

# BEYOND the BATTLEFIELD

# A VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP to the

## ★ MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION ★

### **Dear Educators, Librarians, Parents, Readers, and Fellow Revolutionaries,**

As I work on *I Survived* books, I'm always wishing that I could bring readers along with me on my research journeys. And finally my dream is coming true.

I am writing with an invitation for you to join me on a virtual field trip to the Museum of the American Revolution, an amazing new museum in Philadelphia.

The virtual field trip, called *Beyond the Battlefield*, is a 25-minute video extravaganza in which I take kids (and teachers!) behind the scenes of the museum.

They will delve into the background of the Revolution and War of Independence. They will see historical treasures. They will meet historians and hear stories of young people — like them — who were a part of America's fight for freedom.

Our goal is to bring this exciting and frightening time in history to life to your students, to supplement your curriculum, and to open new doors of curiosity. It's a great companion to my book *I Survived the American Revolution, 1776* and pairs perfectly with a rich collection of ancillary resources, including my March/April *Storyworks* article "Blood, Smoke, and Freedom" (available in multiple reading levels), before and after viewing tips from our Top Teaching bloggers, a vocabulary list, and discussion questions.

I can't wait to hear what you think.  
Huzzah! (That's how they said "hooray!" in colonial times.)



Lauren Tarshis

Author of the *New York Times* Bestselling *I SURVIVED* Series  
Editor of *StoryWorks* and *StoryWorks Jr.* Magazines

## Beyond the Battlefield Virtual Field Trip FAQ

### How can I incorporate the virtual field trip into my plans?

The free virtual field trip can be used to augment a Revolutionary War or Colonial Times curriculum unit, or as part of an ELA study on fiction/historical fiction/non-fiction. Or keep it on file for a substitute day!

### What grade level is this appropriate for?

The Beyond the Battlefield virtual field trip is designed with supporting materials for grades 2–8, but can be enjoyed by older viewers, too!

### How long should I schedule for the virtual field trip?

The actual viewing time is 25 minutes, but classroom engagement can be extended before and after viewing with activities, readings, and discussion questions from this Beyond the Battlefield Classroom Kit.

### How should I plan my viewing?

You can schedule your viewing in a number of ways: watch independently, as a single class, across a grade level, or multiple grades in a larger setting, such as an auditorium, library, or community center.

### What are the technical requirements for viewing?

The virtual field trip is a simple video played like any other video on the internet. You will need access to the internet, audio capability, and, depending on crowd size, a projector for viewing. We recommend testing ahead and contacting your audio visual department as needed.

### How should I prepare my reader/students for the virtual field trip?

- Before the field trip, use the **revolutionary vocabulary handout** in the Beyond the Battlefield Classroom Kit to prepare students for the language and concepts that they will explore.
- After the field trip, use the **grade level-specific discussion questions and answer keys** in this kit to engage further with the themes and topics presented and extend their educational experience.
- Explore Lauren Tarshis's *StoryWorks* narrative nonfiction article "Blood, Smoke and Freedom," about the experiences of one of the young soldiers featured in the virtual field trip ([available for free](#) in multiple reading levels).
- **For grades 3–5**, explore the additional Beyond the Battlefield classroom materials prepared by [Scholastic Top Teaching blogger Genia Connell](#).
- **For grades 6–8**, explore the additional Beyond the Battlefield classroom materials prepared by [Scholastic Top Teaching blogger Mary Blow](#).

### Do my students need to read *I Survived the American Revolution, 1776* before the virtual field trip?

It is recommended (but not required) that you make copies of *I Survived the American Revolution, 1776* available to students prior to the virtual field trip. When paired with the virtual field trip, the book provides a fictional counterpart that will help solidify students's understanding and comprehension of the revolutionary era and events, and help them feel more engaged and connected to the subject matter. The above blogs by Genia Connell and Mary Blow contain wonderful resources for exploring the book in your classroom.

### Is there a hashtag for the virtual field trip?

Yes! Please use #beyondthebattlefield. We'd love to see photos and hear reactions from your students, so be sure to include the hashtag and tag Scholastic in any social posts.

