

# EMILY GEIGER LESSON PLAN

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THEATRETEACHER.ORG IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH STORYTREE CHILDREN'S THEATRE



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AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR HEROINE  
BORN 1736 - DIED 1825



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**“I WAS ALONE IN THE ROOM. I TOOK THE NOTE OUT. I READ IT. OVER AND OVER AND OVER. I MEMORIZED EVERY WORD, EVERY COMMA, EVERYTHING.”**

Emily Geiger is an American Revolutionary War heroine who was captured by the British while on a military mission as a civilian. She was carrying an important message across enemy grounds when she was captured and questioned. The Tory matron could find nothing on her because Geiger had memorized the message, then eaten it, so they had to let her go. She proceeded, reached the general she had sought, and verbally delivered the message.

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## QUICK FACTS

Family came from Switzerland and arrived in Charleston, SC, on February 1, 1737. They settled in Saxe Gotha, SC (Lexington, SC today).

## CURRICULUM VOCABULARY

**13 Colonies** –The British colonies in North America that joined together to become the United States of America.

**Revolutionary War** - (1775 – 1783) Also known as the war of American Independence, where the 13 Colonies fought the British to gain their independence.

**Colonists/Patriots** - Citizens of the 13 colonies who fought for their independence during the Revolutionary War.

**Tories/Loyalists** - Colonists who lived in the colonies, but were loyal to the British Government.

**British Soldiers** - Soldiers who fought for King George during the Revolutionary War.

## THEATRE/STORY VOCABULARY

**Monologue** – When one person is speaking.

**Context** – the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed.

## MATERIALS

Written Monologue

Video Monologue

**TO  
UNDERSTAND  
A STORY,  
YOU MUST  
HAVE  
CONTEXT.**

**Context is** - the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed. In acting, we call this the When/Where/Who. When I am speaking? Where am I speaking? And Who am I speaking to?

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

### WHEN/WHERE/WHO?

**When is Emily Geiger talking in the monologue?**

- a. Before she takes the letter to Sumter
- b. During the journey
- c. After the journey

**How did you get your answer?**

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**Who is she speaking to?**

- a. Her family
- b. British Soldiers
- c. An Octopus

**How did you get your answer?**

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Where is she when she is talking?

- a. On her horse
- b. At her Uncle’s house
- c. At the house of the Tories

How did you get your answer?

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Why do you think Emily Geiger is telling this story?

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## EXAMINING THE MONOLOGUE

Examining and understanding the details and the emotions of a story helps a person to get the picture and the perspective of the speaker.

### DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

**What is the year that Emily makes her famous journey? How many years has the Revolutionary War been going on at this point?**

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**Who wrote the note that Emily is delivering? Who is she writing it to? Why is she writing the note?**

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**Why is Emily so exhausted and hungry?**

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How does Emily feel about King George? Why do you think she feels that way?

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How many miles was it from Emily’s house to the Wateree River?

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Why did she volunteer for the journey?

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How did she feel on the first day of her journey? Why do you think she felt that way?

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Why did Emily sneak out of the kind family's house in the middle of the night?

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How did the British realize she was lying?

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Why was eating the note her only option?

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How does she feel about eating the note? Did she have to eat it?

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DID YOU KNOW?

When the story/play ends, it’s up to the audience to decide what happens next. When working with Historical Characters, the audience has the privilege of learning what actually happened to the characters through research.

THE MOMENT AFTER

How does Emily Geiger feel at the end of the monologue? Why do you think she feels that way?

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Who won the Revolutionary War?

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**Did General Sumter meet up with General Greene as requested? Were they successful in defeating the British Army?**

[illegible]

Having learned about Emily Geiger, what do you admire most about her? What is a quality that she has that you might want to emulate?

**Emulate definition:** matching or surpassing a person's achievement.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## MONOLOGUE

*EMILY GEIGER is sitting in a chair, exhausted. Bleary eyed, but the adrenaline is still pumping, as she can't believe what just happened.*

*Costume: Blousy white shirt that's dirty. Hair in a very loose bun as if it's fallen out.*

And I just ate it. I just ate the paper. Ugh, it was so gross! I kept telling myself, Emily, just don't throw up. Don't throw up.

*BEAT – She is looking at people who are in disbelief.*

I wanted to help the Patriots. I didn't know what else to do. Father wanted to help too, but he was ill, and you know every day I was taking care of him. I'm glad I did, don't get me wrong. I love Father, but I loved the idea of America too. And I just wanted to help.

