

A SOLDIER ON THE MUTINY AT MORRISTOWN

Close Read – 5th grade

Major Understandings of the Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutiny is apart of war. • Soldiers’ justification for leaving. • Understanding patriotism.
Purpose for Reading	To gain a greater understanding of hardships of the soldiers at Morristown.
Text Reading	<p>1st Read - Question the Author</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is meant by re-occupy? • Why would the soldiers take a new hut? • How is hunger described? • What foods were the soldiers given? • Why would the soldiers “give all up”? • What does the author suggest “patriotic” might mean? • Why did the author use the words “it was too much”? • The Author did not blame the army, why not? <p>2nd Read - Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the text structure used by the author? (Journal entry) How do you know? • Is this structure an effective way for the author to inform the reader? Why? Give examples. <p>3rd Read - Read Washington’s Letter to Congress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare Washington’s letter and Private Martin’s journal • How are they similar? • How are they different? • What is the desired goal or outcome of each? • Do they contradict each other in purpose?
Key Vocabulary	re-occupy, troops, exasperated, endurance, patriotic, notable, extreme, rife
Language Structures, Phrases, Sentences	Adjectives - “monster hunger”; “musty bread”; Fact or Hyperbole? - “Starved and naked” Idiom – “shaken off”
Schema and Text Structure	Authors voice and purpose: Who is the Author’s audience? What creates interest for the reader? Can the reader relate to the situation? Why is the 1 st person journal account effective?
Expressions of Understanding	<p>Task 1: Write a brief summary of the text including the main idea, key details, and necessary supporting details.</p> <p>Task 2: Create a journal entry of your own as if you were a soldier in Morris town.</p> <p>Task 3: Design and complete a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts the information from Private Martin’s journal entry and Washington’s letter to Congress. Then write a fictional letter from Congress responding to Washington’s information.</p>

A SOLDIER ON THE MUTINY AT MORRISTOWN

We left Westfield about the twenty-fifth of May and went to Basking Ridge. We did not reoccupy the huts which we built, but some others that the troops had left. Here the monster Hunger still attended us. He was not to be shaken off by any efforts we could use, for here was the old story of starving, as rife as ever. We got a little musty bread and a little beef, about every other day, but this lasted only a short time and then we got nothing at all. The men were now exasperated beyond endurance; they could not stand it any longer. They saw no other alternative but to starve to death, or break up the army, give all up and go home. This was a hard matter for the soldiers to think upon. They were truly patriotic, they loved their country, and they had already suffered everything short of death in its cause; and now, after such extreme hardships to give up all was too much, but to starve to death was too much also. What was to be done? Here was the army starved and naked, and there [were] their countrymen sitting still and expecting the army to do notable things while fainting from sheer starvation. All things considered, the army was not to be blamed.

Adapted from the Journal of
Private Joseph Plumb Martin

George Washington On The Mutiny At Morristown

Headquarters, Morristown, May 27, 1780

Sir: It is with infinite pain I inform Congress that we are reduced again to a situation of extremity for want of meat. On several days of late, the troops have been entirely destitute of any. Two regiments of the Connecticut line mutinied on Thursday night with a determination to return home.

I have been informed by two colonels of the Pennsylvania line in whom I have the utmost confidence that the troops very pointedly mentioned their not being paid for five months.

Every possible means in my power will be directed on this and on all occasions to preserve order and promote public service; but this will be found, at least, extremely difficult. If the troops could only be comfortably supplied with provisions, it would make them forget, or at least forgo, many matters which make a part of their anxiety and present complaints.

Adapted from a letter from
George Washington to
the President of Congress

Morristown, New Jersey 1779-1780

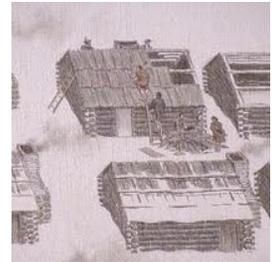


After two significant victories over the British in Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, General George Washington marches north to Morristown, New Jersey, where he set up winter headquarters for himself and the men of the Continental Army. The hills surrounding the camp offered Washington a perfect vantage point to keep an eye on the British army, which was headquartered across the Hudson River on Manhattan Island in New York. Morristown's position also allowed Washington to protect the roads leading from the British strongholds in New Jersey to New England and the roads leading to Philadelphia, where the leaders of the American Revolution were headquartered. Washington could also move his troops swiftly to any threatened point from Morristown.

The Continental Army of over 10,000 soldiers reached Jockey Hollow, their "wintering ground" in the bitter weather of December 1779. The area was a windswept forest in the hills a few miles southwest of Morristown, NJ. Morris County was among the few Revolutionary strongholds in New Jersey. Morristown provided Washington with an important defensive advantage. The country lying behind Long Hill and the Watchung Mountains was protected from sudden attack by both rugged heights and broad swamps.

Anticipating a long encampment at this advantageous position, Washington decreed that his army was to build a "Log-house city" here. Eight infantry brigades occupied the site for seven months. More than 600 acres of oak, walnut, and chestnut were converted into lines of soldier huts that rose on the hillsides. Impeded by the weather, the work of felling the great forest and erecting hundreds of cabins went slowly. Almost all of December, the men slept under tents or with no covering at all. A number were not under roofs until February the following year. There were about 1,000 to 1,200 log structures in Jockey Hollow.

