

# ★ Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor ★

## Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students about the sacrifices of ten of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence. The first activity requires students to complete a crossword puzzle based on biographies of these ten signers. In the follow-up activity, students work in groups to create life-size models of the signers.

## Objective

1. The student will evaluate the sacrifices made by the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence for the good of the colonies.
2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of changes in clothing styles at different times in history by creating a life size drawing of a signer.
3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the sacrifices made by the 56 signers of the Declaration by composing a biography of a signer that includes a description of the signer's life before, during, and after the revolution.

## Theme-Freedom

1. When freedom is not given, sometimes it must be taken. This notion was the basis for the decision of the signers to sign and support the Declaration of Independence.
2. Sometimes individuals must make sacrifices for decisions they make.

## NCSS Standards

Ile. develop critical sensitivities...regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts.  
IVd. relate such factors as...capabilities, learning, motivation, personality, perception, and behavior to individual development.

Xd. practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic.  
Xe. explain and analyze...forms of citizen action that influence public policy decisions.  
Xh. analyze the effectiveness of selected public policies and citizen behaviors in realizing the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government.

## Time

45 minutes—Signers Puzzle  
90 minutes—Create a Signer

## Materials

### Signers' Puzzle

- ★ "Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor" handout
- ★ Signers Puzzle

### Create a Signer

- ★ Poster paper, pencils, erasers
- ★ Markers, Crayons, or colored pencils
- ★ "Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor" sheet
- ★ Pictures of colonial dress
- ★ Signer picture transparencies
- ★ Overhead projector & Grading sheet
- ★ Website - [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

## Preparation

### Signers' Puzzle

- ★ Copy "Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor" handout for groups or individual students.
- ★ Copy Signers Puzzle for all students.

### Create a Signer

- ★ Gather art supplies for groups.
- ★ Reuse copies of "Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor" handout from Signers Puzzle activity.
- ★ Find examples of colonial dress.
- ★ Make signer picture transparencies.
- ★ Copy Grading Sheet rubric for groups.

## Focus

Ask students if they know what it means to “put your John Hancock” on something. Explain that John Hancock was the first of the fifty-six brave men to sign the Declaration of Independence.

## Activity

### Signers Puzzle

1. Have students read the introduction from the “Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor” handout. (See Links page on [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org) for additional resources on the signers of the Declaration.)
2. Have students work individually or in groups to complete the Signers Puzzle using the biographies of the ten signers on the “Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor” handout.

### Create a Signer

3. A. Have students work in groups to select one of the ten signers of the Declaration of Independence from the “Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor” handout.
- B. Instruct students to make a life-sized model of their signer including the following:
  - ★ the face of their signer traced from an overhead projection,
  - ★ an object such as a quill pen or felt hat to represent the time period of the signer,
  - ★ the appropriate colonial clothing for their signer to wear. (Consider his profession/occupation, wealth, etc. Remember that many of the signers were wealthy.), and
  - ★ a paragraph below the signer’s feet which tells about life before, during, and after the Revolutionary War.
- C. Provide groups with art supplies including a piece of poster paper long enough for the student being traced.
- D. Have groups trace one student from the neck down to the feet. Each group can take turns with the overhead projector to trace the head of their signer onto the poster paper.
- E. Have students draw in the details and color their model. Remind them to include facts about their signer at the bottom of the picture.
- F. Students can present their posters to the class, explaining the details in their drawings and reviewing the facts about the signers. Signer models should be displayed prominently in the classroom or hallway.

