Lesson Title: Painting a Picture of Alexander Hamilton’s Life

Grade Level: 4

Time Allotment: Two 45-minute class periods

Overview: In this lesson, students learn about the life and times of Alexander Hamilton through paintings. In the Introductory Activity, students learn about how paintings can be used to chronicle important historical events and place images and facts about the life and times of Alexander Hamilton in chronological order on a timeline. In the Learning Activities, students view video segments from the PBS program Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton to explore how paintings can depict historical events. Students also review online timelines to gather more information about the life of Alexander Hamilton. In the Culminating Activity, students use photographs, drawings and written descriptions to create their own timelines.

Subject Matter: Social Studies; US Government; Visual Arts

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:
- Describe how paintings can be used to provide information about people and historical events.
- Place events in chronological order in a timeline.
- Describe information presented in a painting.
- Discuss who Alexander Hamilton is and at least 5 facts about him.
- Create their own timelines.
- Create a piece of art that provides information about a person and/or event.

Media Resources

Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton, selected segments

- The French Revolution
  A brief look at the French Revolution.

Optional Segments:
- New Jersey Battles: A brief look at some of the New Jersey battles of the Revolutionary War.

Websites:
These sites can be used Learning Activity 2 in this lesson:
• **Alexander Hamilton: The Man who Made Modern America**  
  [http://www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/](http://www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/)  
  This online New-York Historical Society exhibit contains a variety of information, images and activities about Alexander Hamilton.

• **The Life and Legacy of Alexander Hamilton**  
  [http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/alexanderhamilton1.htm](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/alexanderhamilton1.htm)  
  This section of the Social Studies for Kids website provides information about the life of Alexander Hamilton.

*Optional Resource*  
• **What are They Saying?**  
  This online activity on the Historic Valley Website encourages students to fill in speech balloons for individuals featured in a painting.

**Materials**  
*For the class:*  
• Computers with internet access  
• Computer, projection screen and speakers (for class viewing of online/downloaded video segments)  
• “Alexander Hamilton Fact Cards” (attached at end of lesson)  
• “Images for the Alexander Hamilton Timeline” (attached at end of lesson)

*For each student:*  
• Optional: A key to the “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis” painting (attached at end of lesson). This key can be used in the optional activity described in the Introductory Activity.

**Before the Lesson**

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will need to:

Print out one copy of the “Alexander Hamilton Fact Cards” handout and one copy (single-sided) of the 7-page “Images for the Alexander Hamilton Timeline” handout for use in the Introductory Activity. Cut out the fact cards and images along the dotted lines and place the fact cards in one pile and the images in another. Shuffle each pile, so the items are not in chronological order.

*Optional:* Print out the key to the “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis” painting for use in the optional activity in the Introductory Activity.

Preview all of the video segments and websites used in the lesson.

*Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton* is a production of Manifold Productions, Inc., in association with WNET/Thirteen in New York City. Funding for *Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton* was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, BNY Mellon, the John Templeton Foundation, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Roger and Susan Hertog, the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation, The Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation, and the Gilder Foundation.
Download the video clips used in the lesson to your classroom computer(s) or prepare to watch them using your classroom’s internet connection.

Bookmark all websites which you plan to use in the lesson on each computer in your classroom. Using a social bookmarking tool such as delicious or diigo (or an online bookmarking utility such as portaportal) will allow you to save the links in one location.

**Introductory Activity**

1. Ask students to think about what they would do at an important event or party (a birthday, wedding, graduation, etc.) to help them to remember the event and share it with others who weren’t there. *(Write down information, tell others about the event by calling, texting, online tools and other means of communication, take videos, photographs, etc.)*

2. Explain that in the late 1700s and early 1800s, computers, cell phones and cameras did not exist. Ask: What are some ways people living in those times could share information about important events without computers, cell phones, cameras or other electronic things? *(By telling stories, writing about the event, making drawings, etc.)*

3. Explain that in order to document and remember important events (presidential speeches, wars, etc.) artists created works of art. Let students know that today they will be exploring works of art to learn about the life and times of Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury. Explain that Hamilton oversaw the US Department of the Treasury, which is responsible for overseeing the US government’s finances and keeping the US economy strong. He was responsible for giving President George Washington advice on economic and financial issues.

