

# I, Spy

## Purpose

Students will use organizational features of printed text, such as citations, endnotes, and bibliographic references, to locate relevant information.

## Materials

*For the teacher:* collection of sources on the American Revolution, list of questions for students to research

*For the students:* paper, pencils, copy of list of questions, letter paper

## Activity

### A. Pre-Activity Preparation

1. Compile sources on the American Revolution and put them on reserve at your school or local library.
2. Use the indices of the books, search engines on the Internet, and articles from *Cobblestone* or other historical magazines to compile a list of questions about Revolutionary War figures and events. Questions should have relatively simple answers.
3. Type the questions, together with a hint about how you would like students to research them, on a piece of paper and make photocopies for the class.
4. Reserve library time and ask a library assistant to be on hand to answer questions.

### B. Introduce the Activity

1. Ask students to imagine the following scenario:  
“The Revolutionary War is raging. You are a crucial part of your army’s intelligence forces. No one suspects that you are a spy. I am your commander-in-chief. I have a list of questions for you. If you can find the answers to just three of these questions, you will greatly help us in our efforts.”
2. Give a question sheet to each student.
3. Take students to the library and have them find answers to three of the questions.

(continued)



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### Social Studies

Have students rewrite their letters in code using the mask technique of the British Revolutionary Army. Have them take a sheet of letter paper and cut holes in it. Direct students to place this mask on an uncut sheet of letter paper, being sure that the edges of both pieces meet exactly. Instruct students to write their secret message through the holes in the mask. Have students lift the mask off of the paper and write other words around their secret message to change the meaning for an ordinary reader. Replace the mask to read the secret message.

**Standards Links  
5.5.5, 5.5.6**

**Activity (continued)** 

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**C. Apply What Students Have Learned**

1. Have students write the answers in a fictional letter to their commander-in-chief.
2. Encourage them to add descriptive details and stories about their adventures as a spy.

**Questions for Review** 

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**Basic Concepts and Processes**

When your students have finished their fictional letters, assess their knowledge by asking them the following questions:



How did you begin to research your questions?



If you looked at one source that didn't contain the answer, what did you do?



How do you use an index?



How do you use a bibliography?

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