

VA Statute for Religious Freedom, I. Semantic Map

General

Grade Level

High School

Author Info

Hugh Crumley
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Type of Lesson

Document Analysis

Duration

55 minutes

Objectives

Overview

The objective of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom lesson is to introduce students to this work as a primary source document in order to understand events in history, make connections between past and present and interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives.

State Standards

Virginia Standard – VUS. 1a, b,c,d,e,f,h

"The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to: a) identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art to increase understanding of events and life in the United States; b) evaluate the authenticity, authority, and

credibility of sources; c) formulate historical questions and defend findings based on inquiry and interpretation; d) develop perspectives of time and place, including the construction of maps and various time lines of events, periods, and personalities in American history; e) communicate findings orally and in analytical essays and/or comprehensive papers; f) develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled; h) interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and other documents."

Virginia Standard – VUS.5d

"The student will demonstrate knowledge of the issues involved in the creation and ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America and how the principles of limited government, consent of the governed, and the social contract are embodied in it by

d) examining the significance of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in the framing of the Bill of Rights."

Procedures

1. 5 min

Show a picture of Thomas Jefferson, and have students recall what they know about him.

2. 5 min

Ask the students to generate as many words and ideas as possible related to Jefferson. This is a brainstorm, so don't reject any ideas (that comes later). Write the students' ideas on the board.

3. 10 min

Have the students categorize the generated words; they can create/label the categories. After their categories are established, they can decide if some ideas don't fit. They can do this categorizing either individually or in groups.

4. 5 min

From these categorized lists, construct an idea map on the board. Ask the students to direct you in its arrangement. Use lines to show connections between different ideas.

5. 10 min

Lead the class in a discussion that focuses on identifying meanings and uses of words, clarifying ideas, highlighting major conclusions, identifying key elements, expanding ideas, and summarizing information. Guide the class discussion to include on the fact that when the colonists came they were required to worship in the same church and that they had to pay taxes to support it.

6. 10 min

If it has not come up already, introduce the Virginia Statute and briefly describe it as a document that said that everyone in Virginia was free to be whatever religion they choose. Ask students to direct you in integrating this into the idea map on the board.

7. 10 min

1. Read the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution aloud:

Amendment 1. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

2. Ask the students if this sounds similar to the Virginia Statute. Ask which they think came first and why. If it does not come out in discussion, explain that the Virginia Statute came first (written in 1777 and adopted in 1786) and was the basis for the first amendment (added to the US constitution in 1791).