

Teacher Guide: Rules and Regulations

Background: All towns were required to have a militia to protect their towns and the colonies in general. Individual town militias were separate from the Royal Army, which supported both England and the colonies and reported directly to the British government. At times the militias and the Army had worked together, as in the French and Indian War, but this changed completely on April 19, 1775 at the Battles of Lexington and Concord when the Army and the militia members fired directly upon one another. This document was published fourteen days before the events of April 19th, suggesting that at least some colonists knew that a battle was inevitable and that continued fighting could require an army made up of colonists. In June, 1775, the colonists did create a provincial (colonial) army under the leadership of George Washington made up mainly of militia members from colonial towns like Concord.

Responses

Question 1: In the introduction students might notice negative words such as oppressed, persecuted, destruction, and enemies, which suggest the anger and unrest that colonists were experiencing at this time. Words such as liberty, defend, and preparations suggest that colonists are not only upset, but are in the process of planning to stand up to the British government.

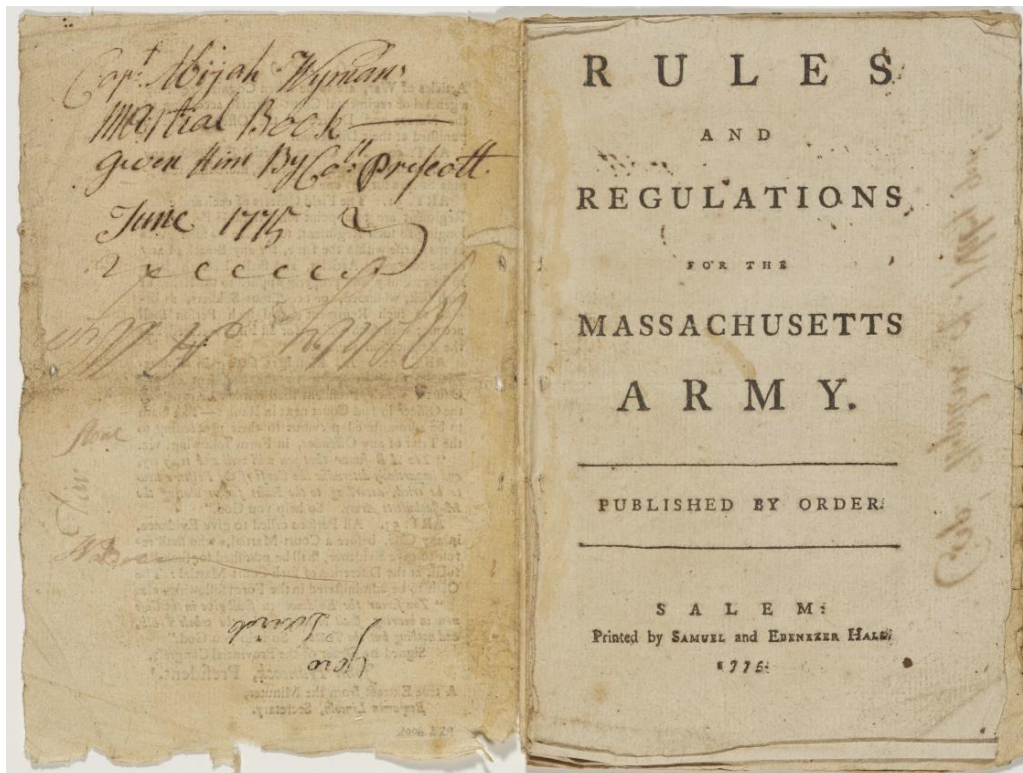
Question 2: Many reasons! Any of the reasons listed in the source would be acceptable. As a follow-up activity this can open a discussion on whether the claims the document is making are justified.

Question 3: In creating an army outside of the Royal Army, the colonists were in direct violation of the King's rule. If the King had seen this pamphlet he would have been immediately aware how serious the dissent among the colonists was and that a rebellion was on the horizon.

