

**Eyewitnesses to the American Revolution**

***The Death of Nathan Hale***

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*A classroom play by Team HOPE*

*Cast List*

William Hull..... Captain 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

### *The Death of Nathan Hale*

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#### CAST ABBREVIATIONS

William Hull.....**HULL**  
Chief Student Correspondent .....**CHIEF**  
Student Correspondent 2 .....**ST1**  
Student Correspondent 3 .....**ST2**  
Student Correspondent 4 .....**ST3**

**CHIEF** Mr. Hull, you were a Captain in the Continental Army, and you join us now to report on the death of Nathan Hale. Can you start by giving us a little background on Mr. Hale?

**HULL** Absolutely. Nathan Hale was a young man born in Connecticut and he was only 21 years old in 1776, the year of his death. He was extremely bright and at fourteen years old attended Yale University. He loved debating topics in astronomy, math, and the ethics of slavery. He graduated with first-class honors in 1773.

**ST1** What did he do after this?

**HULL** He was a schoolteacher, but as soon as the Revolutionary War began, he joined the local militia and later the Continental Army. By March of 1776, he was a Captain in charge of a unit defending New York City from British invasion.

**ST2** What happened to Hale in New York City?

**HULL** Well, the British invaded in the summer of 1776 and they beat us in the Battle of Long Island and as a result the British captured New York City. General Washington feared that the entire army could be captured and the revolution quickly ended. He asked for volunteers to go behind enemy lines and report on British troop movements. Hale volunteered to go in disguise as a Dutch schoolteacher. He even had his Yale diploma to prove it.

**ST3** So Hale was a spy?

**HULL** In a manner of speaking, yes. If we didn't know what the British were doing, we were beat.

**ST2** How was Hale captured?

**HULL** He was actually in a tavern and befriended by a loyalist. The loyalist suspected Hale and eventually got Hale to admit he was a patriot. Hale was immediately arrested and taken to the British commander, General William Howe.

**ST2** What did Howe do?

**HULL** Howe had Hale questioned and searched. Supposedly, Hale had evidence on his body, and was accused of spying for Washington.

**ST1** Was Hale put on trial?

**HULL** No. General Howe didn't give him a trial. Americans were outraged, but even worse, Howe even denied his last request for a pastor, or even a Bible.

**ST2** What was Hale's punishment?

**HULL** He was hanged the very next day. Later, a British officer, who met with me under a flag of truce, told me what happened at the execution: "Hale walked to the gallows very bravely, with no fear of death. As the noose was put around his neck, he was asked his name. 'I am Nathan Hale, Captain in the Continental Army! You tyrants! You are shedding the blood of the innocent! I don't fear my death! If I had ten thousand lives, I would lay them all down, if called to, in defense of my injured and bleeding country! I am so satisfied with the cause in which I am engaged, that *I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.*' Then Hale was hanged."

**CHIEF** His words are still famous, aren't they?

**HULL** We all remembered those words: "*I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.*" It has been an inspiration to thousands of men who have died in combat for America. Nathan Hale was America's first martyr.

**CHIEF** Thank you so much for your account Captain Hull.