4. Let students know that, although there are no photographs of Alexander Hamilton, there are many paintings of him and the major events of his time, which help us know what he looked like, how he dressed and what he did (including the image of him featured on the $10-dollar bill).

5. Create a blank timeline (about 8 feet long) by placing a piece of masking tape or yarn on a wall or by drawing a long horizontal line on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Put the year 1750 on the left end and the year 1830 on the right end.

6. Provide a long table, bench, floor or other flat surface where students can arrange the timeline fact cards and images before placing them on the timeline. Divide your students into groups of 2-3 students each. Hand out the “Alexander Hamilton Fact Cards,” and the “Images for the Alexander Hamilton Timeline,” making sure each group gets at least one fact card and one image.

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7. Ask students to arrange the fact cards and images in the appropriate order on the flat surface. Once all the cards and images are in the correct order, ask students to place the cards on the timeline on the wall.

8. Starting at the left hand side of the timeline, ask students to read off the facts/images which they placed on the timeline.

9. Ask each group to think about what they might tell someone (a friend, family member, etc.) who wanted to know a few things about Alexander Hamilton. Ask your students to look at the timeline again and pick five interesting facts about Alexander Hamilton. Ask them to write down those facts on a piece of paper. After students have written their facts, ask them to share them with the class. (Possible facts to include: Alexander Hamilton was born on the island of Nevis. His mother died in 1768. Hamilton attended King’s College, which is now Columbia University. Alexander Hamilton fought in the American Revolution, which took place from 1775 to 1783. Hamilton married Elizabeth Schuyler, practiced law, served as the first Secretary of the Treasury and helped write George Washington’s Farewell Address. Hamilton was killed in a duel by Aaron Burr, the Vice President of the United States.

10. Ask students to look closely at the paintings featured on the timeline. Ask them what type of information they can get from looking at the paintings. (Details about what people wore, their ages and what they did; information about events, etc.)

11. Explain that some of the paintings of Alexander Hamilton and his peers were created by people who actually met him and lived during his lifetime (like the 1777 painting of Alexander Hamilton by Charles Wilson Peale and the “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis” by John Trumbull). Other paintings were created long after the subjects had passed away. (“Washington Crossing the Delaware,” an event which took place in 1776, was painted by Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, who was born in 1816 and created the painting in 1852. “Washington’s Farewell Address” was painted by artist Allyn Cox in 1973-74). The artists who created the paintings long after the subjects were gone had to rely on previous paintings and verbal/written descriptions of people and events in order to create their paintings.

12. Ask students to look closely at the two paintings of Elizabeth Hamilton featured on the timeline (the one painted by Ralph Earl around 1787, when Elizabeth was about 30 years old and the other painted by Henry Inman around 1825, when Elizabeth was about 68 years old). Ask students to discuss similarities and differences between how Elizabeth looks in both paintings and what each artist has decided to include (and not include) in the painting.

13. Optional Activity: Explain that in many of the paintings with group scenes, the artists have featured specific people who participated in the event. Show students the key for the “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis” painting and ask them to use the key (attached at the
To find the following people in the “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis” painting:

- Benjamin Lincoln (General Lincoln)
- George Washington (General Washington)
- Alexander Hamilton (Col. Alexander Hamilton)
- Count Rochambeau

Ask students to look for Lord Cornwallis in the painting. After a short period of time, let students know that even though the painting is called “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis” and depicts the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis’ British troops, Cornwallis is actually not in the painting, since he was not present when his troops surrendered.