### Key Revolutionary War Vocabulary

**colonies:** areas that have been settled by people from another country and are controlled by that country

**colonist:** a person who lives in a colony or helps create a colony

**ferried:** carried from one place to another in a vehicle (such as a boat)

**memoir:** a piece of writing in which a person describes his or her past experiences

**musket:** a type of long gun used by soldiers from the 1500s to the 1800s

**regiment:** a military unit made up of two or more large groups of soldiers

**slaves:** people who are owned by other people and forced to work for them without pay

**enslaved:** forced to be a slave

**territory:** a large area of land

**wilderness:** a wild and natural area in which few people live, such as a forest

**revolution:** a drastic change in the way something is done

**Declaration of Independence:** a document declaring the freedom of the 13 American colonies from British rule. It was adopted on July 4, 1776.

**independent:** not controlled by other people or things

**militia:** a group of people who are trained to fight but are not official soldiers

**historian:** a person who studies or writes about history

**Loyalist:** during the time of the Revolutionary War, an American who was loyal to the king and did not want the 13 colonies to separate from Great Britain

**native peoples:** the first people to live in an area, before the arrival of settlers or colonists

To further your students's vocabulary discussion visit the [multimedia slide show](#).

### Discussion Questions Grades 2-4

**Directions:**

Watch the Beyond the Battlefield Virtual Field Trip, hosted by Lauren Tarshis. Then answer the questions below.

1. The field trip starts more than 250 years ago when America was made up of 13 colonies. Who was in charge of the colonies? What made the colonists angry, and what did they do? (1:53-3:49)
2. Assistant Curator Matthew Skic says he thinks that July 1776 was the most important part of the American Revolution. What does he tell you about and show you that helps you understand why? (6:05-7:09)
3. What was the first battle that 15-year-old Joseph Plumb Martin fought in? What was important about this battle? (7:12-8:05)
4. Lauren and Matthew show you a number of items used by Revolutionary War soldiers, like Joseph. Choose one and describe what it's for. What do you find interesting about it?  
Choices: a. canteen (9:45); b. knapsack (10:19); c. pocketbook (10:41); d. musket (11:12);  
e. cartridge box (12:16)
5. What was fighting in the war like for Joseph and other American soldiers? What challenges were they up against? (12:46-14:02)
6. Why did London Pleasants join the British army? (14:28-16:12)
7. What do you see and hear about the different types of people who were involved in the war? (18:55-19:54)
8. Lauren says that many historians think the "most remarkable part of George Washington's life" was when he was a general in the Revolutionary War. Why? (21:04-23:16)

**Think About It!** After watching Beyond the Battlefield, what do you think is one important reason people fought for America's freedom in the Revolutionary War? Answer in a well-written paragraph on a separate sheet of paper.

## Discussion Answers Grades 2–4

**Answers will vary but should be similar to:**

1. Great Britain, ruled by King George III, was in charge of the colonies. The colonists became angry because they no longer wanted to be ruled by the British government. They wanted more control over their own laws and future. In 1775, American fighters went to war against the British.
2. Matthew Skic says July 1776 is important because that was when the Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence, announcing that the colonies would no longer be ruled by Great Britain. He shows a copy of the Declaration in a newspaper, which is where most Americans would have found out about it. Matthew explains that this action allowed Americans to form a new kind of government that other countries had never tried before, ruled by regular people instead of a king or a queen.
3. The first battle that Joseph Plumb Martin fought in was the Battle of Brooklyn. This was the first major battle of the Revolutionary War, and it was the biggest one.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Fighting in the war was difficult and horrifying. Joseph saw other soldiers wounded and killed in bloody battles. The American soldiers were outnumbered by the British. The British also had better weapons. Plus, they had the help of experienced German soldiers called Hessians.
6. London Pleasants joined the British army because he had been enslaved on a plantation in Virginia, and the British offered freedom to enslaved people who would fight on their side. London took the risk of running away to join the British, and after the war he became free.
7. You see African Americans, Native Americans, and women. They all participated in the Revolution in different ways. Free and enslaved African Americans fought on both sides of the war. Native Americans did also, depending on which nation they belonged to. Women were important for supporting the American troops. They cleaned and did laundry, and the soldiers wouldn't have survived without them.
8. Before the war, George Washington had a good life. He was not prepared to lead troops in battle. But he believed so strongly in the idea of freedom from Britain that he left his good life and took on the role of general. He failed at first, like in the terrible Battle of Brooklyn. But he kept fighting and finally led the Americans to victory.

**Think About It!** Answers will vary, but students will probably mention people's desire to be free from Great Britain and rule themselves. They wanted a chance to have their own laws and government, run by the people.

