

**Eyewitnesses to the American Revolution**  
***Washington Crosses the Delaware***

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*A classroom play by Team HOPE*

*Cast List*

Elisha Bostwick..... a soldier in the Continental Army  
Chief Student Correspondent ..... in charge of facilitating the discussion  
Student Correspondent 2 ..... co-host and moderator  
Student Correspondent 3 ..... co-host and moderator  
Student Correspondent 4 ..... co-host and moderator

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*NOTE: All responses by historical figures are based on actual eyewitness sources and reflect actual events as closely as possible.*

## TEACHER NOTES

**SETTING:** A contemporary classroom. It is advised to set up the anchor in the front of the room facing the class, in front of some sort of background with “The History New Report.” Other correspondents and the historical figure can be placed in a semi-circle to the left or right of the anchor facing the rest of the class. A name plate in front of each cast member is highly recommended. A 5x8 index card folded in half works great for this purpose.

**COSTUMES:** Although not necessary, any period costumes for the historical figures are a great addition. Even a simple hat or wig is excellent.

**MASKS:** Masks are an easy addition that will add to the drama and make the entire event more fun for the students. First, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and click on “image search.” Type in the historical figure’s name and find an image of the person. Copy and paste the picture in a Word document. You may need to crop and then enlarge the photo so you get a picture large enough to be used as a mask. Portraits obviously work best for this use. Print out the picture and paste it onto a cardboard backing. You can tape a plastic spoon or popsicle stick to be used as a handle. You may decide to make masks for the student correspondents as well, using pictures of television news personalities for the masks.

*Note: If there is a historical person you cannot find a picture for, don’t despair! Almost any random “period” person’s picture (as long as it not someone easily recognizable) would work as a mask.*

**ROLES:** Encourage students to act out the roles with as much energy as possible. Do not be too terribly concerned that the sex of the historical figure matching with the sex of the student.

The teacher may decide to take a part in the play, role-modeling one of the historical figures. It is recommended that five copies of the scripts are specifically set aside for each character in the play. For each character, *highlight all their lines* in order to facilitate a faster pace of dialogue. All other students should receive an unmarked copy of the play to read as the play is performed.

**DISCUSSION:** Use the accompanying worksheet to facilitate discussion before and after the play. Students who are not directly involved in the play can attempt to write preliminary answers as the play is performed. The audience should be told that they will be the primarily responsible for the discussion questions at the end of the lesson.

## Eyewitnesses to the American Revolution

### *Washington Crosses the Delaware*

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#### CAST ABBREVIATIONS

Elisha Bostwick.....**BOST**  
Chief Student Correspondent .....**CHIEF**  
Student Correspondent 2 .....**ST1**  
Student Correspondent 3 .....**ST2**  
Student Correspondent 4 .....**ST3**

**CHIEF** We have with us now, a soldier from the Continental Army, Elisha Bostwick, who served under the direct command of General George Washington and fought in the Battle of Trenton. Let's start the questions.

**ST1** Mr. Bostwick, can you describe the situation for the Continental Army in late 1776?

**BOST** Well, it wasn't very good. We were chased out of New York during the summer. Throughout the fall of '76, the redcoats chased us south through New Jersey. The retreat was depressing. Even the farmers were turning against us and putting red ribbons on their doors to show sympathy with the king. By December our enlistments were running out and men were just deserting the army. It looked hopeless and only 2,400 men remained.

**ST2** Wasn't it time to go into winter quarters? Armies didn't normally fight battles in the winter back then did they?

**BOST** Normally, you are right, but General Washington knew he may not have an army by spring. He had to do something dramatic to regain some enthusiasm for the cause—to give us a reason to stay. But it didn't look good. We retreated across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania, chopping down bridges and taking boats with us.

**ST2** But couldn't the British just wait until the river froze solid and attack?

**BOST** That is exactly what Washington feared, so he planned a surprise attack.

**ST3** Where did he plan to attack?

**BOST** Trenton, New Jersey, the location of Hessian base of 1,000 well trained soldiers.

**ST1** This meant you had to go back across the Delaware?

**BOST** Yes. This was the famed crossing of the Delaware that you see in paintings.

**CHIEF** When would the attack take place?

**BOST** Would you believe Christmas night? General Washington felt that would give us the greatest surprise and that the Germans mercenaries would be no condition to fight after a day of heavy drinking and eating.

**ST2** Describe the crossing.

**BOST** It was terrible. None of us were dressed for the cold. Most of us in tatters. If snow wasn't falling, then sleet and freezing rain were. We gathered on the Delaware to await transport across the river. A bunch of Massachusetts sailors and fishermen ferried us across in boats overloaded with men, guns, horses, cannons, and supplies. The river was chocked with ice and we feared being sunk by ice chunks. Poles were used to keep the ice chunks away from the boat.

**ST3** Did you see General Washington?

**BOST** He was riding up and down the banks of the river speaking and encouraging us: "Soldiers, stay close to your officers. For God's sake, stay close to your officers!"

**ST1** Did everyone reach the other side safely?

**BOST** Amazingly, yes! It took nine hours, but the entire army reached the Jersey shore by 3 a.m.

**ST2** How far was the march to Trenton?

**BOST** A few miles, but it was a brutal march, slipping on ice. Some men had no boots and marched on ice with rags wrapped around their feet. Some were barefoot. Blood stains could be seen on the ice. We arrived after 7am.

**CHIEF** Describe the attack.

**BOST** It was fast. We charged with bayonets because many of guns were wet from sleet and snow. It was chaos. The German Hessians were falling out of their quarters half dressed, trying to load muskets and cannon. We charged them, screaming "These are the times that try men's souls!" Our cannons opened up and Hessians were falling everywhere. Quickly, almost all of the remaining Germans surrendered.

**ST3** How many Hessians were captured?

**BOST** Almost 1,000 and we only had two men wounded! General Washington said "It is a glorious day for our country!"

**CHIEF** Thank you so much for your time Mr. Bostwick.