. **In the past, they allied with the British to fight the French who were allied with the Choctaw Nation. During the American Revolution, they tried to be neutral.** After the Revolution, when the British withdrew from the area, the Chickasaw found themselves caught between the Spanish and the new American government. **In 1783, they sent a letter to Congress to try to stop settlers from coming on their land and establish trade ties to help supply their people.**

They held in check the French and Choctaws with their allies and trading partners, the British. The American Revolution ended that balance of power. The Chickasaws sought neutrality but also felt allegiance to the British due to their long-held ties.

In 1779, the Virginians sent threatening messages warning them of dire consequences if they did not make peace. The once defiant Chickasaw leaders sought to inaugurate a new relationship with the new United States by sending this message to Congress in the spring of 1783. **They desired a halt to encroachments on their land and regular access to supplies in order to appease their belligerent young warriors.**⁶

Letter, "We are Told that the Americans have 13 Councils . . .," July 28, 1783 (excerpt)
George Mason University
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7441>

July 28, 1783

To His Excellency The President of the Honorable Congress of the United American States

Friend & Brother,

. . . Brother, When our great father the King of England called away his warriors, he told us to take your People by the hand as friends and brothers. Our hearts were always inclined to do so & as far as our circumstances permitted us, we evinced our good intentions as Brothers the Virginians can testify-It makes our hearts rejoice to find that our great father, and his children the Americans have at length made peace, which we wish may continue as long as the Sun and Moon, And to find that our Brothers the Americans are inclined to take us by the hand, and Smoke with us at the great Fire, which we hope will never be extinguished.

Brother, Notwithstanding the Satisfaction all these things give us **we are yet in confusion & uncertainty.** The Spaniards are sending talks amongst us, and **inviting our young Men to trade with them.** We also receive talks from the Governor of Georgia to the same effect-We have had Speeches from the Illinois inviting us to a Trade and Intercourse with them-Our Brothers, **the Virginians Call upon us to a Treaty, and want part of our land, and we expect our Neighbors who live on Cumberland River, will in a Little time Demand, if not forcibly take part of it from us,** also as we are informed they have been marking Lines through our hunting grounds: we are daily receiving Talks from one Place or other, and from People we Know nothing about. We Know not who to mind or who to neglect. We are told that the Americans have 13 Councils Compos'd of Chiefs and Warriors. We Know not which of them we are to Listen to, or if we are to hear some, and Reject others, we are at a loss to Distinguish those we are to hear. We are told that you are the head Chief of the Grand Council, which is above these 13 Councils: if so why have we not had Talks from you,-**We are head men and Chiefs and Warriors also: and have always been accustomed to speak with great Chiefs & warriors-We are Likewise told that you and the Great men of your Council are Very Wise-we are glad to hear it, being assured that you will not do us any Wrong,** and therefore we wish to Speak with you and your Council, or if you Do not approve of our so Doing, as you are wise, you will tell us who shall speak with us, in behalf of all our Brothers the Americans, and from where and whome we are to be supplied with necessaries in the manner our great father supplied us-**we hope you will also put a stop to any encroachments on our lands, without our consent, and silence all those People who sends us Such Talks as inflame & exasperate our Young Men, as it is our earnest desire to remain in peace and friendship with our Br: the Americans for ever . . .**

⁶ Adapted from "We are Told that the Americans have 13 Councils . . .," George Mason University, accessed September 26, 2022.
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7441>.

Taking Sides Document Analysis Chart Answer Key

Why did many young members of Indigenous Nations challenge or defy their elders' order to remain neutral or support a particular side during the American Revolution?

	What key ideas can you infer from reading this source?	List two or three questions about this source.
<p>Source One</p> <p>Tsalagi Nation</p> <p>British Allies</p>	<p>The younger population fears that the Americans will continue to displace the Cherokee until the Nation longer exists.</p> <p>Younger members view older members as complacent and believe that this complacency will cost them their land.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p>Source Two</p> <p>Mohawk Nation</p> <p>British Allies</p>	<p>The purpose of this source is to gain British support.</p> <p>The source emphasizes past solidarity, differences from other nations, and continuing loyalty and admiration.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p>Source Three</p> <p>Narragansett Nation</p> <p>American Allies</p>	<p>The diary entry (written later) and the Act emphasize Native Americans' role in the American Revolution.</p> <p>This act only applied to Native Americans in Rhode Island (not the other colonies).</p> <p>It appears that this is motivated by the need for soldiers (and not a genuine push for equality).</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>
<p>Source Four</p> <p>Chickasaw Nation</p> <p>American Allies</p>	<p>This source shows a Native understanding of the American government.</p> <p>There is a strong fear of losing their land.</p> <p>It shows a fear of a possible uprising led by younger members and wishes to maintain friendly relations with the Americans and avoid conflict.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p>