Soldiers build their own huts including surrounding trenches for drainage. The huts, made of log, were 14 by 16 square feet and 6.5 feet high. Twelve men often shared one simple hut. Inside a hut soldiers had a fireplace for warmth and cooking. To create a floor they packed the ground for a dirt floor. Soldiers also had to make their own furniture, including bunks and tables. The bunks were covered with straw and each soldier was given one blanket. Soldier huts were about 2 to 3 ft apart, with three rows of eight huts for each regiment.



In David Ludlum book titled, Early American Winters, 1604 to 1820, is a study of Colonial and Revolutionary Winters. Ludlum's careful analysis of the weather, based on diaries, newspaper accounts, army reports, and official summaries of the period, makes it abundantly clear, that not only was this the worst winter of the war— worse by far than Valley Forge—but it was also far and away the worst winter of the 18th century. Ludlum states,

"There were 28 separate snowstorms recorded at Morristown from November 1779, to April 1780. At least two of the falls were of genuine blizzard proportions— By blizzard I mean howling winds, biting cold, and snow piling up and drifting for two or three days at a time."

The terrible severity of that winter was difficult to describe, even for those who were there. General Johann De Kalb noted in February 1780:

"Those who have only been in Valley Forge or Middlebrook during the last two winters, but have not tasted the cruelties of this one, know not what it is to suffer."

In mid-February, Private Joseph Plumb(Yankee-Doodle) Martin wrote:

"We were absolutely, literally starved. I do solemnly declare that I did not put a single morsel of victuals into my mouth for four days and as many nights, except a little black birch bark which I gnawed off a stick of wood, if that can be called victuals. I saw several of the men roast their old shoes and eat them, and I was afterwards informed by one of the officer's waiters, that some of the officers killed and ate a favorite little dog that belonged to one of them."

Washington was well aware of the paralyzing hunger that struck the camp after the early January blizzard. Since each state was supposed to bear the brunt of feeding the army that it was fortunate to have as guests, Washington wrote to the New Jersey Legislature on January 9, 1780:

"The present state of the army, with respect to provisions, is the most distressing of any we have experienced since the beginning of the war. For a fortnight past the troops, both officers and men, have been almost perishing for want."

New Jersey was not peculiar in its reluctance to feed the army. Many Pennsylvania farmers near Valley Forge grew fat and sleek in the winter of 1777-78 by selling their products to the British in Philadelphia while soldiers in their own nation's army starved to death nearby. Washington ordered the men to take the provisions "with as much tenderness as possible."

Jockey Hollow, where the log city stood, through most of its history was farmland. Mary Cooper Wick and her daughter Temperance were the only family members living on the 1,400-acre farm during the winter of 1779-1780. Henry Wick served as a volunteer with the Morris County cavalry. Mr. Wick had officers staying in his house that winter.



George Washington used the Ford Mansion as his military headquarters during the bitter winter of 1779-1780

Officers of eighteenth century armies had more comfortable winter quarters than their men. General Washington believed that the commander-in-chief needed to maintain a dignified style.

Col. Jacob Ford, Jr. was the prosperous owner of a mine, forge, and powder mill, and a colonel in the New Jersey militia. Ford, his wife, Theodosia, and their children moved into the newly built Georgian style mansion in 1774. Early in 1777, when the Continental Army first came to Morristown, the mansion served briefly as quarters for Delaware troops commanded by Capt. Thomas Rodney. Shortly after the Continental Army arrived, Ford died of pneumonia.

During his first stay in Morristown, Washington quartered at the Arnold Tavern. However, on his return in December 1779, the recently widowed Theodosia Ford opened her home to Washington and his entourage. Shortly before he arrived, Washington wrote, "I shall be at Morris Town tomorrow and shall be obliged by your ordering me a late dinner. I understand my quarters are to be at Mrs. Ford's.

For 200 days the Ford Mansion served as the nerve center of the Revolutionary War. Washington used the front room as a conference room and staff office to meet with officers, scouts, spies, and private citizens. Statesmen and foreign diplomats came here to consult with the commander-in-chief. Washington's troops were encamped nearby at Jockey Hollow.

The winter of 1780 also brought the astonishing news that one of America's greatest generals, Benedict Arnold, faced an army court martial in Morristown.

Benedict Arnold was thought to be a man of courage. In the esteem of the army and Congress alike, he stood—at worst— second only to Washington. Many in Congress felt that he was the nation's finest field commander, and Arnold agreed. Arnold had been twice severely wounded—in the same leg—at Quebec in 1775 and at Saratoga in 1777.

Arnold's court martial was based on charges that he had enriched himself and had dealt leniently with Tories while he was military commander of Philadelphia in 1778-79. The trial began in the Dickerson Tavern in Morristown on December 23, 1779. It would soon be discovered that Arnold had been dealing directly with the top British command since the previous May. Arnold was found guilty on two minor counts, because of his military service and status. Washington was asked to reprimand the convicted general. He did so as gently as possible, trying to placate the enraged Arnold.



Many agreed with Arnold at the time that he had been wronged. His defection to the British seven months later was more shocking because of his lavish show of innocence.

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