We've been at war for over 6 years! 6 years! Is this war ever going to end?! And King George is awful, you know? He's just a selfish old king! I can't stand that guy! He's just so, so, ugh!

Sorry, I get so frustrated when I think of him.

*BEAT – The listener obviously wants her to get on with it.*

As I was saying, I was in the kitchen when I overheard Father discussing with General Greene, that he needed to get a message to General Sumter on the Wateree River.

The Wateree River is 70 miles away. And that's where Uncle Jacob's farm is, you know? Of course you know.

I listened closely. I put my ear up to the door. Father always told me I shouldn't eaves drop, but their voices were so low and intense. I couldn't help it.

I heard that the message General Greene was trying to get to Sumter was to have the two armies join forces and move the British out. But Greene's men were tired and hungry from battle. He couldn't ask them to travel undercover to General Sumter. So, he asked for a civilian volunteer.

No one volunteered. Everyone was too scared because there were so many British soldiers and Tories in the area. I just started thinking. I could do that. I've done that before. I mean, I CAN do that. I CAN DO THAT!

I finally found a way to help!

I knew Father would say no. *[He's in the room]*, You know you would, Father.

So, I decided to go straight to General Greene myself.

I was so nervous. Facing the great General myself, but I knew I could do this.

I took a deep breath. *[She's now in the moment]* "General Greene, My name is Emily Geiger (pronounced Geager). I will deliver your message to General Sumter."

The look on his face. I knew he was looking at me thinking, how can this young thing of a person do this? But before he could say anything, I said,

***BEAT – She is herself in that moment***

"General, I was born and raised here. I know this area better than anyone. I know the path I need to take. I am an excellent horse rider and I've taken the trail before. I have an Uncle Jacob who has a farm close to the Wateree River. If I am stopped, I will tell them I am traveling to see him. They won't suspect me. After all, what would an 18 year-old girl have to do with an army? I can do this. I will do this. I won't let you down."

***BEAT***

And he said yes! Can you believe it! Of course you can believe it, I'm sitting here, telling this story.

***BEAT – She smiles a little. . .***

So, the next day, I met him early in the morning. He wrote the message and handed it to me and told me to hide it.

Then I saddled up my horse, Bella, and we rode off. Of course, I rode side-saddle. *[said as if she would be in trouble if she didn't]*

Oh, what a thrill it was! I was doing something to help the Patriots. I was furthering our effort to drive out the British to create a country of our own. It was so exciting. I rode along the Broad River, being sure to keep out of sight. The woods were cool, and such a break from the heat.

By the end of the first day, Bella and I had made it about 20 miles, a quarter of the way there. I saw a farmhouse and asked them if I could stay for the night.

The family was kind and generous, but I didn't tell them what I was doing. And thank goodness! That evening over dinner, they mentioned that I should be careful because General Greene's army was in the woods.

They were Tories! They were the enemy. I kept calm. If I left immediately they would suspect. So, I thanked them for dinner and went to bed. I awoke in the middle of the night to whispers. Another man had arrived and was taking me into custody. Quickly, I snuck out of the window, saddled up Bella, and rode into the night.

That's when I knew I was being tracked. There must have been a spy in General Greene's army. So, Bella and I rode faster, but tried to stay off the path.

It wasn't enough. Half way into the day's ride, three British soldiers spotted me. They stopped me.

I tried to tell them I was simply headed to Uncle Jacob's farm.

They didn't believe me.

I blush when I lie. I can't help it.

I was caught.

For a moment, I couldn't think. Should I run? I knew that once they found the note, they would know General Greene's plans, and that would put more Patriots' lives at risk. If they found the note, I would die. If they found the note, all was lost.

What to do? What to do?

They threw me into a room. They said they were finding a woman to search me. Search me.

She would find the note.

They would find the note.

The note.

The note.

I was alone in the room. I took the note out. I read it. Over and over and over. I memorized every word, every comma, everything.

And then.

I ate it. I ate the note.

It was disgusting. Don't throw up Emily, Don't throw up.

The woman came in. She searched me. They found nothing.

They let me go.

They had to.

They escorted me here, to Uncle Jacob's farm. I rested there, and the next day, I delivered the note to General Sumter. I said every word, every comma, every little bit.

He's joining General Greene! We have a chance. I can feel it.

### **BEAT**

Boy, am I tired. And hungry. Really hungry. Can I sleep? And eat? Eat, then sleep. Yes, that's what I need.