



New Online Game Uses the Eve of the Revolution to Teach Critical-Thinking Skills to Upper Elementary School Students

Uncovering Loyalties with Colonial Williamsburg challenges students to determine who in 1774 Williamsburg is a Patriot and who is a Loyalist by engaging with young people from multiple perspectives.

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Sept. 3, 2024) - Today, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and iCivics released a new game that uses the eve of the American Revolution to teach upper elementary students how to apply critical-thinking skills and engage with multiple perspectives.

Uncovering Loyalties with Colonial Williamsburg helps young learners in grades 3-5 understand the tensions of pre-revolutionary Williamsburg and encourages them to learn how people from different backgrounds brought unique perspectives to American history.

Funded by the Bob and Marion Wilson Family, Uncovering Loyalties is set in 1774 Williamsburg, Va. With independence in the air, Lord Dunmore, Virginia's last royal governor, asks players to explore the colonial city and see if rumors of revolution are true. Players engage with young people across different social classes and life experiences, identifying clues to determine if loyalties in colonial America stay true to Britain or lie with soon-to-be American patriots.

Clues vary from conversational snippets to found items. A ledger at a local pub shows that Thomas Jefferson had visited and that sentiment for a revolution may be moving south from Boston. The teapot found at the silversmith's home is decorated with anti-British Stamp Tax sentiment, and a conversation about trade demonstrates the neutrality of a character in the marketplace.

All of the artifacts that students explore are renderings of items found in the Colonial Williamsburg museum collection. Players ultimately report their findings to the governor and in the end, they must decide whether they feel pulled toward the loyalist or the revolutionary cause.

Uncovering Loyalties merges the game-building expertise of iCivics and the historical expertise of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, which lent a team of historians to make the game true to history. Museum specialists, historians and onsite interpreters collaborated with the game team at iCivics to bring to life both well-known and underrepresented historical characters, including indigenous people, enslaved and free Black residents, and those from the political elite and artisan classes.

"Uncovering Loyalties represents a new frontier in Colonial Williamsburg's nearly 100-year storytelling tradition. This new digital offering brings the world's largest U.S. history museum to classrooms across the nation, encouraging students to thoughtfully consider the motivations that led to the American Revolution so they can make up their own minds about America's shared history," said Mia Nagawiecki, Colonial Williamsburg's vice president for education strategy and civic engagement.

Uncovering Loyalties is the first game that iCivics has created exclusively for elementary students, representing a further expansion into the K-5 space. It is also the first game that iCivics has developed that focuses on a specific place in U.S. history.

“We are incredibly excited about partnering with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to develop a new game about the pre-revolutionary period just in time for the anniversary of America's founding in 2026: Uncovering Loyalties,” iCivics Chief Executive Officer Louise Dubé said. “Civics and history education, like Math and Literacy, needs to start early so that we can teach young people the skills they need to become informed and engaged citizens. Uncovering Loyalties is a building block to teach young people how our country came to be.”

The game is available in English and Spanish and includes robust educator support materials designed to inspire deeper learning, engagement, and conversation in classrooms. In the spring of 2024, 234 students in grades 4-8 previewed the game, reporting a 93 percent approval rating.

The game is available for free at icivics.org/games/uncovering-loyalties. For more information, contact jacob@oneallen.com.

ABOUT THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers and 18th-century inspired culinary options from historic taverns situated along historic Duke of Gloucester Street.

ABOUT iCIVICS

Founded in 2009 by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, [iCivics](https://icivics.org) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing civic learning by providing educators and students with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to embrace and engage in our civic life together. iCivics empowers educators and leads the movement to make civic education a nationwide priority so all young people have the confidence to shape the world around them and believe in our country's future.