Located in Washington, DC, the Woodson Center has a long history of empowering community-based leaders, revitalizing underserved communities and creating economic opportunities. We value their approach, especially their strong focus on highlighting achievements by Black Americans, and believe that students across the US and worldwide will find these individuals inspiring. Recently, we decided to take a piece of their existing curriculum and design it as an active learning project for students to work on their own, with peers or in their schools.

ACTIVE LEARNING: THE OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION APPROACH

At Opportunity Education, we believe students should take an active and leading role in shaping their own learning. All of our projects are built on interactive and open-ended activities that empower students to choose their own directions while engaging with materials. This approach frees teachers to take on a mentoring role, framing materials and walking alongside students throughout the learning process.
ACTIVE LEARNING IN PRACTICE: CRISPUS ATTUCKS AND THE BOSTON MASSACRE

For this project, we built on a piece of Woodson Center curriculum that focuses on Crispus Attucks, the first man to die in the Boston Massacre. We designed our curriculum in the form of a quest, where students learn about Attucks, his role in the Boston Massacre and the larger American Revolution, and the different ways that historical events are portrayed, both at the time they occurred and afterward.

The focus throughout this project is on practicing analysis, creativity and exploration skills. Students begin this project by examining information about Attucks, including a slide show, an overview of the Boston Massacre and a short biographical film about Attucks’ life. Teachers will draw from a host of supporting materials, including a general lesson plan and learning objectives, to guide students through a series of critical reflection questions.

First Activity - Learning about the Boston Massacre

Students will engage with primary source materials, including letters from soldiers, poems and engravings, to explore how communications can be manipulated to serve various purposes. They’ll question what it means to be a patriot, how propaganda is created, the ways that arguments can deviate from facts and the many ways communications can become muddied during the “fog of war.” Students will work individually and in groups while teachers provide mentorship, guidance and integrate learning skills and objectives.

ACCESS THESE AND OTHER RESOURCES

To learn more about the Opportunity Education approach — including this project and others built upon the Woodson Center’s existing curriculum — visit our website at www.opportunityeducation.org/resources/.