

A Spy Called James

The Contributions and Legacy of Armistead Lafayette during the American Revolution

- Subject:** History and Social Sciences, Language Arts
- Grade Level:** Fourth Grade
- Topic:** The Civil Rights Movement in Virginia; Brown vs the Board of Education
- Guiding Questions:** How did James Armistead Lafayette's actions as a spy impact the outcome of the American Revolution and what challenges did he face in his quest for freedom?
- Objectives:** Students will understand the contributions of James Armistead Lafayette during the American Revolution.
Students will analyze primary sources related to James Armistead Lafayette.
Students will create a timeline of key events in James Armistead Lafayette's life.
Students will discuss the importance of spies during the American Revolution.
- VA SOL:** VS.1. The student will demonstrate skills for historical thinking, geographical analysis, economic decision making, and responsible citizenship by:
- a) analyzing and interpreting artifacts and primary and secondary sources to understand events in history;
 - b) analyzing the impact of geographic features on people, places, and events to support an understanding of events in Virginia history;
 - c) interpreting charts, graphs, and pictures to determine characteristics of people, places, or events in Virginia history;
 - d) recognizing and explaining the interrelationships among people, places, and events in Virginia history;
- VS.5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the role of Virginia in the American Revolution by:
- a) identifying the reasons why the colonies went to war with Great Britain as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
 - b) identifying the various roles played by Virginians in the Revolutionary War era, with emphasis on James Armistead Lafayette.
- Materials:** [A Spy Called James](#) by Anne Rockwell
Chart paper and markers
Primary source documents from the Library of Congress (letters, maps, images related to James Armistead Lafayette)
Timeline worksheet
Access to computers/tablets for accessing online primary sources

Day 1: Introduction to James Armistead Lafayette

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

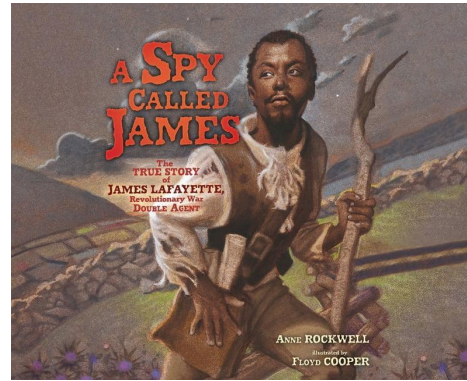
- Begin with a brief discussion about the American Revolution and the role of spies.
- Introduce the book "A Spy Called James" by Anne Rockwell and provide some background information about James Armistead Lafayette.

2. Read Aloud (30 minutes)

- Read "A Spy Called James" aloud to the class.
- Pause periodically to ask comprehension questions and discuss key points from the story.

3. Discussion (20 minutes)

- Discuss the significance of James Armistead Lafayette's contributions.
- Talk about the challenges he faced as an enslaved person and how he gained freedom.
- Use notes cards to jot down important events from book



Day 2: Analyzing Primary Sources

1. Review (10 minutes)

- Review the previous day's discussion and key points from the book.

2. Primary Source Analysis (30 minutes) Appendix A, B, C, & D

- Introduce the primary source documents from the Library of Congress.
- Divide students into small groups and provide each group with a different primary source related to James Armistead Lafayette (e.g., letters from Marquis de Lafayette, maps of Yorktown, images of Revolutionary War scenes).
- Have each group analyze their primary source using a worksheet with guiding questions (e.g., What do you see? What does this document tell us about James Armistead Lafayette?).

3. Group Presentations (20 minutes)

- Each group presents their findings to the class.
- Discuss how these primary sources provide a deeper understanding of James Armistead Lafayette's life and contributions.

Day 3: Creating a Timeline

1. Introduction to Timelines (10 minutes)

- Explain what a timeline is and how it can be used to organize historical events.

2. Timeline Activity (30 minutes)

<https://www.biography.com/military-figures/james-armistead>

- Provide students with key events from James Armistead Lafayette's life and the American Revolution.

- Have students create a timeline using these events, either on paper or using timeline creation software.

3. Reflection and Discussion (20 minutes)

- Have students share their timelines with the class.
- Discuss the importance of James Armistead Lafayette's contributions and how spies played a crucial role in the American Revolution.