### Discussion Questions Grades 4–6

**Directions:**

Watch the Beyond the Battlefield Virtual Field Trip, hosted by Lauren Tarshis. Then answer the questions below.

1. Based on the second section of the video, how was America in the 1600s and early 1700s different from America today? What kinds of people lived there? (1:52–3:10)
2. What does the section of the video from 3:11 to 3:34 explain? How do the narration, visuals, music, and sound effects in this section help you understand the feelings of American colonists at this time?
3. According to museum curator Matthew Skic, what was the most important part of the Revolutionary War? Explain why this event was important, using evidence from the video.
4. What was the first battle that 15-year-old Joseph Plumb Martin fought in? What was significant about this battle?
5. Think about the Revolutionary War objects that Skic shows Tarshis from 9:36 to 12:31 of the video. Based on this section, what can we learn by studying objects from the past? Explain using examples from the section.
6. How does the section about Martin's experience on the battlefield help you understand the horrors of being a Revolutionary War soldier? Consider the music, narration, and visuals. (12:31–13:01)
7. According to the section of the video from 13:20 to 14:02, what advantages did the British army have over the American army?
8. How were London Pleasants's reasons for becoming a soldier different from Joseph Plumb Martin's? Compare and contrast Pleasants's experience of the war with Martin's, using details from the video.
9. Toward the end of her conversation with Skic, Tarshis says that "many different types of people were involved in this Revolutionary War." How do the images in this section support her statement? (18:59–19:33)
10. According to Tarshis, what made General George Washington a hero? Explain using details from the section about Washington. (20:31–23:18)

**Think About It!** In the beginning of the field trip, museum educator Adrienne Whaley says that "the ideas of the American Revolution are so important to us today." Based on what you saw, what do you think she means?

## **Discussion Answers Grades 4–6**

**Answers will vary but should be similar to:**

1. In the 1600s and early 1700s, America wasn't yet a country; it was made up of 13 colonies that were owned and controlled by Great Britain. People who lived in these colonies included settlers from European countries, African people who had been brought over and forced to work as slaves, and Native Americans from dozens of tribes and nations.
2. This section explains that Americans grew more and more angry at England and its king, because they wanted more control over America's laws and future. This led to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775. Images of furious-looking colonists, tense drum music, shouting sound effects, and narration like "anger exploded into war" all help you understand the feelings of American colonists at this time.
3. According to Matthew Skic, the most important part of the Revolutionary War was when the Continental Congress issued the Declaration of Independence in July of 1776. The Declaration stated that America would have a government that was directed by the people, rather than a king or queen, which was a new idea at the time. The idea was so inspiring to American colonists that they were willing to fight for it in the American Revolution.
4. The first battle Joseph fought in was the Battle of Brooklyn in 1776. This battle, which took place soon after the Declaration of Independence was signed, was the biggest of the entire war—and yet not many people have heard about it.
5. By studying objects from the past, we can learn about what everyday life was like for people living in that time period. For example, by studying the type of knapsack used by Revolutionary War soldiers, you can imagine a young soldier like Joseph carrying one filled with clothing and other necessities for life on the battlefield.
6. The section features dramatic footage of soldiers firing muskets, running through smoky battlefields, and lying wounded in the grass. Scary drum music plays as Skic explains that Joseph would have seen "blood on the field" and "soldiers retreating for their lives." All of this helps you understand the horrors of being a Revolutionary War soldier.
7. The British army had more soldiers, better weapons, and more cannons than the American army. They also had help from the Hessians, German soldiers who were among the best in the world.
8. Joseph Plumb Martin fought as a soldier in the American army because he believed in the cause of independence from England. London Pleasants, who was enslaved, fought because the British promised him freedom in exchange for joining their army. London was a trumpeter in the British army, which meant that, unlike Joseph, he was not shooting a musket. But both young soldiers saw horrible things and faced terrible dangers on the battlefield—and the danger London faced was even greater, because as an enslaved person, he could be whipped or killed if the Americans captured him.

### Discussion Answers Grades 4–6 (Continued)

9. The section features images of people from a variety of different groups, such as an African-American soldier, a member of the Oneida Indian nation, an enslaved woman, and a British soldier.
10. According to Tarshis, Washington was a hero because he never gave up fighting for America's freedom, even as he faced tough challenges and painful failures. Though he did not want to lead the Continental Army at first—because he had a happy life and little experience in war—he agreed because he believed strongly in American independence. And even after his humiliating defeat in the Battle of Brooklyn, he “worked hard to learn from his mistakes,” as Tarshis explains, and persisted through “dark days” and “doubts.” His refusal to quit eventually led the Americans to victory.

