Choosing Sides

Read the reasons people gave for loyalty, resistance, and neutrality.

8.C.2.2 "Evaluate the motivations and points of view of various populations to remain loyal to Britain, join the patriot cause, or choose neutrality. Explain major arguments supporting the Patriot cause by analyzing the speech..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one reason for resisting Britain, circle one reason for remaining loyal, and number two different reasons people might seek freedom or protect their communities. These marks will help you compare choices that did not have the same risks for everyone.

Whose Liberty?

1. In 1775, Patrick Henry urged Virginia leaders to resist Britain. In the speech later attributed to him, he argued that peaceful appeals had failed and that waiting would only strengthen British control. His cry, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" expressed the cost he was willing to risk. In *Common Sense* (1776), Thomas Paine attacked rule by kings and argued that the colonies should govern themselves. Both writers challenged British control, but Henry stressed the danger of delay, while Paine questioned a distant king's right to rule.

2. A Loyalist merchant might fear losing British trade and trust the stability of British government. A farmer with relatives serving in the king's army might remain loyal to keep family ties, even if independence promised new opportunities. Others stayed neutral because fighting threatened their homes. Many American Indian nations faced another choice: British traders supplied important goods, while colonists pushing west threatened homelands. Some nations sided with Britain to defend land and trade; others sought neutrality or chose the Patriots based on local interests. No nation spoke for all.

3. Revolutionary promises raised questions about who shared liberty. Mercy Otis Warren supported the Patriot cause and argued that women deserved education and a public voice. Phillis Wheatley, an enslaved poet who later gained freedom, wrote that a love of freedom lived in every human heart; she exposed the tension between liberty and slavery. Free and enslaved Black petitioners in Massachusetts asked colonial lawmakers to end slavery. Enslaved people weighed other paths: in 1775, Virginia's British governor offered freedom to enslaved men owned by rebels who joined British forces.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Henry's and Paine's arguments against British control differ?

2. Compare a political, an economic, and a family reason someone might remain loyal to Britain.

3. Why might an American Indian nation side with Britain rather than remain neutral? Why might another nation make a different choice?

4. How did Warren and Wheatley challenge limits on liberty, and what two paths toward freedom did Black people pursue?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-line conversation between a Loyalist merchant and a free Black petitioner in Massachusetts. Give them different views about Britain, have each respond to the other's concern, and use at least two details from the passage to show what each might risk.

ANSWER KEY

Choosing Sides

GRADE 8 · 8.C.2.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one reason for resisting Britain, circle one reason for remaining loyal, and number two different reasons people might seek freedom or protect their communities. These marks will help you compare choices that did not have the same risks for everyone. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Henry's and Paine's arguments against British control differ?	**Henry argued that peaceful appeals had failed and delay was dangerous. Paine challenged rule by kings and argued that the colonies should govern themselves.**
2	Compare a political, an economic, and a family reason someone might remain loyal to Britain.	**A Loyalist might trust the stability of British government, depend on British trade, and want to preserve ties with relatives serving in the king's army.**
3	Why might an American Indian nation side with Britain rather than remain neutral? Why might another nation make a different choice?	**One nation might side with Britain to defend its homeland and trade from westward-moving colonists. Another might seek neutrality or choose the Patriots because its local interests differed.**
4	How did Warren and Wheatley challenge limits on liberty, and what two paths toward freedom did Black people pursue?	**Warren argued for women's education and a public voice. Wheatley presented freedom as a human desire, exposing the conflict between liberty and slavery. Free and enslaved Black people petitioned Massachusetts to end slavery, while some enslaved men joined British forces under an offer of freedom.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Merchant: I will remain loyal. If British trade stops, I could lose my business.
Petitioner: I will support independence, but I will also ask Massachusetts lawmakers to end slavery. What good is a new government if it denies people freedom?
Merchant: I hear your concern, but breaking from Britain could cost my family its living.
Petitioner: I understand that risk. Supporting the Patriots could also fail to bring the freedom I am asking them to protect.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons and reasonable inferences about risks. The conversation should give both speakers distinct views and have each address the other's concern.