PRIMARY SOURCE: FIGHTING

Directions: Read the following account, and answer the questions below.

Jeremiah Greenman went to war in 1775, just after his seventeenth birthday. He kept a journal during the entire Revolutionary War—first as a private, later reaching the rank of first lieutenant. He was captured twice and wounded once.

Note: Some spelling and punctuation have been changed from the original.

DECEMBER 1775 POINT AUX [Canada]
Monday 11 to the 21. during our time we stayed we took several prisoners and cannonaded & bombarded each other both night & day. During the transaction we hear that the two men that was left back with Leur. MCeland and other Sick returned. Inform’d that Capt MCeland was [buried] at the first French Inhabittance and the others died in the woods. Continuing fire both Sides. A number of men kil’d & wounded. Made another attempt to send a flag into the city but they would not receive it. The small pox very plenty among us. Preparing to storm the city. Making pike and Spears....

Saturday 23. the small pox very brief among our troops. A very brisk cannonading [cannonading]. Our Detachment was drewed up and form’d a Square where General Mountgomey asked us if we were willing to storm the city & the bigger part of them seem willing.... The enemy threweth Shells into Saint Rox and very plenty kill and wound a few. We return as many back to them....

Thursday 28 and 29. very plesant [weather]. Some of our Company dieth with the small pox. A very brisk cannonading [cannonading] both Sides.

[October 1777, New Jersey]
Wednesday 22... we fetched in to the fort all the Wounded & dressed them shewing [showing] as [much] humanity as possible. Colo. Donop was attended with care. In the attack we lost 7 of our Regiment killed & 14 Wounded. [One] of the Killed proved to be my Capn. Shaw who was shot through the Neck. In all Killed and Wounded it amounted to 31—

Tuesday 23. the fore part of this day employing ourselves in burying the dead. 73 buried in one grave 4 or 5 in [an]other & C. About 9 o’clock the [British] Ships Eagle, Summersit, Issis, Agusta, Pearl Leverpool & Several Frigates with a Galley, came up ... 500 yards from the fort, at the same time the Land Batteries & our gallies, & the British Squadron engaged and one of the Most Solemnest Actions commenced, that may be seen by a soldiers eye, the Spectacle was magnificent, to see at once, the river covered with Ships, four great fire ships, in a blaze, floating on the Water. The Island
& Main covered with Smoak & fire. Part of the English Army drew up in battle array on Province Island ready to throw themselves into boats, to storm the Fort, which appeared involved with fire & was the prize of the day, the firing lasted 'till 2 o'clock PM with relentless fury....

Friday 24 to Thursday 30. We hourly expect another visit from the Enemy....


**QUESTIONS**

1. What kind of fighting does Greenman describe? Is there a clear beginning and end of the fighting? Is there a clear winner or loser?

2. List three dangers faced by Greenman and his comrades.
PRIMARY SOURCES: DEFEAT

Directions: Read the following accounts, and answer the questions below.

Michael Graham was a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, who served in the Pennsylvania militia in 1776, and later in a county militia unit in Virginia. In 1832, he wrote this account of his experiences at Long Island, New York, in August 1776.

I left them (Colonel Miles was taken prisoner and Lieutenant Sloan killed), as the firing had ceased where I had retreated from. I returned to near the same place. I had not been at this place I think more than one minute before the British came in a different direction from where they were ... firing platoons as they marched. I turned and took one fire at them and then made my escape as fast as I could. By this time our troops were routed in every direction.

It is impossible for me to describe the confusion and horror of the scene that ensued: the artillery flying with the chains over the horses' backs, our men running in almost every direction, and run which way they would, they were almost sure to meet the British or Hessians. And the enemy huzzahing [cheering] when they took prisoners made it truly a day of distress to the Americans. I escaped by getting behind the British that had been engaged with Lord Stirling and entered a swamp or marsh through which a great many of our men were retreating. Some of them were mired and crying to their fellows for God's sake to help them out; but every man was intent on his own safety and no assistance was rendered. At the side of the marsh there was a pond which I took to be a millpond. Numbers, as they came to this pond, jumped in, and some were drowned. Soon after I entered the marsh, a cannonading commenced from our batteries on the British, and they retreated, and I got safely into camp. Out of the eight men that were taken from the company to which I belonged the day before the battle on guard, I only escaped. The others were either killed or taken prisoners.


Joseph Wood, a Rhode Island soldier, served three tours of duty in the Continental army beginning at age fourteen. In 1848, when he applied for a pension for his service, Wood wrote this account of events at Fort Griswold, Connecticut, on September 6, 1781.

Colonel Ledyard then commanded Fort Griswold. I remained in the service in the fort till the next September, when the fort was taken by the British....

When Colonel Ledyard found that he was not able to withstand the attack upon
the fort, he opened the gate to surrender. As he did so, the British commander asked, "Who commands this fort?"

