



SPHERE

PROHUMAN FOUNDATION

Fostering Civil Discourse and Diverse Viewpoints for Every Classroom

Women in the American Revolution: The Story of Esther de Berdt Reed

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will explore the life of Esther de Berdt Reed, who published a broadside, "The Sentiments of an American Woman," in 1780. Through close reading and character analysis, students will examine how Esther de Berdt Reed's compassion inspired her to create and execute a plan that raised the equivalent of \$7 million in today's dollars for American troops during the Revolutionary War. 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 Esther de Berdt Reed demonstrated compassion when assisting American troops.



Unit at a Glance

	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.
- Support claims using textual evidence in a graphic organizer.
- Understand the roots of vocabulary words to better comprehend the meaning of a text.
- Collaborate with others to generate questions and share different perspectives about a nonfiction text.
- 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

- “‘Love for the Public Good’: The Story of Esther de Berdt Reed” text
- Large sticky notes or a large piece of butcher paper

Warm-Up

STEP ONE

- Project or post the word “compassion” on the board. Then give students this writing prompt:
 - What does the word “compassion” mean to you? Respond in two or three sentences.
- Ask students to share their definitions with a partner. Then give a few students the opportunity to share their thoughts with the whole class.

STEP TWO

- Tell students that the word “compassion” comes from the Latin roots *com* (which means “together with”) and *pati* (which means “to suffer”). Write these two Latin roots on the board with their definitions so students can recall them.
- Have students write their thoughts or share with a partner in response to the following prompt:
 - How does knowing the Latin roots for “compassion” change your understanding of the meaning? Does it make a difference that the word “compassion” at its core means “to suffer with”?
- Help students understand that compassion is more than simply feeling sorry for or having pity on another person. Bring them to a deeper understanding of the word so they can better understand how Esther Reed showed compassion.

Learning Activities

READ ABOUT ESTHER DE BERDT REED

- As a class, brainstorm words that are synonyms for the words suffer, together, and love. Some examples are given in the table below.

Suffer	Together	Love
Endure	In unison	Passion
Go through	As one	Care
Undergo	United	Bond
Hurt	Collectively	Attachment
Pain	All at once	Endearment
Experience	Combined	Be passionate about
Tolerate	Along with	Treasure
Deal with	With	Cherish
Weather	Side by side	Devotion and dedication

- Debrief with students and help them understand that each of these words has a wide range of associated words and a spectrum of meanings.
- Hand out the text “‘Love for the Public Good’: The Story of Esther de Berdt Reed.” Have students read the text individually or in pairs.

While they are reading, ask students to highlight or underline the actions or events that show Reed having compassion (suffering together with) and love for the public good during the Revolutionary War.

SMALL-GROUP WORK

After students have finished reading the passage, put them into small groups. Ask each group to complete the following table. Be sure that students use evidence from the text to support the ways in which Reed showed compassion and love.

Did Reed show love or compassion?	Event/action that showed this love or compassion	Supporting quotation from text
Example: Love	Example: She wrote a broadside for the Patriot cause although women weren't encouraged to take part in politics or public life.	Example: "She wrote a broadside that was published in 1780 titled 'The Sentiments of an American Woman.'"

After all students have completed the table, facilitate a whole-class discussion and debrief about the ways in which Reed showed compassion and love for the public good. Leave students with the question: "Just as Reed showed love and compassion for the public good, how can you show love and compassion for the good of those in your community or school?"

GENERATE WAYS TO SHOW COMPASSION

In their small groups (or, if preferred, in new small groups), have students brainstorm ways that they can show love and compassion for the public good of their community or school. Have students list their ideas on a large sticky note or a piece of butcher paper. Hang these around the room so all students can see each other's ideas.

PLAN A PROJECT

Using a Google Slides or PowerPoint slide deck or posterboard, have students plan a project that shows love or compassion for the public good. Each plan must include the following:

- A clearly stated problem,
- A written statement about how their project shows compassion for those dealing with this problem,

- An outline of how the project will help others with this problem,
- How their project contributes to the public good of the whole community

SHARE PROJECTS

Ask students to present their projects to the rest of the class. If possible, have students work on their projects with the appropriate stakeholders (i.e., administrators, other teachers, etc.) to help their school or community for the public good. You might even plan an after-school event where students are able to share their ideas and interact with relevant community members.

DEBRIEF

After students have shared their projects, ask the following questions:

- How was your project similar to and different from the projects that Esther Reed undertook for the public good of her community?
- What character strengths show compassion and/or love for the public good? How did Reed show these character strengths? How did you and your small group show these character strengths as you created your project?
- What challenges did Reed have to overcome to show compassion/love for the public good? How did her character strengths help with this?
- What challenges did you have to overcome to show compassion/love for the public good? How did your character strengths help with this?

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 Esther de Berdt Reed use compassion 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.W.6.9 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.9 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9</p>	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</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.6.1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1</p>	<p>Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.2</p>	<p>Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.3</p>	<p>Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.3</p>	<p>Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events)</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3</p>	<p>Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).</p>
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.2 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2</p>	<p>Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</p>

ELA Common Core Standards Met

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.10 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.10 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10	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.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6-8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Character and Social Emotional Development National Guidelines Met

Responsible and ethical decision-making A3	Write about and share a principle you want to live by that you learned from a family member, book, movie, or personal experience.
Intellectual character A3	Recognize and understand why the intellectual character strengths are not innate (something you are born with) but can be developed with practice and support.
Social awareness A1	Experience and demonstrate empathy.
Social awareness A3	Demonstrate respect for other people's opinions and perspectives.
Social awareness A5	Practice "perspective taking" as a strategy to strengthen your acceptance of others.
Social awareness A6	Demonstrate awareness and understanding that despite differences, all people have similar needs, feelings and wants.
Interpersonal/relationship skills A5	Understand and practice positive collaboration and cooperation skills (e.g., teamwork).