Johnny Tremain by Esther Forbes (Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. New York, 1971)

Literature Annotation
This novel tells the story of a young apprentice silversmith who lives in Boston during the turbulent times prior to the Revolutionary War. The main character, Johnny Tremain, interacts with a variety of historical figures, British soldiers and ordinary citizens as he attempts to resolve the mysteries of his past, to overcome his personal misfortunes, and to secure a role for himself in the impending conflict between Great Britain and the American colonies.

Grade Level: 8

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Maryland State Curriculum
Peoples of the Nation and World Standard: Students will understand the diversity and commonality, human interdependence, and global cooperation of the people of Maryland, the United States and the world through both a multicultural and historical perspective.
2.C.1 Analyze factors that affected relationships in the United States prior to 1877

Economics Standard: Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.
4.A.1 Analyze the decisions that people made because resources were limited relative to economic wants for goods and services in America
4.A.1.a Describe the opportunity cost of economic decisions by individuals, businesses, and governments in the U.S. through 1877
4.A.2 Analyze how scarcity affected economic choices prior to 1877
4.A.2.a Describe how limited resources and unlimited economic wants caused colonists to choose certain goods and services

History Standard: Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States, and the world.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies: Grade 8
RH.8.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
H.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
RH.8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

College and Career Ready Standards: Reading Literature
RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.
RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
Objectives
Given the novel *Johnny Tremain,* students will be able to...
- describe the various occupations available in pre-Revolutionary Boston.
- identify the human, natural and capital resources needed to produce goods and services in colonial times.
- compare the effect of scarcity on the standard of living in Boston and Britain in the mid-1770's.
- compare/contrast the “midnight ride” of Paul Revere, William Dawes and Samuel Prescott
- write a persuasive essay on the topic “Sons of Liberty – Patriots or Terrorists?”

Vocabulary
**scarcity:** Not having enough resources to satisfy all wants  
**supply:** the different quantities of a resource, good or service that will be offered for sale at various possible prices during a specific time period  
**demand:** the different quantities of a resource, good, or service that will be purchased at various possible prices at a given point in time  
**goods:** things that people make or grow that satisfy economic wants; things desired by consumers and supplied by producers  
**services:** Actions (jobs) that people do for each other  
**human resources:** the health, strength, talents, education and skills that humans can use to produce goods and services  
**natural resources:** gifts of nature that can be used to produce goods and services  
**capital resources:** the goods that are manufactured and constructed by people and used to produce other goods and services  
**standard of living:** the quantity and quality of goods/services available for people to consume.

Additional Vocabulary: historical fiction, apprentice, artisan

Materials
- Novel: *Johnny Tremain*  
- Resource 1: K-W-L chart  
- Resource 2 (a-c): Pictures of colonial artisans  
- Resource 3 (a-b): Colonial Trade Sign  
- Resource 4: Copy of Longfellow’s *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*  

Teacher Background
Knowledge of the Pre-Revolutionary War period

Motivation
Direct student attention to the cover of the novel, *Johnny Tremain.* What clues does the cover provide you with information to enable you to predict the following:
- The time period in which the story is set. Possible responses could include: tricorn hat, cobblestone street, British soldiers/Redcoats, and soldier’s hat with “GR” (George Rex- King George) on it all point to the Revolutionary War Era.
- The storyline. Depending on the cover, possible responses could include: Storm clouds in the sky, the presence of troops in the street, serious looks on the faces of people on the cover foreshadow trouble/conflict between Britain and the colonists.
Jot student responses on a sheet of tagboard or on an overhead transparency for later use.

Use Resource 1 (K-W-L chart) to jump-start a brief discussion about the Revolutionary War era and how the novel might reflect events from that time.
Development
Before Reading Chapters 1-3, the teacher may want to conduct a Read Aloud Activity based on the following:
Have students research and discuss jobs today that have apprenticeships.

NOTE: The following industries currently operate Registered Apprenticeship programs in the United States:
Construction
Manufacturing
Telecommunications

Information technology/networking
Service and Retail industries
Military

Health care
Public utilities

Based on the Read Aloud selection, have students discuss the positive and negative aspects of an apprenticeship and formulate a working definition of “apprentice.” Jot responses on tagboard or on the chalkboard.

After reading Chapters 1-3, complete the following:

• After his accident, Johnny must decide upon a new trade. Mr. Lapham suggests several possibilities in Chapter 2, Section 5. In Chapter 3, Section 1, Johnny walks the streets of Boston in search of a job. Use a chart or other graphic organizer to create a list of the jobs mentioned in the text and indicate the goods and/or services provided by each job. Discuss why there was a demand for the various jobs.

• Johnny Tremain must find a job in order to survive. Discuss what human resources Johnny has to offer an employer. (ability to read, leadership skills, knowledge of the Boston area, sense of responsibility, reliability, etc…)

Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a picture from Resource 2 (a-c) of one of the colonial artisans and a copy of Resource 3a. Each group should be instructed to indicate the trade and label the human, natural and capital resources needed for the trade depicted on their artisan picture. Next, the group should decide whether or not this trade would be a good one for Johnny and provide support for their conclusion. Finally, each group should report their findings to the class by explaining the resources needed for the job and by making a case for or against hiring Johnny Tremain.

AND/OR

• In colonial times, signs outside of businesses often contained a symbol to indicate the good or service provided. Divide the class into groups and distribute one picture of a colonial artisan to each group. Groups should discuss the human, capital and natural resources needed to produce the good or service provided for by the trade. Using Resource 3b, have student groups design a sign that reflects the trade. Allow time for each group to show the sign to the class. Have the class try to identify the trade represented and explain how they arrived at their conclusion. Display the finished products.