Colonel Ledyard answered, "I did, but you do now," and presented to the British commander his sword.

The British commander took the sword and thrust it through Colonel Ledyard. This I heard and saw. Upon that, Captain Allen, who was standing nearby in the act of presenting his sword to surrender, drew it back and thrust it through the British officer who had thus killed Colonel Ledyard. Captain Allen was then immediately killed by the British. This I also saw. I then leaped the walls and made my escape....

Avery and myself traveled up the river together a short distance, I think about a mile, when we found a boat. We then got into the boat and rowed across to the other side of the river. We there met large numbers of the militia on their way to New London. We fell in with them and went down to New London. It was near night when we got to New London. It was before dark. When we got there, [former American, now British general Benedict] Arnold had burned the town and left with his forces....

I also recollect that a fellow soldier with whom I was well acquainted and whose name was Jehiel Judd was killed in the fort. I also recollect that a man by the name of Frink, another by the name of Allen, and another by the name of Miner were killed in the fort.... There were two men in the fort by the name of Miner, one a drummer and the other a fifer, and I suppose they were both killed.


QUESTIONS

1. Soldiers could be punished severely for running away. Why were Graham and Wood willing to risk punishment?

2. What could happen to soldiers when they were defeated?
PRIMARY SOURCES: SURVIVAL

Directions: Read the following accounts, and answer the questions below.

Jeremiah Greenman went to war in 1775, just after his seventeenth birthday. He kept a journal during the entire Revolutionary War—first as a private, later reaching the rank of first lieutenant. He was captured twice and wounded once.

Note: Some spelling and punctuation have been changed from the original.

NOVEMBER 1775

Wednesday 1... In a very miserable Sittuation. Nothing to eat but dogs. Here we killed another and cooked. I got Some of that by good [luck] with the head of a Squirrel with a parsol of Candle wicks boiled up together wich made a very fine Soup without Salt. Here on this we made a noble feast without bread or Salt thinking it was the best that ever I eat & so went to Sleep contented...

Tuesday 2. this morn when we arose many of us so weak that we could hardly stand... I happened to git a pint of water that a partridge was boyled in... In the afternoon when we came in Sight of the Cattle which the advance party [of soldiers] had sent out it was the Joyfulest Sight that I ever saw & Some could not refrain from crying for joy... hear we killed a creature and Some of the men [were] so hungry before this Creature was dressed they had the Skin and all entrails guts and everything that could be eaten on the fires a-boyling...

Friday 3... we met Some Indians on the march that had some flour cakes & some potatoes which we bought of them giving a very great price. Then we came in Sight of a house the first I had seen 27 days where there was beef and bread for us which we cooked very plenty of. Some of the men made thair Selves Sick eating so much...

Friday 24. this day thare was a counsel held concerning our allowance. We were order’d to have one pound & a quarter of beaf & the same of flour. Here we got morgasons [moccasins] made of half tan’d leather wich made us comfortable for we was very bad off for Cloths &c forth.

Joseph Plumb Martin was born on November 21, 1760 in western Massachusetts. Martin served as a Continental soldier in a Connecticut regiment from 1776 to 1783.

Having had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours ... one of the men near the Lieut. Colonel complained of being hungry; the Colonel, putting his hand into his coat pocket, took out a piece of an ear of Indian corn burnt black as a coal. “Here,” said he to the man complaining, “eat this and learn to be a soldier.”

It was dark; there was no water to be found and I was perishing with thirst. I searched for water till I was weary and came to my tent without finding any. Fatigue and thirst, joined with hunger, almost made me desperate.... Just after I arrived at my tent, two soldiers, whom I did not know, passed by. They had some water in their canteens which they told me they had found a good distance off, but could not direct me to the place as it was very dark. I tried to beg a draught of water from them.... At length I persuaded them to sell me a drink for three pence, Pennsylvania currency, which was every cent of property I could then call my own.

Almost every one has heard of the soldiers of the Revolution being tracked by the blood of their feet on the frozen ground. This is literally true, and the thousandth part of their sufferings has not, nor ever will be told.... On our march from the Valley Forge, through the Jerseys, and at the boasted Battle of Monmouth, a fourth part of the troops had not a scrip of anything but their ragged shirt flaps to cover their nakedness, and were obliged to remain so long after. I had picked up a few articles of light clothing during the past winter, while among the Pennsylvania farmers, or I should have been in the same predicament.


QUESTIONS

1. What did soldiers eat when rations were unavailable? How were the items prepared?

2. Besides food, what else did soldiers need to survive? What happened when these items were not available?
PRIMARY SOURCES: WOUNDS

Directions: Read the following accounts, and answer the questions below.

**John Adlum** served in the Pennsylvania militia as a corporal in 1776 and was captured in November of that year. In 1833, he submitted an account of his service to receive a pension.