**Think About It!** Answers will vary. Students may say that the colonists were fighting for the right to have a say in how their country was run, and that this right is fundamental in America today.

## Discussion Questions Grades 6–8

1. Based on the second section of the video, how was America in the 1600s and early 1700s different from America today? (1:52–3:10)
2. What is the mood of the video from 3:12 to 4:29? Why? How do the narration, visuals, music, and sound effects in this section help create the mood?
3. According to museum curator Matthew Skic, how would a government inspired by the Declaration of Independence be different from other governments colonists were familiar with?
4. How did Joseph Plumb Martin's book about his experience in the war help author Lauren Tarshis write her book *I Survived the American Revolution, 1776*? Consider what Lauren Tarshis says in the section of the video from 7:09 to 9:35.
5. Think about the Revolutionary War objects that Skic shows Tarshis from 9:36 to 12:31 of the video. Based on this section, what can we learn by studying objects from the past? Explain using examples from the section.
6. How does the section about Martin's experience on the battlefield help you understand the horrors of being a Revolutionary War soldier? Consider the music, narration, and visuals. (12:31–13:01)
7. According to the section of the video from 13:20 to 14:27, what role did the Hessian soldiers play in the Revolutionary War? How was their presence helpful to the British?
8. Lauren Tarshis says that London Pleasants was taking a "double risk" by joining the British army. What does she mean? Why was it risky for Pleasants to sign up to fight? (15:39)
9. According to the section of the video from 19:34 to 20:19, what role did women play in the Revolutionary War?
10. In the section about George Washington, what is Tarshis's tone (or attitude)? Explain using evidence from the video. (20:31–23:18)

### Discussion Answers Grades 6–8

Answers will vary, but may be similar to:

1. In the 1600s and early 1700s, America wasn't yet a country; it was made up of 13 colonies that were owned and controlled by Great Britain. People who lived in these colonies included settlers from European countries, African people who had been brought over and forced to work as slaves, and Native Americans from dozens of tribes and nations.
2. The mood of this section of the video is tense and dramatic because Tarshis is explaining how the Americans grew more and more angry at England and its king. Images of furious-looking colonists, tense drum music, shouting sound effects, and narration like "anger exploded into war" all help to create this tense and dramatic mood.
3. According to museum curator Matthew Skic, the Declaration of Independence introduced the idea of a country's government being directed by its own people, rather than a king or queen.
4. Joseph Plumb Martin's book helped Lauren Tarshis gather accurate historical details about the Revolutionary War and understand what it was really like to be a soldier in the war.
5. By studying objects from the past, we can learn about what everyday life was like for people living in that time period. For example, by studying the type of knapsack used by Revolutionary War soldiers, you can imagine a young soldier like Joseph carrying one filled with clothing and other necessities for life on the battlefield.
6. The section features dramatic footage of soldiers firing muskets, running through smoky battlefields, and lying wounded in the grass. Scary drum music plays as Skic explains that Joseph would have seen "blood on the field" and "soldiers retreating for their lives." All of this helps you understand the horrors of being a Revolutionary War soldier.
7. The Hessian soldiers provided more manpower to the British army. Hessian soldiers were among the best in the world, and according to curator Matthew Skic, the sight of these soldiers in their ornate uniforms would have been very intimidating to the much less experienced American soldiers.
8. Lauren Tarshis means that as an enslaved person, the danger London faced was even greater than that of other soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War. Though Pleasants was given his freedom by the British army, if the Americans had captured him, he could have been sold back into slavery, whipped, or killed.

**Discussion Answers Grades 6–8 (Continued)**

9. Women played an important role in the Revolutionary War. Although they could not be soldiers, they provided vital support to the American army. Women would follow the army, cleaning and doing laundry for the troops. According to Lauren Tarshis and Matthew Skic, the Americans would not have won the war without the support of women. Additionally, some women like Abigail Adams played a part in formulating the idea of the Revolution before the war even began.
10. Tarshis's tone is admiring as she talks about General George Washington. Tarshis says Washington believed strongly in American independence and was "willing to risk everything to fight for that cause." She says that even after his humiliating defeat in the Battle of Brooklyn, Washington "worked hard to learn from his mistakes," and persisted through "dark days" and "doubts." These details show that Tarshis admires Washington for his conviction, courage, and resilience.