



# SPHERE

# PROHUMAN FOUNDATION

Fostering Civil Discourse and Diverse Viewpoints for Every Classroom

## Women in the American Revolution: The Story of Deborah Sampson

### Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will explore the life of Deborah Sampson, who disguised herself as a man and fought in the Revolutionary War. Through close reading and character analysis, students will examine how Deborah Sampson demonstrated grit. Students will also practice generating thoughtful questions about character development and support their analysis with textual evidence. These activities will enable students to explore how Sampson's character strengths motivated her to contribute to the Patriots during the Revolutionary War and become one of the earliest female lecturers in the country.



## Unit at a Glance

Lesson number	Featured person	Accomplishments	Target character trait
Lesson 1	Elizabeth Freeman	Sued for her freedom and inspired many enslaved women	Curiosity
Lesson 2	Anna Smith Strong	The only female member of George Washington's spy ring	Courage
Lesson 3	Nanyehi (Nancy Ward)	A respected member of the Cherokee Nation	Humanity
Lesson 4	Deborah Sampson	Disguised herself as a man to fight in the Revolutionary War	Grit
Lesson 5	Esther de Berdt Reed	Author and fundraiser for the Continental Army	Compassion

## Unit Essential Questions

- The Declaration of Independence lists several self-evident truths: People, by their very existence, are free and equal, and they have rights. No one, not even a king, can govern them without their consent. What are freedom, equality, rights, and government with consent?
- To what extent were the women covered in these lessons able to use their character strengths to achieve the self-evident truths outlined in the Declaration of Independence?

## Objectives

- Identify and analyze a historical individual's character strengths.
- Compare and contrast one's own thinking with the key pieces of evidence from a written text.
- Engage in the close reading of a text using annotation to identify key characteristics of a historical figure.
- Engage respectfully in small- and large-group discussions, showing positive collaboration and cooperation skills.
- Demonstrate command of standard English grammar and usage while speaking and in writing.

## Materials

- "Deborah Sampson: The Grit of a Soldier" text
- Blank sheets of copy paper

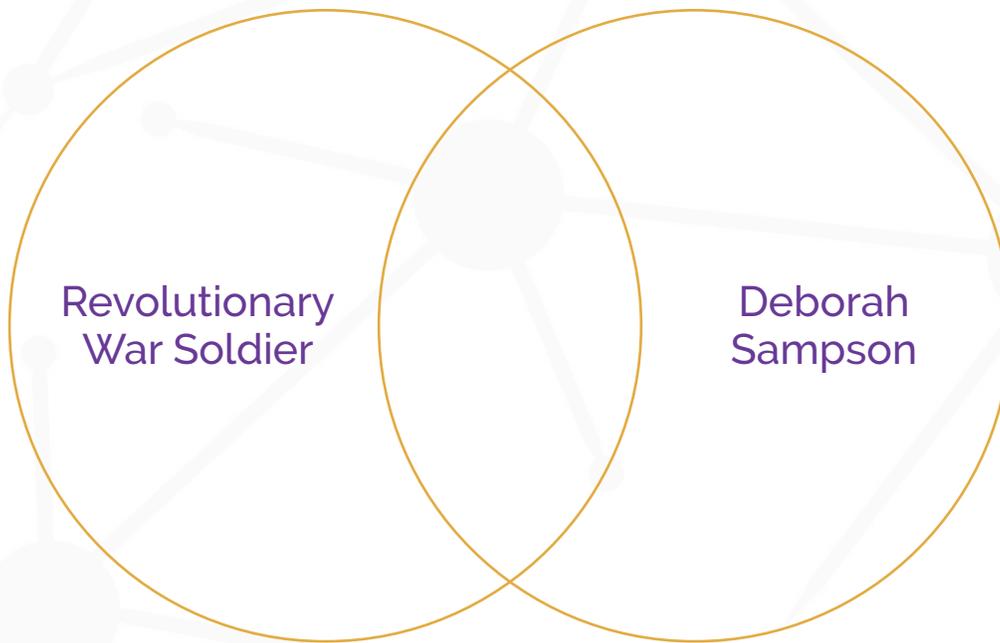
## Warm-Up

- Hand out blank sheets of copy paper and post the following prompt on the board.
  - Draw or explain your response to this question: What were some of the abilities needed by an American soldier in the Revolutionary War?
- When all students have finished, have them share their writing or drawing with a partner.