Of our regiment, there was Captain Stake, to whose company I attached myself... of Captain Trett's company I only recollect Ensign Myers, a blacksmith, and who was the most uncouth-looking man in the army and one of the greatest dunces. Ens. Jacob Barnitz of Stake's company was shot through both legs and lay on the field of battle all night naked, having been stripped by the Hessians... He was taken up the next day after the battle by those appointed to bury the dead and carried to the hospital in New York, where one leg was cured, and he would not suffer [allow] the surgeons to amputate the other. He carried the ball a little below his knee for thirty-two years, when it became so painful, he was obliged to have his leg amputated above his knee. In our brigade the sergeants, etc., with but few exceptions, were the most talented and efficient officers in the brigade.


**William Hutchinson**, born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, served six terms in the county militia and a year in the Continental army. In 1836, he applied for a pension, and dictated the following story of his service.

A Quaker, a stranger, came to our quarters and brought with him a man which he said he had found lying in the woods whose clothes, coat, vest, and trousers were stiff with gore... Our captain immediately dispatched his lieutenant for a physician, who, when he returned, was so fortunate as to bring two with him. We then procured the means of washing and cleansing the wounded man, and upon examining him there was found, as our captain afterwards announced to the men, forty-six distinct bayonet wounds in different parts of his body, either of which were deep and sufficiently large to have been fatal if they had been in vital parts. But they were mostly flesh wounds, and every one of them had bled profusely, and many of them commenced bleeding again upon being washed. His wounds were dressed, his bloody garments were burned, and by orders of our captain, he was waited upon with strict attention until he was able to walk, and then was by Lieutenant Corry taken somewhere not distant to a hospital...  

QUESTIONS

1. List three events that happened to wounded soldiers in Adlum's and Hutchinson's accounts.

2. What might have happened to the wounded soldiers in Adlum's and Hutchinson's accounts, if they had not been rescued?
PRIMARY SOURCES: CAPTURE

Directions: Read the following accounts, and answer the questions below.

William Gipson volunteered in North Carolina militia units five different times between 1777 and 1781. In 1832, to prove his service while applying for a pension, he dictated his experiences in the fall and winter of 1780.

[At] the mouth of Briar Creek, where the American army halted and the British army came up and gave battle[,] this applicant was [in the] engagement. He was close by Colonel Alston when he hoisted a white handkerchief upon the hilt of his sword as a signal of his surrender, and this applicant, with twenty or thirty of the regiment, including Colonel Alston, were taken prisoners, and a great number, but how many he does not recollect, were taken prisoners from other regiments.

The prisoners in a few days were marched towards Savannah [Georgia], and this applicant with the rest were there confined in an old ship called “the old Roebuck,” which was placed at a considerable distance out in the bay. He thinks about five hundred prisoners were in the ship, including what were in before with the number captured at the mouth of Briar Creek. This applicant well remembers the severity of this imprisonment. He and his fellow sufferers were daily tempted to enlist into the king’s army by gold and promise. A great many [en]listed, and many died with disease.


Jeremiah Greenman went to war in 1775, just after his seventeenth birthday. He kept a journal during the entire Revolutionary War—first as a private, later reaching the rank of first lieutenant. He was captured twice and wounded once.

Note: Some spelling and punctuation have been changed from the original.

APRIL 1776 QUEBEC PRISON
Monday 1 to Tuesday 30, this day ... some officers came [and] searched every man’s pack and the room to see if they could not find some arms or ammunition. They mistrusted that the people of the town equipped us with arms but they found nothing. Then they put us [in] Irons some leg bolts & some handcuffs which was very uncomfortable. The officers of ye Jail or provost master counts us twice a day. It is very Sickly among us recently. Such provision as they give us they give us warm biscuits which we think was poisoned for the doctors could cure us just as they pleased / Say or do what you would, they would give such phisick [medicine] as they thought ... Complain of ever so different an ailment they would serve us all alike and give one sort of phisick ... but we soon got better. Our people keep a Continual fire in the
lower town which we are very glad to see hoping we shall be redeemed very soon but almost ready to give up fearing they will not come. But we keep up our hearts with a pewter fife that we made out of all the buttons that we could git off our Clothes which made us some merry. So we passed away the long tedious time.


QUESTIONS

1. What were some conditions faced by prisoners of war?

2. Why might the British offer gold and promises to get American soldiers to enlist in the king’s army? Why might some Americans accept?
PRIMARY SOURCES: LONG MARCHES

Directions: Read the following accounts, and answer the questions below.

Jeremiah Greenman went to war in 1775, just after his seventeenth birthday. He kept a journal during the entire Revolutionary War—first as a private, later reaching the rank of first lieutenant.

Note: Some spelling and punctuation have been changed from the original.

