



*Honoring the Spirit of America*

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## **“Liberty or Death” It Is Your Vote**

Grades: 6-8  
English

### **Objective**

- Explain what Patrick Henry’s argument was in “The Speech to the Virginia Convention.”
- Determine if Patrick Henry’s argument was well thought out, and convincing.

### **Character Education Words**

- Self-motivated
- Persevering
- Patriotic

### **Teachers Overview**

- Give the students some background on what is happening during the period the speech is given.
- Before the speech is read, students will be placed into two groups. Group A will argue for forming a local militia and Group B is against using the information that has been given to form their views.
- The students for the militia (Group A) will read the speech out loud using inflections in their speech to show the importance for their argument.
- After Group A reads the speech; Group B will argue their side.

### **Materials**

- A copy of the speech - <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/patrick.htm>
- Background information  
<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/henry.htm>
- Paper and pens

### **Activities**

- Read or distribute background information on what is happening a couple of years before the Revolutionary War begins. Focus on the pros and cons of going to war and why people don't necessarily want to go to war.
- Students will take notes on the opinions of both sides.
- After the background information is read and discussed, separate the class into three groups. First group for the revolution, second group against, and third group of unbiased convention members.
- Have students from the pro war group read the speech with fervor (Patrick Henry was known for his oratory skills).
- Make sure members of all groups are taking notes on what the speech is trying to persuade the members of the convention.
- After the speech has been read, the group against the war is to try to persuade the convention members against the war in the form of a rebuttal.

### **Independent Practice/Reflection**

- Have students write a journal entry about what argument they thought was more convincing and why.

### **Assessment**

- Students will be assessed on their final arguments and judgments. Each group is to write a final argument that will be judged by the unbiased convention members. The judgment must be written by stating clear reasons for their decision as a group.

### **Enrichment**

- Students can research and explore other persuasive speeches given during the American Revolutionary War.
- Students can compare other speeches to Patrick Henry's speech to see which one is more convincing.