



John Paul Jones: Captain of the High Seas Classroom Guide

His sense of adventure brought him to the United States and his bravery made him one of the nation's greatest naval heroes. The son of a Scottish gardener, John Paul Jones (born John Paul) went to sea at age 12 with the British navy, making his way to America after killing a sailor in self-defense during a mutiny. He joined the fledgling American navy, and was quickly pulled in to key naval battles in the American Revolution. In 1779, he became captain of the *U.S.S. Bonhomme Richard*. In an epic engagement with the British frigate, *Serapis*, he responded to the enemy captain's premature assumption of victory with the immortal words, "Sir, I have not yet begun to fight." He went on to win the battle. Jones later fought in the Russian navy and lived in Paris during the French Revolution. This 1-hour BIO captures his life story, from his early years through his accomplishments on the high seas.

Curriculum Links:

John Paul Jones: Captain of the High Seas would be useful for classes on American History, American Culture, World History and Maritime History. It is appropriate for middle school and high school.

Vocabulary:

Using the dictionary at www.merriamwebster.com, an internet resource such as www.google.com, or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

- affidavits
- embarked
- incognito
- latitude
- lionize
- mutiny
- navigate
- swashbuckling
- wretched

Discussion Questions:

1. John Paul Jones grew up in Galloway. How did this location feed Jones' desires to be a seaman?
2. Why did Jones become a merchant marine instead of a midshipman in the Royal Navy? What does this say about the class hierarchy of the period?
3. What is an apprenticeship? Is it a symbiotic relationship or an exploitative one? Can it be both?
4. Why did Jones object to serving as a seaman in the slave trade?

5. Why was Jones accused of murder? Was he guilty?
6. What is “dead reckoning?” How did Jones use this to navigate? How does this illustrate his maritime prowess?
7. Why did John Paul Jones join the Continental Navy?
8. Why and how did John Paul Jones “take the war to the British Isle”? What did he hope to accomplish? Was he successful?
9. Discuss John Paul Jones’ career after the American Revolution ended.
10. What is the legacy of John Paul Jones?

Extended Activities:

1. Imagine that you are a young seaman serving under John Paul Jones. Create a diary or journal that tells of your experiences, feelings and adventures.
2. Create a timeline of John Paul Jones’ life, also marking other key developments in world history that occurred during his lifetime.
3. Imagine you had to come up with a motto describing John Paul Jones. What would it be and why?

Websites:

Learn more about John Paul Jones on Bio.com:

<http://www.biography.com/articles/John-Paul-Jones-9357409>

Additional background on Jones:

http://www.history.navy.mil/bios/jones_jp.htm

Books:

Brandt, Keith. *John Paul Jones: Hero of the High Seas*. (Troll, 1997).

Thomas, Evan. *John Paul Jones: Sailor, Hero, Father of the American Navy*. (Simon & Schuster, 2004).