



Day 33 American Revolution

The Southern Theater

The Southern Campaign of the American Revolutionary War

Grade Level: 5–8

Time: 60–75 minutes

Lesson Type: Inquiry + Interactive Map Analysis

Anchor Text: *Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War PowerPoint*

Essential Question

How did the Southern Campaign change the direction of the Revolutionary War and lead to American victory?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Explain **why Britain shifted its strategy to the South** after the Battle of Monmouth.
 2. Identify and sequence **key battles of the Southern Campaign**.
 3. Analyze **geography, strategy, and outcomes** using an interactive map.
 4. Use evidence from maps and readings to explain **cause and effect** in the war.
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Materials

- Teacher computer + projector
- **Southern Campaign PowerPoint** (with speaker notes)

- Student devices (Chromebooks/iPads)
 - **Southern Campaign Interactive Map + Scavenger Hunt**
 - Optional articles from **LearnAbout America**:
 - [Siege of Charleston](#)
 - [Camden](#)
 - [Kings Mountain](#)
 - [Cowpens](#)
 - [Daniel Morgan](#)
 - [Guilford Courthouse](#) |
 - [Yorktown](#)
 - [Nathanael Greene](#)
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Vocabulary (preview or reinforce)

- Campaign
 - Strategy
 - Loyalist
 - Patriot
 - Militia
 - Surrender
 - Turning point
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Lesson Structure

1. Hook / Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Teacher Script

“By 1778, the American Revolutionary War had been going on for three years. The British had one of the strongest armies in the world — so why hadn’t they won yet?”

(Allow brief student responses.)

“Today, we’re going to see how the war *changed direction* when Britain shifted its focus to the **Southern colonies** — and how that decision helped lead to American victory.”

2. Anchor Instruction: PowerPoint with Guided Listening (15–20 minutes)

Use your PowerPoint as the **narrative backbone**. Students should *listen*, not copy slides.

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/revwar/southern.pptx>

Slide 1: Cover Slide – Southern Campaign Overview

Teacher Script

“This lesson focuses on the **Southern Campaign**, sometimes called the **Southern Theater** of the Revolutionary War.

A *campaign* is a series of connected battles with a shared goal.”

“As we move through this lesson, notice how **each battle connects to the next.**”

Slide 2: Strategy Shift After Monmouth

Teacher Script

“After the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse in 1778, the war in the North reached a stalemate. Neither side could gain a clear advantage.”

“British leaders believed the **South** would be different.

They thought more people there would remain loyal to Britain, and the region had valuable resources like rice and indigo.”

“This decision changed *where* and *how* the war was fought.”

Check for Understanding

- “Why did Britain think the South would be easier to control?”
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Slide 3: Siege of Charleston

Teacher Script

“Charleston was one of the most important port cities in the South. In 1780, British forces surrounded the city and cut off supplies.”

“When Charleston fell, over **5,000 American soldiers were captured** — one of the worst defeats of the war.”

“At this point, Britain believed their Southern strategy was working.”

Slide 4: Battle of Camden

Teacher Script

“Only a few months later, the Americans suffered another defeat at Camden.”

“Poor leadership and untrained troops led to a quick collapse.”

“But sometimes losing a battle leads to important changes.

After Camden, the Americans replaced their commander with **Nathanael Greene**, who had a new strategy.”

Slide 5: Kings Mountain

Teacher Script

“Kings Mountain was different — this battle was fought mostly by **Patriot militia**, not the regular army.”

“They surrounded Loyalist forces and won a decisive victory.”

“This battle showed that British control in the South was weaker than it appeared.”

Slide 6: Cowpens

Teacher Script

“At Cowpens, American General Daniel Morgan used one of the most clever strategies of the war.”

“He made it look like American troops were retreating — but it was a trap.”

“This victory severely weakened the British army under Cornwallis.”

Slide 7: Guilford Courthouse

Teacher Script

“Technically, the British won this battle — but at a huge cost.”

“General Greene’s goal was not to win outright, but to **wear down** the British.”

“After this battle, Cornwallis had to retreat because his army was exhausted.”

Slide 8: Yorktown

Teacher Script

“The Southern Campaign didn’t end in the South.”

“Cornwallis moved into Virginia, where American and French forces trapped him at Yorktown.”

“When Cornwallis surrendered, the war was essentially over.”

3. Transition to Main Activity (2 minutes)

Teacher Script

“Now that you’ve seen the story of the Southern Campaign, it’s time to explore it yourself — using geography, maps, and evidence.”

“You’ll be completing a **Southern Campaign Interactive Map and Scavenger Hunt**.”

4. Main Activity: Interactive Map + Scavenger Hunt (20 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/battles-of-the-revolutionary-war/the-southern-campaign>

(scroll to the bottom)

Student Task Overview

Students will:

- Explore the **interactive Southern Campaign map**
- Locate battles and trace British and American movement
- Answer scavenger hunt questions tied to:
 - Geography
 - Strategy
 - Cause and effect

Teacher Role

- Circulate
 - Ask guiding questions:
 - “Why do you think this battle location mattered?”
 - “What pattern do you notice in British movement?”
 - “Which battle seems like a turning point?”
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Optional Reading Integration (Differentiation)

Students may choose or be assigned:

- A **LearnAbout America** article related to one battle on the map. See links at the top of the lesson plan.
- Students must connect **one fact from the article** to **one map observation**

Optional Reading Comprehension (20 minutes)

- [Siege of Charleston Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1200
- [Siege of Charleston Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1200
- [Battle of Cowpens Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100

Prompt Example

“How does the article help explain what you see on the map?”

5. Closure & Reflection (5–10 minutes)

Discussion Questions

- “Which battle do you think was the most important in the Southern Campaign? Why?”
- “How did geography affect the outcome of the war?”
- “Why didn’t winning battles in the South guarantee British victory?”

Teacher Tip

This lesson works especially well when:

- Slides are treated as **storytelling**, not note-taking
- The **map becomes the “text” students analyze**
- Reading is used for **depth**, not overload