

John Adams: Part 1: Join or Die

Scene 1: The Boston Tea Party (about 3 minutes)

- Characters: Sam Adams, John Adams, John Hancock, British Tax Official
 - After witnessing the tarring and feathering of the tax official, John is horrified by the violence. John asks his cousin Sam, “Do you approve of this?” Sam replies, “People are hurt when they fight for what is rightfully theirs!” John asks, “Do you approve of brutal and illegal acts to enforce a political principal, Sam?!” (political principal – an idea like “no taxation without representation”)
 - How would you respond to John Adam’s question?
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Scene 2: The Intolerable Acts (about 4:20 minutes)

- Characters: John and Abigail Adams, Sam Adams, Jonathan Sewall
 - Jonathan Sewall reads the Intolerable Acts to the crowd in Boston. The Acts include closing Boston Harbor, quartering soldiers in Boston, and appointing General Thomas Gage as military governor.
 - Do you think Boston deserved the Intolerable Acts? Why or why not?
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Scene 3: John Adams nominated to the First Continental Congress (8 minutes)

- Characters: Sam Adams, John and Abigail Adams

John Adams: Part 2: Independence

Massachusetts, 1775: The Battles of Lexington and Concord, (6 to 7 minutes)

John Adams returns from the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia disappointed by the actions of the Congress. They sent a petition to the king and did little else. He is on his farm outside of Boston with his family when a rider races by yelling, “The British are coming! They are marching on Concord!” John is fearful for his family and rides toward Concord to see the dead and wounded from the battles.

The battles of Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, are the first real battles of the American Revolution. The battles are often referred to as the “Shot Heard Round the World.” Why?

Bunker Hill, Massachusetts – June, 1775 – (8 minutes)

Characters: Abigail Adams, Adams' children, John Adams, Sam Adams

- Second Continental Congress - Philadelphia

Abigail and the Adams' children witness Boston burning after the Battle of Bunker Hill. They help soldiers on the road leaving Boston after the battle. At Bunker Hill, the British take the hills outside of Boston, but at great cost: 1,000 British casualties (dead and wounded). Adams tells the story of Bunker Hill to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia and asks the Congress to create a Continental Army with Virginian George Washington as general.

- Why was it smart for John Adams to pick Washington as general of the Continental Army?
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Independence? – June - July, 1776 (6 – 8 minutes)

The Second Continental Congress debates independence for the first time. They decide to postpone the vote and set up a committee to write a statement explaining why the American colonies want to break from Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson, with the help of John Adams and Ben Franklin, write the document.

Characters: Second Continental Congress

John Hancock (president of the Congress) -
Massachusetts
John Adams – Massachusetts
Sam Adams - Massachusetts
Thomas Jefferson – Virginia
Richard Lee – Virginia

Ben Franklin – Pennsylvania
John Dickenson – Pennsylvania
Edward Rutledge – South
Carolina
James Duane – New York
Caesar Rodney - Delaware

- Why were some delegates opposed to independence?
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The Vote for Independence, July 2, 1776 – (12 minutes)

John Adams, Sam Adams, and Benjamin Franklin must convince the delegates from New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina to vote for independence. The delegates believe the vote for independence must be unanimous. The Second Continental Congress votes for independence on July 2, 1776. On the 4th of July, 1776, the delegates gave final approval for the Declaration of Independence.

- Why were the delegates so quiet and afraid at the end of their vote for independence?
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