• Eventually, Johnny became a delivery boy for the Boston Observer. Use Think-Pair-Share as a method for discussing the following: Would the Observer need a sign? Support your answer.

Have students work in pairs to design a sign for the Observer that reflects the goods/services provided.

Maryland Council on Economic Education
Literacy Connection: Vocabulary
Details in the second paragraph on page 44 suggest that the word “illiterate: means
A. unable to read*
B. looking for signs
C. unwilling to work
D. interested in pictures

Literacy Connection: Main Idea

An important idea in paragraph 4 on page 45 is that
A. It is noontime in Boston.
B. Johnny is walking up Salt Lane.
C. The *Boston Observer* is published in Salt Lane.
D. The *Boston Observer* is urging revolt against England.*

After reading Chapters 4-7, complete the following:
- In Chapter 7, the British closed the port of Boston as punishment for the destruction of the tea by the Sons of Liberty. Discuss with the class:
  ✓ What types of colonial goods would the British have to do without? (fur, lumber, corn, wheat, etc...)
  ✓ What types of British goods would the people of Boston have to do without? (sugar, spices, tea, manufactured goods, etc...)
  ✓ Who eventually would lose their jobs if the port remained closed for a long period of time? (merchants, sailors, dock hands, etc... With people out of work, businesses such as silversmiths and tailors would start to suffer because people would not have the money to purchase “luxury” items.)

- Introduce the term “standard of living.” Based on what they know and what they have read in *Johnny Tremain*, have them respond in writing to the following: Explain how the closing of the port affected the standard of living of people in Britain and in Boston. Provide evidence from the novel to support your answer.

Literacy Connection: Main Idea

What other title would help a reader understand the main idea of the section called “Salt-Water Tea?” Use information from “Salt-Water Tea” to support your answer.

or

Explain whether “Salt-Water Tea” is an effective title for Chapter VI of the novel. Use information from “Salt-Water Tea” in your explanation.
After reading Chapters 8-12, complete the following:

- Conduct a Read-Aloud of Resource 4: Longfellow’s Midnight Ride of Paul Revere. Remind students that in the book, Johnny Tremain was involved with helping Paul Revere on the night of Revere’s famous ride. However, in reality, two others unmentioned by Longfellow, also played important roles that night. Research information regarding the activities of William Dawes and Dr. Samuel Prescott on the night of April 18-19, 1775. Discuss: Which rider do you think was most successful? Why do you think Longfellow did not mention the other riders? Provide an explanation for your choice. A list of websites relative to this activity is included at the end of this lesson. (OPTION: Have students work in groups to develop an extra stanza for the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere that includes mention of Dawes and Prescott.)

- The Sons of Liberty figure prominently throughout the novel. Have students complete the following writing activity:

  The debating club at your school is looking for new members. In order to join, you must submit, to the membership committee, an essay in which you take a stand on the topic “The Sons of Liberty: Patriots or Terrorists?”

  Before you begin your essay, be sure to think about what you have read about the Sons of Liberty in Johnny Tremain. Think about whether you would consider the Sons of Liberty a patriotic group or a terrorist group. Defend your position using information from the novel.

  Now, write your essay for the membership committee in which you determine whether the Sons of Liberty were “patriots” or “terrorists.”

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**Literacy Connection: Tone**

The tone of Sam Adams’ words in the second paragraph on page 177 is best described as
A. concerned
B. determined*
C. hesitant
D. polite

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**Literacy Connection: Main Idea**

Read these sentences from the last page of the novel:
“True, Rab had died. Hundreds would die, but not the thing they died for.
‘A man can stand up…”

Explain the meaning of these lines. Use information from the novel in your explanation.
Summary
Return to the tagboard or transparency and the K-W-L chart used during the motivation. Conduct a follow-up discussion based on the predictions made in the motivation regarding the time period, the story line and how the novel reflected events in Boston from 1773 to 1775.

Extension
Research information about others, such as Sybil Ludington, who made important “rides” during the American Revolution. Create a chart that compares their ride with that of Paul Revere. How did physical (rivers, hills) and human-made (bridges) features along the route effect the riders?

Relative Websites
Sybil Ludington
- https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/sibyl-ludington/
- http://www.anb.org/articles/20/20-01901.html

The Midnight Ride
- http://www.theamericanrevolution.org/PeopleDetail.aspx?people=20
- http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/paul-revere
- http://www.paulreverehouse.org/ride/virtual.html
- http://www.wmdawes.org/map3.html

Colonial Trades
- http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/tradehdr.cfm
- http://www.pocanticohills.org/tradesmen/tradesmen.htm

Sons of Liberty
### K-W-L

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Know</th>
<th>What I Want to Know</th>
<th>What I Learned</th>
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Colonial Artisans

Apothecary

Brickmaker

Basketmaker

Cabinetmaker

Blacksmith

Carpenter
Colonial Artisans

Cooper

Milliner

Farmer

Shoemaker

Printer

Silversmith
Colonial Artisans

Wigmaker

Tailor

Weaver

Wheelwright

Tinsmith

Saddler
Colonial Trade Sign

HUMAN RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

CAPITAL RESOURCES
Colonial Trade Sign
Paul Revere's Ride

Listen my children and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere.
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light."

One if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said "Good-night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend through alley and street
Wanders and watches, with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still

That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"

A moment only he felt the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now he gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns.

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock.
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, black and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadow brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the redcoats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1860