JUNE–JULY 1777 ON A MARCH

Sunday 29 to Tuesday 1. this morn rain. Moved out of the woods into our ten[t]s just below the hill. The bagage ariv'd but lost almost all my Clothes. We hear that the regulars is quitted [left] the Jersies [New Jersey] & we are order'd to be in readyness for a march in ye morn. Two or three men deserted.

Wednesday 2. this morn at ye beat of ye Genl ["The General," a tune played by fifes and drums] struck our tents, slung our packs from Lincolns Gap came as far as Brown Brook where we got our breakfast. Then proceeded on as far as Baskinridge where we dined. From thence came to Morristown where we pitched our tents. We hear a Number of ye enemy is embarked from New York.

Tuesday 3. this morn from Morristown came to Scituate where we eat breakfast. Then proceeded on as far as Pumton where we put up. Had orders to be in readyness for to march in ye morn at 2 oClock.

Friday 4. this morn very early marcht from Pumton. Marcht as far as Yapor where we halted a little while. Then came to the Clove or Quantrom where we pitched our tent. Draw'd some provision & cooked it. Then struck our tents just at night. Came as far as Kearkreat where we put up, being fatigued very bad. 1 or 2 men dropped dead with heat when marching.

Saturday 5. this morn from Kearkreat marcht about 3 miles. Made a halt till ye after part of ye day. Then marcht as far as Haverstraw where we put up in a barn. Very hot sultry weather & C,

Sunday 6. this morn turn'd out very early. Grounded our arms. Very cold indeed & blustering till about Sun rise. Then proceeded on as far as Kings Ferry where we continued till almost night. Then crossed ye ferry. Went on a hill just by Peekskills where we pitched a few tents and lay all night.

Joseph Plumb Martin was born on November 21, 1760 in western Massachusetts. Martin served as a Continental soldier in a Connecticut regiment from 1776 to 1783.

No one who has never been on such duty as those advance parties have to perform, can form any adequate idea of the trouble, fatigue, and dangers which they have to encounter. Their whole time is spent in marches, (and especially night marches) watching, starving, and, in cold weather, freezing and sickness. If they get any chance to rest, it must be in the woods or fields, under the side of a fence, in an orchard or in any other place but a comfortable one—lying down on the cold and often wet ground, and, perhaps, before the eyes can be closed with a moment’s sleep, alarmed and compelled to stand under arms an hour or two, to receive an attack from the enemy; and when permitted again to endeavour to rest, called upon immediately to remove some four or five miles to seek some other place, to go through the same maneuvering as before.... We were once on one of those night marches, advancing toward the enemy and not far from them, when, towards the latter part of the night, there came on a heavy thundershower.... We were then marched across fields and fences, pastures and brooks, swamps and ravines, a distance of two or three miles, and stationed upon a hill, or rather a ledge of rocks.... We remained on this hard and fatiguing duty about six weeks....

It is fatiguing, almost beyond belief, to those that never experienced it, to be obliged to march twenty-four or forty-eight hours (as very many times I have had to) and often more, night and day without rest or sleep.... How often have I envied the very swine their happiness, when I have heard them quarreling in their warm dry sties, when I was wet to the skin.... I have often been so beat out with long and tedious marching that I have fallen asleep while walking the road and not been sensible of it till I have jostled against someone in the same situation... Fighting the enemy is the great scarecrow to people unacquainted with the duties of an army.... But, reader, believe me, for I tell a solemn truth, that I have felt more anxiety, undergone more fatigue and hardships, suffered more every way, in performing one of those tedious marches than ever I did in fighting the hottest battle I was ever engaged in.

QUESTIONS

1. How many days in a row did Greenman and his fellow soldiers march?

2. What examples does Martin give to explain why long marches were harder than fighting in battles?
WORKSHEET: SOLDIERS' EXPERIENCES

Directions: After each group in your class finishes its presentation, fill in the answers to the appropriate questions below.

Primary Sources: Survival

1. What did soldiers eat when rations were unavailable? How were the items prepared?

2. Besides food, what else did soldiers need to survive? What happened when these items were not available?

Primary Source: Fighting

1. Is there always a clear beginning and end of the fighting? Is there always a clear winner or loser?

2. List three dangers faced by Revolutionary war soldiers in battle.

Primary Sources: Long Marches

1. How did regular soldiers travel?

2. What examples can you give for why a soldier might believe that long marches were harder than fighting in battles?
Primary Sources: Defeat

1. Soldiers could be punished severely for running away. Why were some soldiers willing to risk that punishment?

2. What could happen to soldiers when they were defeated?

Primary Sources: Wounds

1. Based on the presentation, list three events that happened to wounded soldiers.

2. What might happen to a wounded soldier who is not rescued?

Primary Sources: Capture

1. What were some conditions faced by prisoners of war?

2. Why might the British offer gold and promises to get American soldiers to enlist in the king’s army? Why might some Americans accept?