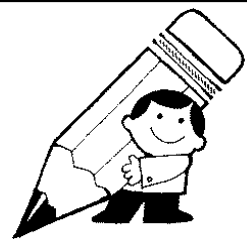
4. Students may research a signer and write a brief biography or report about him. The students may present these reports and/or their findings in class. Discuss/review as a class what the signers and their lives were like during the colonial period. Who were the signers? What were their personalities, histories, occupations, families, and lifestyles like? What were their beliefs, values, and motivations? Students may also try to find other portraits in artwork that represent one or more signers to cite and present. The teacher will review information on the signers and answer any questions.
5. Also referring to the “Declaration of Independence” unit, discuss/review with students why these brave individuals signed the Declaration of Independence and what it meant for their lives. Was it dangerous to sign the declaration at that time? What happened to the signers? Talk about the bravery and sacrifice of these men. Despite their hardships and suffering, what was the final outcome of the Declaration? Was it worth the risk? Also discuss the peaceful co-existence today of the U. S. and England and how relations have changed.
6. Have students examine a facsimile, poster, or representation of the original Declaration document and see if they can identify and decipher the signatures of these brave men. (See the “Declaration of Independence” unit for a facsimile of the document.)

## **Closure**

Remind the students that these ten men, while generally not well-known, made tremendous sacrifices for us so that we could have the freedom that we enjoy today.

### **Assessment**

Students will write a paragraph or a journal entry describing how they would feel if someone or something very important to them were taken away from them because of a belief they held or a decision they made.



# *Lives, Fortunes, Sacred Honor*

Americans celebrate the Fourth of July as the day that men from the thirteen original American colonies approved the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, is a document that explains why the American colonies owned by the country of Great Britain wanted to be free from the laws and government of that country.

Two hundred years ago, most common people could not read or write, and most had very little money. The men who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776, however, were not common men. They were men who had money and influence. Most of them had attended very good schools. These men lived in large houses with servants to care for them. They ate the best food and wore the best clothes. All of these men knew that if the colonies broke away from Great Britain, war would soon follow and Britain would send many ships and soldiers to punish the colonists. These men knew that signing the Declaration of Independence meant the possibility of losing everything, even their own lives. In the last sentence of the Declaration they declared, “And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other ***our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.***”

Of the fifty-six men that signed the Declaration of Independence, five were captured and mistreated by the British, twelve had their homes destroyed, two lost sons fighting in the American Army, one had two sons captured, and nine of the fifty-six died during the war from hardships or violence.

Here are the stories of ten of the fifty-six men who signed the Declaration of Independence:

## **Carter Braxton**

This signer was a son of a wealthy Virginia planter. Carter Braxton attended the College of William and Mary and received a good education as a young man. During the war, Braxton’s ships were filled with goods and materials that could make him much money when sold in other far away lands. Unfortunately, his ships became the targets of the British Navy and were swept from the sea. Braxton survived the war, but he lost much of his wealth due to the war.

## **William Floyd**

Born in Brookhaven on Long Island, New York, William Floyd received from his parents their large and comfortable home. Later in life he became a major general for the state’s militia and served in the Continental Congress for the state of New York. Because of his signature on the Declaration, Floyd was forced to leave his wealth and property when the British Army came to Long Island during the war. Floyd survived the war, but the American Revolution left him much poorer.

## John Hancock

John Hancock had received great wealth from his uncle. He was one of the richest men in New England and had offered much of his fortune to the city of Boston. As President of the Continental Congress that approved the Declaration, Hancock was the only delegate to sign the Declaration on July 4, 1776. Hancock is famous for his large signature (shown below) on the Declaration of Independence. During the war, he saw some of his beloved city burned and destroyed by British soldiers.



## Benjamin Harrison

Born in Berkeley, Charles City County in the colony of Virginia, Benjamin Harrison grew up in a very large house and enjoyed all the things that a lot of money could buy. Harrison's family was well-known in Virginia. Harrison attended the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Harrison did not like the British laws that he felt were bad for the colonies. After signing the Declaration of Independence, Harrison was always careful not to be captured by British soldiers. When the British Army came to Virginia, led by a man named Benedict Arnold, they looted and destroyed Harrison's home. He died in 1791 at the age of 65. One of his sons and one great-grandson later became presidents of the United States.