Learning Activity 1

1. Explain that you will be playing a video segment from the PBS program Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton, which uses paintings to help tell a story. Let students know that you will first be playing the video segment without sound. Ask them to look closely at the paintings to try to gather information about the featured people and events (including what type of clothing the people are wearing, how they might be feeling, what country they might be from, what they are doing and whether this event took place recently or a long time ago). Ask students to write down a few details about each painting shown in the segment.

2. Play The French Revolution with no sound. [Note: The image of Alexander Hamilton, shown at the beginning of the clip, appears for more than 30 seconds, while the remaining images are shown for much shorter durations.] After showing the segment, ask students to describe what they saw.

Possible answers:

- **Painting 1:** This image shows Alexander Hamilton looking successful and well dressed.
- **Painting 2:** This image features men, a few women and children, and two horses. Some of the men are wearing red, white and blue sashes/belts. There is one man holding a French flag, several men who look like armed soldiers and one man carrying a French flag and holding his hat in the air. There is one woman kneeling with a baby in front of one of the soldiers who has a worried expression on his face.
- **Painting 3:** The 3rd image shows a man standing on a platform saying something while raising his right arm in front of a crowd of men. Many of the men are lifting one arm in the air and some are also raising a hat. There are three men in front of the man on the platform, one of which appears to have one hand on a book.
- **Painting 4:** The last scene features a structure which looks like a castle, with dark clouds. Men appear to be fighting.
3. Explain that you will now be playing the segment again with sound. Ask students to write additional details they discover as they watch and listen to the segment.

4. Play The French Revolution one more time with sound. After playing the segment, ask students discuss what they learned from the segment. (The segment begins by showing a successful Hamilton at the height of his power and then discusses the French Revolution. It shows the Tennis Court Oath in 1789, where delegates promise a constitution to the French people. It also describes an armed mob storming the Bastille one month later looking for weapons and mentions that American opinion about the French Revolutions starts to split.)

5. Ask students to discuss some ways the paintings included in the segment provided information about the featured people and events. During the discussion, talk about how the artists use colors and details to express the mood of the painting and to provide information about the people and events featured.

6. Optional: Play one or more of the following clips (first without sound and then with sound) and ask students to observe and discuss the information presented through the paintings:
   - Working for Washington: The Early Years. This clip provides a look at the early years of Alexander Hamilton’s work with George Washington and shows how Hamilton met his wife.
   - New Jersey Battles. This segment uses paintings to provide a look at some of the New Jersey battles of the Revolutionary War.

Learning Activity 2

1. Ask students to work in groups to explore an online timeline of Alexander Hamilton. Here are two possible timelines which students can use:
   - www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/alexanderhamilton1.htm
   - www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/timeline/

2. Assign each group to one of the following time periods in Alexander Hamilton’s life:
   - 1750-1773
   - 1774-1781
   - 1782-1788
   - 1789-1800
   - 1801-1854

   Ask students to review the online timelines to find out information about Alexander Hamilton and his family during that time period. Ask students to select 3 facts from their assigned time period to share with the class.

3. Ask students to share their facts with the rest of the class and add any new details to the class timeline.

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Culminating Activity

1. Ask students to work alone or in small groups to create timelines, including written descriptions, photographs and drawings or paintings of major events. Students can create one of the following types of timelines:
   - A personal timeline about their lives and/or the lives of their families.
   - A personal timeline about their lives and/or the lives of their families, as well as major events that have occurred in their community or somewhere else in the world during their lifetime (important community events, presidential elections, major sporting victories, natural disasters or other major event).
   - A timeline of something or someone who is of interest to your students (the history of the students’ favorite sports team, a timeline of a favorite celebrity’s life, etc.).

2. Ask students to create at least one drawing or painting for their timeline. Encourage students to think about how they want to space the years on their timeline and when they want the timeline to start. (For example, if they are doing a personal timeline, they need to decide if they want to start the timeline with the date of their birth or if they want to include information about the birth of their parents or other events that happened before they were born.)

