



A&E Original Movie Benedict Arnold: A Question of Honor

premiere: **January 13, 8pm ET**
classroom: **April 1-2**

Benedict Arnold: A Question of Honor is the story of the man whose name is now synonymous with the word *traitor*, but who was once regarded as a patriotic hero by his friend George Washington. This original movie is the dramatic re-creation of the events and personalities surrounding Benedict Arnold during the American Revolution, and his decision to betray his country.

Benedict Arnold's life presents an interesting study in early American life and in character development as well. While the movie hints at Arnold's origins, the brief biography presented online will help you understand Arnold's complexities. Visit AandE.com/class for a one-page biographical synopsis.

national standards

Benedict Arnold fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5–12: Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Historical Analysis and Interpretation, Historical Research Capabilities, Historical Issues Analysis and Decision Making for United States History Eras 2 and 3.

curriculum links

Benedict Arnold would be useful for classes on American history, military history, American culture, civics and ethics.

Note: This movie is not intended for elementary school students. It is appropriate for ages thirteen and over. It contains some vulgar language, violence, medical scenes, and adult situations that are portrayed with historical accuracy.

vocabulary

Students should identify the following terms. Visit www.merriamwebster.com for definitions.

ally
Continental Congress
loyalist

patriots
treason
turning point

George Washington

activities

pre-viewing activities

Before watching the movie, students should have a general understanding of the American Revolution.

1. Geography Review. Students should be able to locate on a map the following sites: Saratoga, New York City, Philadelphia, the Hudson River, Quebec, and West Point.

2. Introducing the Documentary. Explore the topic of Benedict Arnold by discussing the meaning of *treason*. What is a traitor? What is betrayal? What are some forms of betrayal?

the idea book
for educators
AandE.com/class



for the idea book educators

AandE.com/class

viewing activities

While viewing the movie, students should consider the following topics:

1. The role of Arnold at the Battle of Saratoga.
2. The friendship between George Washington and Benedict Arnold.
3. Arnold's frustrations with other Revolutionary leaders.
4. The living conditions of the common soldier.
5. Peggy Shippen Arnold's influence on her husband.
6. The decision to "turn traitor."
7. The major cause of Arnold's treason.

post-viewing activities

1. **Classroom Discussion.** Begin with the topics the students were assigned to consider while viewing the documentary. Continue with thematic questions. Why did Benedict Arnold choose to betray his country? What influenced him the most? (There is not one correct answer for this question.) How does Arnold's career illustrate irony? (A beloved friend of Washington's and a heroic leader would become a hated traitor)
2. **Developing Chronological Thinking.** Students may create timelines that highlight various important events during the American Revolution, including data on Benedict Arnold. At least fifteen events should be included on the poster or other form of presentation, dating (at least) from the Stamp Act to Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown.
3. **Wallboard Debate.** Divide the wallboard into two sections. Each section will represent one question. Question One—Why is loyalty honored? Question Two—Is loyalty always right? For Question Two, students must give the reasoning behind their opinion, not just a yes or no answer. Assign one student for each section of the wallboard, to write students' opinions and rationales on the wallboard.
4. **Understanding Analogies.** Using people in current events today or in twentieth century history, provide a parallel situation of personalities and treason. (Example: What if General Norman Schwarzkopf had betrayed former President George Bush?).

websites & books

web sites

[search.biography.com
/print_record.pl?id=12373](http://search.biography.com/print_record.pl?id=12373)

www.benedictarnold.org/

[www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/served/
/arnold.html](http://www.ushistory.org/valleyforge/served/arnold.html)

[www.si.umich.edu/spies/stories-arnold
1.html](http://www.si.umich.edu/spies/stories-arnold1.html)

books

Davis, David Brion, and Steven Mintz. *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

Fritz, Jean. *Traitor: The Case of Benedict Arnold*. Paper Star, 1997.

Martin, James Kirby. *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered*. New York University Press, 2000.

Wilson, Barry K. *Benedict Arnold: A Traitor in Our Midst*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.