Optional Extension

- Research other key figures from Virginia during the American Revolution and create biographical posters.
- Write a journal entry from the perspective of James Armistead Lafayette describing his experiences as a spy.

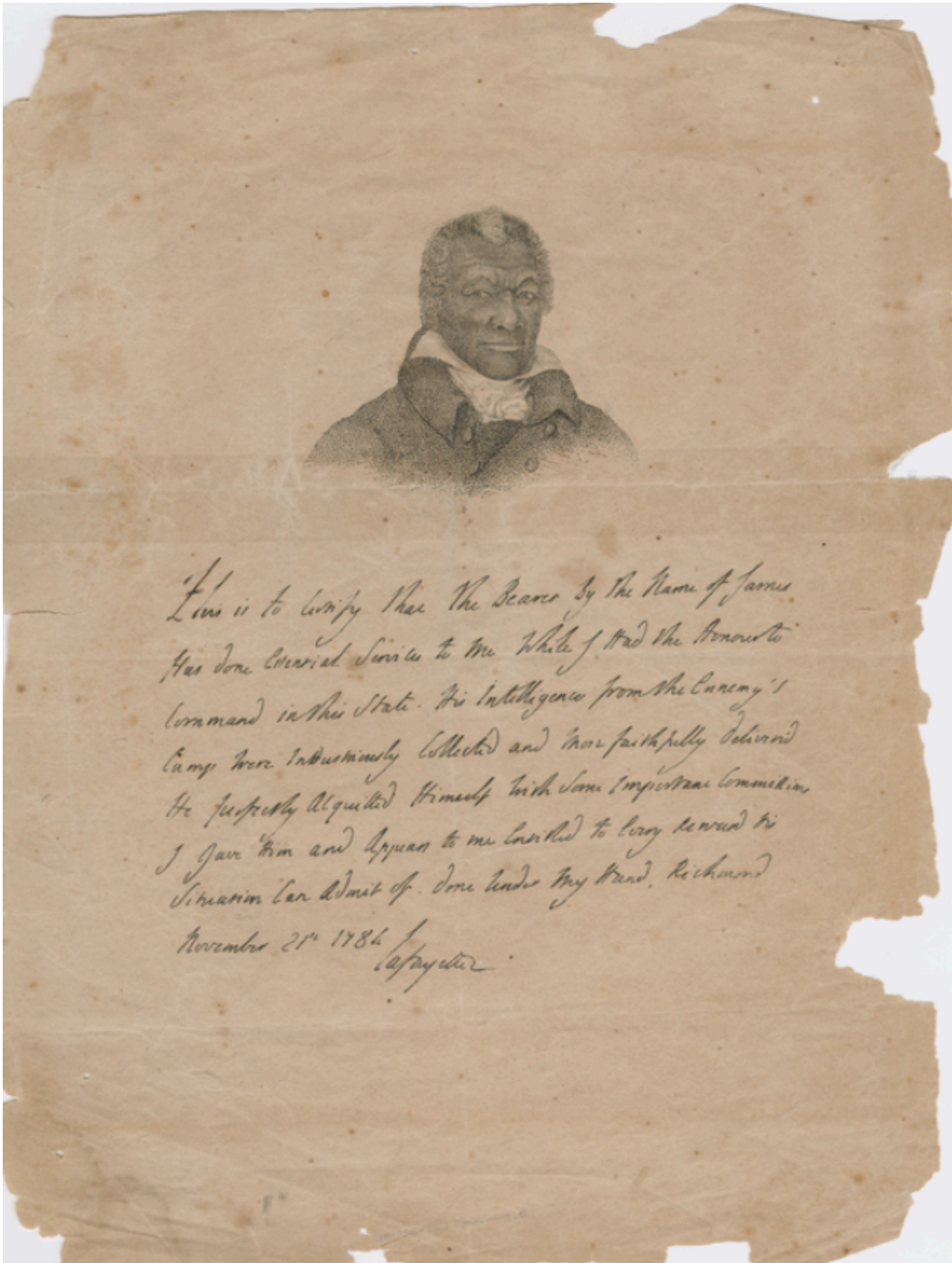
Lesson Created by Amy Allen, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education at Virginia Tech.

Appendix A



Image retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gvhs01.vhs0005/>

Appendix B



Appendix C



Article retrieved from: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010715552/>