## Learning Activities

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOLDIER

- As a class, brainstorm the characteristics of American soldiers in the Revolutionary War and list the characteristics on the board.
- Then hand out or have students draw a Venn diagram like the one shown here. Have students use a pencil to list the characteristics you just brainstormed under the "Revolutionary War Soldier" side. \*Note: It's important for students to use pencil so they can erase and rewrite as needed.



### **READ ABOUT DEBORAH SAMPSON**

Hand out the text "Deborah Sampson: The Grit of a Soldier." Have students read the text individually or in pairs.

**While students are reading, have them highlight or underline important characteristics of Deborah Sampson.** Then, individually or in pairs, have students list Deborah Sampson's characteristics (in pencil) on the "Deborah Sampson" circle of the Venn diagram.

### **EXTENSION ACTIVITY FOR THE VENN DIAGRAM (IF STUDENTS STRUGGLE WITH THE TEXT)**

- Show students this short video: "Here's the story of Deborah Sampson, the first woman to ever enlist in the US military" by CBS Boston (about four minutes).
- As the students watch, have them answer the following questions on a sheet of notebook paper:
  - Deborah Sampson was the first woman to do what?
  - How many years did Sampson serve?
  - At Sampson's first skirmish, what happened?
  - How did Sampson show grit?
  - What did Sampson begin in 1802?
  - What key characteristics did Sampson show throughout her life?
- Facilitate a whole-class discussion (two to three minutes) about the answers to the questions. Then have students write Sampson's characteristics (in pencil) on the right side of the Venn diagram.

## ACTIVITY

- Separate students into pairs or small groups and have them collaborate to determine which characteristics in their Venn diagrams should be placed in different sections. Remind students that the characteristics that are shared between their original ideas of a Revolutionary War soldier and Deborah Sampson should be placed in the middle where the circles overlap.
- After students have finished revising their Venn diagrams so that all the characteristics are placed in the correct spot, allow them to add characteristics as needed.

## DEBRIEF

Facilitate a whole-class discussion about the differences between their original idea of a Revolutionary War soldier and what they learned about Deborah Sampson. The following questions can help you begin this conversation:

- What surprised you about Deborah Sampson's story?
- Did you originally think of a woman as a soldier in the Revolutionary War? Why or why not?
- How did Deborah Sampson's story change your perspective?
- If you could go back to your original response to the Warm-Up question ("What were some of the abilities needed by an American soldier in the Revolutionary War?"), how might you respond differently?

## Closing

Individually, through an exit ticket, ask students the following question:

- The Declaration of Independence lists several self-evident truths: People, by their very existence, are free and equal, and they have rights. No one, not even a king, can govern them without their consent. To what extent did Deborah Sampson show grit to achieve the self-evident truths outlined in the Declaration of Independence?

### ELA Common Core Standards Met

<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4                  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4                  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4</p>	<p>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.1                  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1                  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1</p>	<p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.10                  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.10                  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10</p>	<p>By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.</p>

### Character and Social Emotional Development National Guidelines Met

<p>Responsible and ethical decision-making A3</p>	<p>Write about and share a principle you want to live by that you learned from a family member, book, movie, or personal experience</p>
<p>Performance character B1</p>	<p>Describe a role model who demonstrates a positive attitude, effort, and grit</p>
<p>Social -awareness A1</p>	<p>Experience and demonstrate empathy</p>
<p>Social -awareness A5</p>	<p>Practice "perspective taking" as a strategy to strengthen your acceptance of others</p>
<p>Social awareness A6</p>	<p>Demonstrate awareness and understanding that despite differences, all people have similar needs, feelings and wants</p>