

Revolutionary Voices

Examine how African patriots served and sacrificed during the Revolutionary Era.

SS.68.AA.1.6 "Examine the service and sacrifice of African patriots during the Revolutionary Era (e.g., Crispus Attucks, Peter Salem, James Armistead Lafayette, 1st Rhode Island Regiment)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence of service or resistance, and circle evidence of sacrifice, danger, or unequal treatment. Number the four African patriots or groups discussed in the passage.

Service Under Unequal Laws

- ① In March 1770, Crispus Attucks stood among civilians confronting British soldiers in Boston. Attucks, a sailor of African and Native American ancestry, was killed when the soldiers fired into the crowd during what became known as the Boston Massacre. He was the first person to die. His death did not occur on a battlefield, but it became a powerful symbol for Patriots who opposed British rule. Attucks's sacrifice showed that people of African descent were part of resistance before the war began.
- ② Peter Salem had been enslaved in Massachusetts before he joined the Patriot forces in 1775. He fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill, where colonial troops resisted a British assault. James Armistead Lafayette, an enslaved Virginian, served the Continental Army as a spy. He passed information from British camps to American leaders while pretending to support the British. His reports helped the American and French forces plan for Yorktown in 1781. Although he served during the war, he remained enslaved afterward and won legal freedom in 1787.
- ③ In 1778, Rhode Island recruited enslaved men into the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, offering freedom to those who enlisted and compensation to their enslavers. The regiment included many Black and Indigenous soldiers. At the Battle of Rhode Island, its soldiers helped defend American positions against British troops. These patriots faced enemy fire and the dangers of military life, yet their service did not erase the nation's unequal laws. Together, these examples show African patriots contributing as protesters, soldiers, and spies, often while seeking freedom themselves.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did Crispus Attucks do, and why did his death become important to Patriots?

2 Compare Peter Salem's service with James Armistead Lafayette's service. What was each man's role?

3 What detail shows that James Armistead Lafayette sacrificed more than facing danger during the war?

4 How did the 1st Rhode Island Regiment's enlistment policy show both an opportunity and an inequality?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one person or group from the passage. Write exactly three sentences that make a claim about how that person's or group's service challenges the idea that only white patriots contributed to the Revolution. Use at least two specific details from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline evidence of service or resistance, and circle evidence of sacrifice, danger, or unequal treatment. Number the four African patriots or groups discussed in the passage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did Crispus Attucks do, and why did his death become important to Patriots?	Attucks confronted British soldiers with other civilians and was killed in the Boston Massacre. His death became a symbol of resistance to British rule.
2	Compare Peter Salem's service with James Armistead Lafayette's service. What was each man's role?	Salem served as a soldier and fought at Bunker Hill. Armistead Lafayette served as a spy who sent information from British camps to American leaders.
3	What detail shows that James Armistead Lafayette sacrificed more than facing danger during the war?	He remained enslaved after serving in the war and did not gain legal freedom until 1787.
4	How did the 1st Rhode Island Regiment's enlistment policy show both an opportunity and an inequality?	It offered freedom to enslaved men who enlisted, creating an opportunity. It also compensated enslavers and existed under unequal laws, showing inequality.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The 1st Rhode Island Regiment proves that African patriots took an active role in winning independence. Its Black and Indigenous soldiers defended American positions at the Battle of Rhode Island against British troops. Yet Rhode Island had to offer freedom to enslaved recruits and compensation to enslavers, showing that military service occurred within unequal laws.

Accept equivalent claims supported by two accurate passage details. Students may select Attucks, Salem, Armistead Lafayette, or the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, as long as they address both contribution and the historical context of sacrifice or inequality.