

King George III on Trial

Think about the series of events that led to the American Revolution. Many colonists felt strongly about their rights. They resented the proclamations and laws enacted in the name of King George III. Colonists were alarmed because they thought many of the rights they had enjoyed as British citizens were being threatened. Above all, they believed they should have a voice in how they were governed, where they could settle, and how much they were taxed. Consider what might have happened if the colonists had been able to resolve their differences in court.

Your assignment: Research the relationship between Great Britain and the American colonies. Working in a group, put King George III on trial for abusing the rights of American colonists.

Suggested materials: Poster board and stand (for charts, graphs, lists, and other illustrations); U.S. maps (one current, one showing North America about 1775); push pins or map pins (to identify positions and routes); period costumes – Colonial-era wigs, jackets, boots, shirts, and pants – to enhance the theatrical effect of the trial.

Suggested procedures:

1. Decide which role each group member will play in the trial. In addition to King George III, there should be a judge, a jury, lawyers, and witnesses for each side. Witnesses could include famous Patriots and British Loyalists.
2. Research the key events and ideas that led to the American Revolution, including how the idea of self-government took hold in the colonies.
3. Identify events, such as the passage of the Stamp Act, for example, that you want to present during the trial.
4. As a group, prepare an outline of a script for the trial. Then have group members prepare individually by writing their portions of the script, using the outline as a guide.
5. After a first draft of the script has been written, start reading it aloud. Make revisions as necessary.
6. Decide whether you will use any props, such as a wig and robe for the judge. Make a list, and assign group members to bring the props to the next rehearsal.
7. Decide where each participant in the trial will be located. Will participants move around the courtroom?
8. Present the trial during a class session.
9. Hold a discussion after the trial to exchange opinions about how the trial went. Use the rubric for the discussion.

Grading Criteria	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1
Content	Clearly focused introduction; idea development interesting and sophisticated; supporting evidence detailed, accurate, and convincing; perceptive conclusion.	Introduction gives assignment direction; idea development clear; supporting evidence accurate; strong conclusion.	Introduction unclear; idea development uneven and simplistic; supporting evidence uneven; conclusion summarizes information in assignment.	Introduction incomplete, ineffective; idea development ineffective; supporting evidence vague, inaccurate, or missing; conclusion incomplete or missing.
Organization	Paragraph order reinforces content; strong topic sentences make content easy to follow; effective and varied transitions.	Logical paragraph order; clear topic sentences; clear and functional transitions.	Ineffective paragraph order; narrow or inaccurate topic sentences; few clear transitions.	Inconsistent paragraph order; topic sentences and transitions missing.
Mechanics	Flawless punctuation and spelling; varied and interesting sentence structure.	Few spelling and punctuation errors; sentence structure correct.	Some careless spelling and punctuation errors; some errors in sentence structure.	Many spelling and punctuation errors; many sentence fragments and run-ons.