## John Hart

During the war, John Hart of New Jersey had to flee from the attacking British soldiers. His farm was destroyed and his cattle slaughtered for the use by the British Army. Hart was hunted by the British because of his signature on the Declaration of Independence. He stayed in hiding until General George Washington's success at taking Trenton. John Hart died in 1780, one of the most difficult years for the struggling colonists, and never lived to see the victory of the American Army over the British.

## Francis Hopkinson

Francis Hopkinson was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but represented New Jersey when he signed the Declaration. He was the son of a wealthy lawyer and went to college to become a lawyer also. During the war, British soldiers occupied Philadelphia and looted and destroyed the large house in which Francis Hopkinson was raised. After the war, Francis Hopkinson became a judge and moved back to Pennsylvania where he died at the age of fifty-four.

## **Francis Lewis**

Francis Lewis, at sixty-three years of age, was the oldest signer of the Declaration of Independence to come from his home state of New York. Lewis made much money as a merchant—someone who buys and sells goods. In his fifties he gave up working and retired to his home at Whitestone on Long Island, New York. Like other colonists, Lewis also did not like the British laws and government. After he signed his name to the Declaration, he knew that the British would want to punish him. During the war, his house was burned and his wife was imprisoned by the British. Because of her suffering, his wife, Elizabeth, did not live as long as she should have. Francis lived to be 90 years of age and died in New York in 1802.

## **Arthur Middleton**

Arthur Middleton was born at Middleton Place near Charleston, South Carolina. His parents were rich enough to send him to school in London, England—the capitol city of Great Britain. When Arthur Middleton returned to the American colonies, he settled at his large farm called Middleton Place where he had a good life. After representing his state by signing the Declaration, he knew that he had put his fortune, as well as his life, at risk. During the American Revolution, Charleston was captured by the British, and Arthur Middleton was taken as a prisoner. He was sent to Saint Augustine, Florida, where he stayed until the American victory over the British. He died in South Carolina in 1788 when he was only forty-five years old.

## **Thomas Nelson, Jr.**

Thomas Nelson was born in Yorktown, Virginia on December 26, 1738. At the age of fourteen, he was sent to England by his wealthy father to receive an education. He attended Trinity College and returned to America in 1761. During the war, this signer of the Declaration had his home occupied by the British General, Lord Cornwallis. At the Battle of Yorktown, Nelson told General George Washington to fire on the British soldiers staying in his own home. He borrowed up to \$2,000,000 dollars to aid the French Navy which was on the side of the colonists. When the war was over he paid back the loans with his own money and was never paid back by the new American government. He died on January 4, 1789.

## **Richard Stockton**

Born in New Jersey, Richard Stockton received a formal education and became a very successful lawyer. As a young man he attended the College of New Jersey. Stockton initially steered away from politics, but as the war with Britain approached, he found it difficult not to get involved. He served as a Member of Council for the state of New Jersey and became a Justice for the State Supreme Court. In the autumn of 1776, after signing the Declaration of Independence, Stockton's home was taken by the British. Soon after, he was captured by the British and treated very badly. After he was released, he suffered health problems as a result of his captivity. Richard Stockton, although not as outspoken for freedom as his fellow signers, gave much for the cause of liberty.

# Signers

# Puzzle

						5						
			2/6								10	
		1						9				
	7											
								3				
				8								
4												

## Across

1. His ships were swept from the sea by the British Navy.
2. He was the only delegate to sign the Declaration on July 4<sup>th</sup>.
3. His house was burned, and his wife was imprisoned.
4. He was imprisoned at St. Augustine, Florida by the British.

## Down

5. This signer from New Jersey was captured and mistreated by the British.
6. His farm was destroyed, and he died during the war in 1780.
7. British soldiers destroyed his home in Philadelphia.
8. He was forced to leave his wealth and property in Long Island.
9. He had George Washington fire on his own house because the British had taken it.
10. He had a son and a great-grandson who became presidents of the United States.

