

## WHO WANTS TO BE A LANDOWNER?

### Objectives

- Students will explore the historical context of the musical *1776*.
- Students will create 1776-inspired team names and compete to win enough Continentals to purchase an estate.
- Students will understand key facts of colonial life that shape the characters and events of the musical.

### Materials needed

- Scoreboard and marker
- Who Wants To Be A Landowner Q&A Slides:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/sjqjq3ca2tq9ic2/Who%20Wants%20to%20Be%20A%20Landowner%20Q%26A%20slides.pdf?dl=0>
- Optional: Printed papers with “A, B, C, D” answer options

### Activity

*1776* is a musical inspired by historical events. The story takes place in colonial America and involves actual people – some of whom you have probably heard of. However, significant plot points, character depictions, and details of the time period blend fact and fiction.

In the show, John Dickinson reminds us, “...most men with nothing would rather protect the possibility of becoming rich than face the reality of being poor.”

- Divide your class into small groups of 3-4 participants. Ask each group to select a team name inspired by what they may already know about colonial America.
- Ask for a volunteer to keep score.
- Host Intro: “It’s summer 1776. Which lucky colonists will be today’s winners? Answer the following questions correctly to win enough Continentals to purchase your own estate! That’s right, friends. Never work another day in your life. Let’s play!”

QUESTION 1: 7 Continental dollars

**In early 1776, what did all of the thirteen British North American colonies have in common?**

- They all agreed that they did not want to remain part of the British Empire.
- They all depended economically on slave labor and overseas markets.
- They all practiced the same Christian religion.
- They all allowed women, indentured servants, enslaved Africans, and Native Americans to vote.

**Answer (B):** *Although we often discuss the southern plantations’ involvement in slavery, we often overlook the role of northern port commerce. Northern merchants profited from trade in molasses, rum, and enslaved people.*

A: Resistance to independence existed throughout the colonies. Some colonists chose neutrality, and others chose loyalty to Great Britain. Revolutionaries were outnumbered in certain regions.

C: Different people in different areas held different beliefs. There were many religious groups: Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Quaker, Jewish, etc. Native American, African, and African American inhabitants practiced their own belief systems, too.

D: Only white men who owned a certain amount of land or property or paid a certain amount in taxes had the right to vote. Everyone else was excluded from the political process. Some colonies even barred people of certain religions from voting.

QUESTION 2: 20 Continental dollars

**Why did certain colonies advocate for cutting ties with the motherland?**

A. Colonists did not think that they should pay higher taxes to pay off Great Britain's war debt.

B. Colonists were forced to use their own homes to provide room and board for British soldiers.

C. Colonists thought that Great Britain did not treat them fairly and wanted more control of their government.

D. All of the above.

**Answer (D):** *Several colonies had grown used to their own customs, traditions, and forms of local governance. As King George III and the British Parliament began asserting their authority, frustrated colonists—namely in Boston—rebelled.*

QUESTION 3: 30 Continental dollars

**Which of the following was NOT true of White women in colonial America?**

A. They were expected to run the household and educate the children.

B. Some of them ran small businesses and taverns.

C. They received the same education as men.

D. They enjoyed more privileges than Native American and Black women of the same class.

**Answer (C):** *Depending on family social status, women learned certain household skills that focused on preparing them for marriage and motherhood. Men received additional education to prepare them for careers in business, farming, or trade. College remained accessible to men only.*

A: Based on the European model, White women's responsibilities in the 1700s were primarily domestic. Upper class women learned skills such as dancing and etiquette while middle class women learned skills such as soapmaking and cooking.

B: Although married women could not own their own businesses, many helped run their husbands'. Some single women and widowers owned and operated businesses such as taverns and small retail shops.

D: In colonies where non-White women theoretically shared the same rights under law as White women of the same economic class, racial discrimination prevented them from securing those rights.

QUESTION 4: 55 Continental dollars

**True or False: By 1776, the Revolutionary War had already begun.**

**Answer (True):** *Tensions had been rising for over a decade before armed conflict between British and colonial soldiers broke out at Lexington and Concord in 1775. George Washington had already been named Commander in Chief of the Continental Army by the time the Second Continental Congress reconvened to debate independence in summer 1776.*

QUESTION 5: 80 Continental dollars

**Fill in the blank: A powerful passage about \_\_\_\_\_ was excluded from the final draft of the Declaration of Independence.**

- A. Slavery
- B. The tyranny of King George III
- C. Native Americans
- D. The bald eagle

**Answer (A):** *In an early draft, Thomas Jefferson had originally included a clause condemning the African slave trade. After debating the document, delegates decided to remove the passage from the final wording—prioritizing the goal of unity over the issue of slavery.*

B: The final draft of the Declaration of independence included a list of 27 grievances intended to prove to the world that King George's tyranny justified the colonists' rebellion and call for independence.

C: The section that replaced the anti-slavery clause accuses the king of inciting hostility against colonists and refers to Native Americans as "domestic insurrectionists" and "merciless Indian savages".

D: There was no mention of the bald eagle in any of the founding document drafts. (One could argue that it was not excluded since it was never included.) The American bald eagle would not become a national icon until 1782 when it was chosen for use on the Great Seal.

- Host Closing: And those are some facts of life in 1776! Now it's time to check out our scoreboard: [announce/congratulate winners]. For those of you who won't be going home landowners today, don't worry! You can come back to try again next season on *So You Want to Be A Landowner- Spanish Florida and French Canada edition*.

Obviously, this activity is all fun and games; however, some of these facts of life were not so fun for the people living through them. While you watch the show, be on the lookout for key facts of life that turn into key plot points. For more info on life in 1776, check out the CTG Discovery Guide.

**Lesson Extensions**

- Refer to the *1776* Discovery Guide to create additional questions for extended play.

**Lesson Variations**

- Have students research life in the British North American colonies in order to create their own game questions and answers.
- Dedicate additional game time to discuss all answer explanations.