3. After students have completed their timelines, ask them to present them to the class.

Standards:

History Standards for Grades K-4
www.nchs.ucla.edu/Standards/standards-for-grades-k-4

Historical Thinking

- **Standard 1/ Chronological Thinking:** The student thinks chronologically. Therefore, the student is able to:
  - Distinguish between past, present, and future time.
  - Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story: its beginning, middle, and end (the latter defined as the outcome of a particular beginning).
  - Establish temporal order in constructing their [students’] own historical narratives: working forward from some beginning through its development, to some end or outcome; working backward from some issue, problem, or event to explain its origins and its development over time.
  - Measure and calculate calendar time by days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries and millennia, from fixed points of the calendar system: BC (before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, "in the year of our Lord") in the Gregorian calendar and the contemporary secular designation for these same dates, BCE (before the Common Era) and CE (in the Common Era); and compare with the fixed points of other
calendar systems such as the Roman (753 BC, the founding of the city of Rome) and the Muslim (622 AD, the hegira).

- Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred.
- Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.
- Compare alternative models for periodization by identifying the organizing principles on which each is based.

- **Standard 2/ Historical Comprehension:** The student comprehends a variety of historical sources. Therefore, the student is able to draw upon the visual, literary, and musical sources including: (a) photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings; (b) novels, poetry, and plays; and, (c) folk, popular and classical music, to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

- **Standard 4/ Historical Research Capabilities:** The student conducts historical research; therefore, the student is able to obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films; and so on.

**Content Standards**

- **Topic 1: Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago/ Standard 1A:** The student understands family life now and in the recent past; family life in various places long ago. Therefore the student is able to investigate a family history for at least two generations, identifying various members and their connections in order to construct a timeline. (Teachers should help students understand that families are people from whom they receive love and support. Understanding that many students are raised in nontraditional family structures--i.e., single-parent families, foster homes, guardians raising children--teachers must be sensitive and protect family privacy.)

- **Topic 3: The History of the United States: Democratic Principles and Values and the People from Many Cultures Who Contributed to Its Cultural, Economic, and Political Heritage/ Standard 4C:** The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy. Therefore the student is able to identify historical figures who believed in the fundamental democratic values such as justice, truth, equality, the rights of the individual, and responsibility for the common good, and explain their significance in their historical context and today.

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Visual Arts Standards for Grades K-4

Standard 2: Content Standard: Using knowledge of structures and functions.
Achievement Standard:
• Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas
• Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses
• Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

Standard 3: Content Standard: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.
Achievement Standard:
• Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art
• Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

Standard 4: Content Standard: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.
Achievement Standard:
• Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures
• Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
• Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

Standard 5: Content Standard: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.
Achievement Standard:
• Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art
• Students describe how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks
• Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton is born January 11th on the island of Nevis. (There is disagreement about when he was born. Historians believe it was either January 11, 1755 or January 11, 1757.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton moves with his parents to St. Croix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton’s mother, Rachel, dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton moves to New York City and begins attending Kings College (now Columbia University).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>George Washington appoints Alexander Hamilton to serve as a lieutenant colonel on his staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton marries Elizabeth Schuyler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton studies law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Hamilton helps write the Federalist Papers to encourage the ratification of the Constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>George Washington becomes the first president of the United States and appoints Alexander Hamilton to be the first Secretary of the Treasury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton dies on July 11th in a duel with Aaron Burr, the Vice President of the United States.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Images for the Alexander Hamilton Timeline

Alexander Hamilton (January 11, 1773)

A. Hamilton Drawn from Life, Jan. 11, 1773.
This is a photograph of a portrait of Alexander Hamilton. (Artist unknown.)

Alexander Hamilton protects King’s College President, Myles Cooper (May 10, 1775)

“Alexander Hamilton Addresses the Mob” by Howard Pyle, 1884.
George Washington Crossing the Delaware (December 25, 1776)
Oil painting by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze in 1851.

Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton (1777)
Watercolor painting on ivory by Charles Willson Peale, 1777.
The Battle of Monmouth (June 28, 1778)

“Washington Rallying the Troops at Monmouth,” created by Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze before 1854, is a painting of the Battle of Monmouth during the Revolutionary War. Washington is shown with his arm raised, sword in hand. Hamilton, wearing a hat, is on a horse behind Washington.

Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (circa 1787)

Oil painting by Ralph Earl, 1787.
The Federal Ship Hamilton (July 23, 1788)

Surrender of Lord Cornwallis (October 19, 1781)
This oil painting, “Surrender of Lord Cornwallis,” created by John Trumbull in 1820, shows the British surrendering to French troops (on left) and American troops (on right) five days after the Siege (Battle) of Yorktown, an American Revolutionary War battle in which Alexander Hamilton fought.
George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)


Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton (circa 1792)

“Alexander Hamilton,” an oil painting created by John Trumbull in 1792.

George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)

Duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr (July 11, 1804)
Painting by J. Mund.

Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (circa 1825)
Watercolor painting by Henry Inman, 1825.
Photo Credits:

A. Hamilton Drawn from Life, Jan. 11, 1773 from www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010648300/
Photograph of miniature watercolor and ink portrait of Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton Addresses the Mob: Study for the Illustration in Harper’s New Monthly Magazine
Painting by Howard Pyle, 1884 (watercolor, black ink and gouache on card).

George Washington Crossing the Delaware
www.metmuseum.org/explore/gw/el_gw_bigimage.htm
Painted in 1851 by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, American, 1816-1868; Oil on Canvas; Gift of John S. Kennedy, 1897.

Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton, Aide de Camp to George Washington, 1777
Painted in 1777 by Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), a captain in the American army. Watercolor on ivory; Museum of the City of New York, Gift of Philip and Dolores Grieve.
www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/about/objects/a249.html

Washington Rallying the Troops at Monmouth
Painted before 1854 by Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze (1816-1868).
For more information about the painting, go to: www.americanrevolution.org/leutze.html

Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, 1757-1854)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mrs._Elizabeth_Schuyler_Hamilton.jpg
Painted in 1787 by Ralph Earl (1751-1801); Oil on canvas. Museum of the City of New York, Gift of Mrs. Alexander Hamilton and General Pierpont Morgan Hamilton For more information about the painting, go to:
www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/about/objects/a131.html

Surrender of Lord Cornwallis by John Trumbull (Oil on canvas; 1820; Located in the Rotunda of the US Capitol since 1826.) www.aoc.gov/cc/art/rotunda/surrender_cornwallis.cfm

The Federal Ship Hamilton
https://www.nyhistory.org/web/crossroads/gallery/all/federal_ship_hamilton.html
Engraving by Alfred Fredericks with the caption: “When opposite Bowling Green, the president and members of Congress discovered standing upon the fort, and the ship instantly brought to and fired a salute if thirteen guns, followed by three cheers, which were returned by the Congressional dignitaries.” Featured in Martha J. Lamb, History of the City of New York, volume 2. New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1880.; New-York Historical Society Library. For more information, see www.gettyimages.ie/detail/96743837/Hulton-Archive

Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804)
http://www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/about/objects/a247.html
Painted by John Trumbull (1756-1843). 1792, Oil on canvas. On loan to the New York Historical Society from the Collection of Credit Suisse First Boston.

Washington’s Farewell Address
http://www.aoc.gov/cc/art/cox_corr/g_exp/washingtons_farewell.cfm?closeup=1

Hamilton Burr Duel
Painting by J. Mund. Public domain image, reproduced from Wikipedia.

Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, 1757-1854)
http://www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/about/objects/a136.html
This key is from the following website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KeyTrumbullsSurrenderOfLordCornwallis.jpg.