Name: _____

Rules and Regulations

This pamphlet was distributed to militia officers in Massachusetts by order of the Provincial Congress meeting in Concord in 1775. For a few months, colonists had been gathering military supplies against the express wishes of the British government. The document was published 14 days before the battles of Lexington and Concord occurred on April 19, 1775.



Reading Closely

Read carefully the attached introduction of this document and answer the questions on the following page.

In PROVINCIAL CONGRESS,
CONCORD, April 5th, 1775.

Whereas the Lust of Power, which of old oppressed, persecuted and exiled our pious and virtuous Ancestors, from their fair Possessions in Britain, now pursues, with tenfold Severity, us, their guiltless Children, who are unjustly and wickedly charged with Licentiousness, Sedition, Treason and Rebellion; and being deeply impressed with a Sense of the almost incredible Fatigues and Hardships our venerable Progenitors encountered, who fled from Oppression for the Sake of civil and religious Liberty for themselves and their Offspring, and began a Settlement here, *on bare Creation*, at their own Expence; and having seriously considered the Duty we owe to GOD, to the Memory of such invincible Worthies, to the King, to Great-Britain, our Country, ourselves and Posterity, do think it an indispensable Duty, by all lawful Ways and Means in our Power, to recover, maintain, defend and preserve, the free Exercise of all those civil and religious Rights and Liberties for which many of our Fore-Fathers fought, — bled — and died; and to hand them down entire for the free Enjoyment of the latest Posterity : And whereas the keeping a standing Army in any of these Colonies in Times of Peace, without the Consent of the Legislature of that Colony in which such an Army is kept, is against Law : And whereas such an Army, with a large naval Force, is now placed in the Harbour of Boston, for the Purpose of subjecting us to the Power of the British Parliament : And whereas we are frequently told by the Tools of Administration, Dupes to ministerial Usurpation, that Great-Britain will not, in any Degree, relax in her Measures, until we acknowledge her *“Right to make Laws binding upon us in all Cases whatsoever ;”* and that if we refuse to be Slaves, if we persist in our Denial of her Claim, the Dispute must be decided by Arms, in which, ‘tis said by our Enemies, — *“We shall have no Chance, being undisciplined, Cowards, disobedient, impatient of Command, and possessed of that Spirit of levelling which admits of no Order, Subordination, Rule or Government :”* — And whereas, from the ministerial Army and Fleet now at Boston, the large Reinforcement of Troops expected, the late circular Letters to the Governors upon the Continent, the general Tenor of Intelligence from Great-Britain, and the hostile Preparations making here, as also from the Threats and frequent Insults of our Enemies in the capital Town, we have Reason to apprehend that the sudden Destruction of this Colony is in Contemplation, if not determined upon :

And whereas the great Law of Self-Preservation may suddenly require our raising and keeping an Army of Observation and Defence, in order to prevent, or repel, any farther Attempts to enforce the late cruel and oppressive Acts of the British Parliament, which are evidently designed to subject us and the whole Continent to the most ignominious Slavery : And whereas, in Case of raising and keeping such an Army, it will be necessary that the Officers and Soldiers in the same be fully acquainted with their Duty, and that the Articles, Rules and Regulations thereof be made as plain as possible ; and having great Confidence in the Honour and publick Virtue of the Inhabitants of this Colony, that they will readily obey the Officers chosen by themselves, and will chearfully do their Duty, when known, without any such severe Articles and Rules (except in capital Cases) and cruel Punishments as are usually practiced in standing Armies, and will submit to all such Rules and Regulations as are founded in Reason, Honour and Virtue :

It is therefore RESOLVED, That the following Articles, Rules and Regulations for the Army, that may be raised for the Defence and Security of our Lives, Liberties and Estates, be, and hereby are earnestly recommended, to be strictly adhered to by all Officers, Soldiers and others concerned, as they regard their own Honour and the publick Good.

1. How are the colonists who wrote this feeling? What specific words jump out to you that tell you how they are feeling?

2. Notice the phrase “Massachusetts Army” on the cover of the pamphlet and look carefully at this quote. Why are the colonists creating an army?

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3. What might the King of England think if he saw this document?

Challenge! Can you read the original document? Note that some “s” letters look similar to the modern “f.”