# Signers

# Puzzle

						<sup>5</sup> S						
						T						
						O						
			<sup>2/6</sup> H	A	N	C	O	C	K		<sup>10</sup> H	
			A			K					A	
		<sup>1</sup> B	R	A	X	T	O	<sup>9</sup> N			R	
	<sup>7</sup> H		T			O		E			R	
	O					N		<sup>3</sup> L	E	W	I	S
	P							S			S	
	K			<sup>8</sup> F				O			O	
<sup>4</sup> M	I	D	D	L	E	T	O	N			N	
	N			O								
	S			Y								
	O			D								
	N											

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# *Create a Signer Grading Sheet*

Group Name or Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Students:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

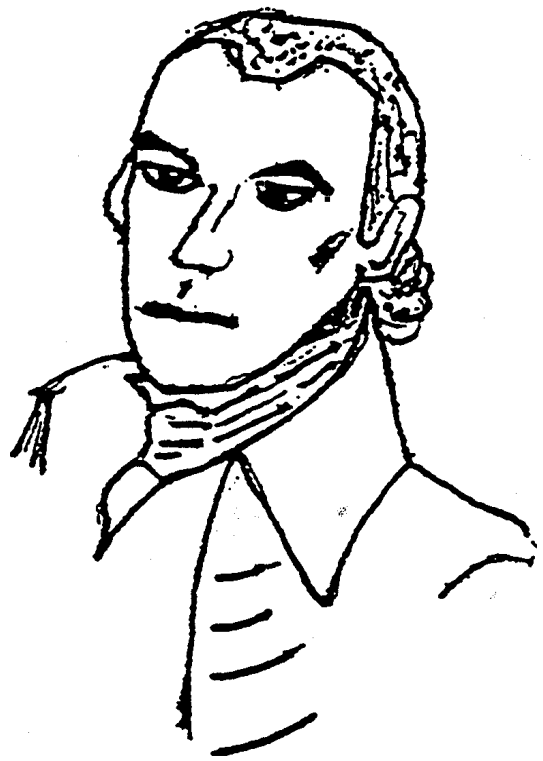
For Teacher Use Only:

Category	Circle One											Score
Neatness	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	<input type="text"/>
Creativity	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	<input type="text"/>
Accuracy	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	<input type="text"/>
Group Work	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	<input type="text"/>
Overall Quality	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	<input type="text"/>
Total Grade											<input type="text"/>	



*Carter Braxton*

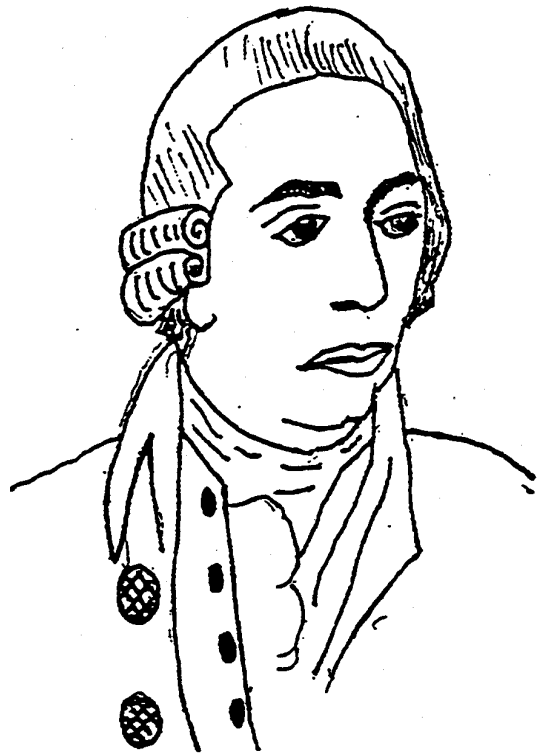
*Carter  
Braxton*



*William  
Floyd*



*John  
Hancock*



*Benjamin  
Harrison*



*John Hart*

*John Hart*



*Francis  
Hopkinson*



*Francis Lewis*



*Arthur  
Middleton*



*Thomas Nelson Jr.*



*Richard  
Stockton*