History in a Nutshell
Rochambeau to the Rescue

Grade Level: 5-8

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:
1. Explain how the Patriots in the American colonies and the French united to fight against the British during the American Revolution. (Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks HIST 5.9; HIST 8.4)
2. Compare information provided by different historical sources about the French march through Connecticut during the Revolutionary War. (Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks HIST 5.6)
3. Analyze the role and contributions of Connecticut in the Revolutionary War. (Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks HIST 8.1)

Program Framework:
1. Introductory Video
2. Close-Looking Activity
3. Independent Practice

Materials: introductory video; images for close-looking activity

Teacher background:

1. Introductory Video

Images shown:
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2. Close-Looking Activity Options

1. This activity can be done with students in real time, either in the classroom or virtually, with the teacher guiding students using Visual Thinking Strategies to connect the images to what students learned in the introductory video.
   a. What’s going on in this picture?
   b. What makes you say that?
   c. What more can we find?

2. Alternatively, students can explore the images on their own, using the guiding questions that are provided for each image below.

3. Close-Looking Images

   a. Extract of a letter from Stratford, dated June 22, Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer (1778-1791), July 3, 1781, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, pg. 3, Connecticut Historical Society. [Background information: This selection from a letter printed in the Connecticut Courant offers a first-hand account of a Connecticut resident’s reaction to seeing Rochambeau and his men.]
      i. What does the author of the letter think about Rochambeau and his men? What impresses him most?
      ii. What role do you think newspaper articles and opinion pieces might have played during the American Revolution?
      iii. In your opinion, what type of media – newspapers, television, or the Internet – is the most important source of news today?

   b. French Artillerymen at the Time of the American Revolution, 1781, From The American Campaigns of Rochambeau’s Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783. Rice, Howard C. and Ann S.K. Brown, Eds. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972, Connecticut Historical Society. [Background information: This drawing is from a series made by a French soldier in America showing French army uniforms at the time of the American Revolution. These are the types of uniforms Rochambeau’s men may have worn during their march through Connecticut.]
      i. Describe the tools that these soldiers are holding. What roles do you think these men may have played in the French army?
      ii. Do these uniforms look impressive? Practical? Why or why not?
      iii. What purposes do uniforms serve? Have you ever had to wear a uniform? How did the uniform make you feel?

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across Connecticut. They were created by one of Rochambeau’s
officers, Louis-Alexandre Berthier.[

i. Do you recognize any place names on the maps?
ii. The two maps vary in their level of detail. Why do you think
Berthier chose to include the details he did?
iii. Now that most people navigate using apps or GPS, are paper
maps still necessary? Why or why not?

d. Captain O’Brien beside the Rochambeau Monument, Southington, E.
[Background information: Captain Lawrence O’Brien was the creator
of the Rochambeau Monument, which was erected in memory of the
French soldiers who aided the American colonies during the
Revolutionary War.]

i. Captain Lawrence O’Brien was an Irish immigrant to
Connecticut who served in the Ninth Regiment (made up of
fellow Irish immigrants) during the Civil War. After the war, he
traveled back to Ireland to fight for Irish independence from
Great Britain and later returned to Connecticut. Why do you
think O’Brien, a war hero himself, chose to create this
monument to Rochambeau?

ii. Why do people create monuments? What purpose do they
serve?

iii. If you could erect a monument to an important individual,
whom would you choose?

e. Connecticut: Revolutionary War Period Map, Ed Vebell, 1976,
Connecticut Historical Society, 2012.312.120.

i. This map was created in 1976, 200 years after the signing of
the Declaration of Independence. What might have been the
artist’s intent in creating it?

ii. Of the events shown in the pictures highlighting Connecticut’s
contributions to the Revolutionary War, which one(s) do you
think was the most important to the Patriot victory?

iii. Can you find your town on the map? Using the key, can you
tell if your town has a specific connection to any event during
the Revolutionary War?

3. Options for Independent Practice

1. Writing for Understanding

After having students listen to the video and examine the primary sources,
ask each of them to imagine that s/he was a Connecticut resident living
during the time of the Revolutionary War. Have students think about the
challenges that they might have faced and how they might have felt seeing
Rochambeau and his troops march across the state. Then have them write a letter to a loved one in which they share their impressions.

2. Contemporary Connections

The alliance between George Washington’s Continental Army and the French enabled the Patriots to win the Revolutionary War. Throughout history, the subject of whether and when foreign countries should intervene in the affairs of others has been a controversial subject. Ask your students to take a stand on the issue by brainstorming at least three reasons why a country should become involved in another nation’s affairs or at least three reasons why they should not. After they’ve made their list, have them meet with a classmate (either in person or virtually) to discuss and debate their point of view. Did opinions change on either side of the conversation?
same unhappy fate.

On the 22d ultimo, His Excellency General Rochambeau arrived here with the first division of the army under his command; the three other divisions arrived the three following days. His Excellency proceeded with the first division the 25th, the others followed in the order they arrived, the last leaving this place last Thursday morning. A finer body of men were never in arms, and no army was ever better furnished with every thing necessary for a campaign. The exact discipline of the troops, and the attention of the officers to prevent any injury to individuals, have made the march of this army through the country very agreeable to the inhabitants; and it is with pleasure we assure our readers not a single disagreeable circumstance has taken place.