

In matters of principle, stand like a rock: What Inferences Can We Make About Thomas Jeffersons Guiding Principles?

General

Grade Level

High School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Cooperative Learning

Duration

60 minutes

Objectives

Overview

The aim of this lesson is to introduce students to Thomas Jefferson through an evidence-based enquiry into his defining principles. Through engaging with this lesson, students will begin to understand Jefferson's main goals and ambitions and make inferences about his guiding principles.

Prior Knowledge

This lesson is designed as an introduction to Jefferson for students with little or no prior knowledge; it is the first of a sequence of lessons which will encourage students to make judgements, links and connections in regards to Jefferson's moral stance and principles and think critically when analysing some of the more significant aspects and events of his life. To ensure the objectives of this lesson are successfully met, it is important that students are able to work independently and self-manage constructively in a small group setting.

State Standards

English Key Stage Three History Standards

Key Concepts –

Significance

Interpretation

Key Processes –

Historical Enquiry

Using Evidence

Communicating about the past

Personal Learning and Thinking Skills –

Effective Participators

Self-Managers

Independent Enquirers

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Analyse primary source documents and make inferences based on this evidence.

Explain this inference, showing depth and detail of thought.

Demonstrate and further develop communication skills through collaborative learning.

Technology Connections/outcomes

This is the first lesson of a unit focusing on Jefferson. However, in the English National Curriculum for

History, this unit could easily be linked to concepts such as slavery and Empire.

Additional Learning Outcomes

Students will learn a combination of knowledge and skills in engaging with the learning in the lesson. In terms of knowledge, students will learn about Jefferson's most noteworthy and famous achievements and his vision for the future. More able students should also begin to approach these with a critical eye and question evidence presented. Important skills will also be challenged and developed; indeed, one key foci of this unit is collaborative yet independent learning, creating and justifying arguments both verbally and in writing, and critical thinking, specifically in reference to historian's use of evidence.

Essential Questions

Key Question – 'In matters of principle, stand like a rock': What inferences can we make about Thomas Jefferson's guiding principles?

Procedures

1. 10 min

Students will be presented with a range of Jefferson quotes; these will be posted around the room and students will be asked to work either individually, in pairs, or groups of three to walk around, read and discuss these. Once students have started reading, thinking, discussing and sharing they will then be posed the question "What kind of man would have said these things?". Students will then be invited to write a brief response to this on a post-it note along with their name and stick it on the whiteboard at the front of the room; a selection of these will be shared with the rest of the class through whole-class discussion and teacher-led questioning.

2. 15 min

Before beginning the main learning episodes of the lesson, it may be helpful to share the bigger picture of the lesson with students so they understand how the work they will undertake will help them and add value to their learning as the lesson develops. Working in groups of three, students will work from one of three documents; the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's First Inaugural Address or the inscription on his grave stone. Each member of the group will have their own copy of this document, plus a highlighter. Here, students will read the document together and pick out key words and phrases that tell them something about Jefferson's goals and ambitions; prompt question such as 'what did he want to achieve?', 'what was he aiming for?', 'what was he most proud of?' would perhaps be appropriate here. Given the length and nature of these sources, this should aid differentiation, however further opportunities are also outlined later in this lesson plan.

3. 15 min

Students move into different groups of three – each member of the group will have a different document to discuss and share. Here, the challenge for students will be to identify similarities and differences between these before making further inferences into what Jefferson's principles were and what made him "tick." Students will be encouraged to come up with three key words that they can identify the reading and discussion they have undertaken; they must be able to explain and justify these choices.

4. 10 min

Bringing the whole class back together, students will be selected to share their key ideas and

findings. Display a portrait of Jefferson and revisit the enquiry question; What kind of man was he? Here, the role of the teacher will be to facilitate and encourage deeper discussion and explanation between students as they ask and answer questions. More able students will be asked to make clear reference to the documents and quotes used in the starter activity throughout the course of the lesson to help evidence their thoughts and ideas and demonstrate their depth of knowledge.

5. *10 min*

As the homework is outlined and shared with the students, the class will work together to create the criteria for successful pieces of explanatory writing. Having students model their contributions and show what this would look/sound like will add greater purpose to this. This will then be used at the start of the next lesson where students will peer assess the homework they have undertaken.

Related Assets

Handouts and Downloads

- [Matters of Principles – Copies of Documents](#)
- [Who was the real Thomas Jefferson? – Unit of Study Overview](#)

Materials

Materials Needed

Post-it notes

Highlighter pens

[Matters of Principles – Copies of Documents](#) (also listed under Handouts and Downloads above)

Assessment

Homework

Students will be asked to re-visit their initial ideas from the beginning of the lesson which they recorded on a post-it note; have their ideas evolved over the course of the lesson or have these stayed the same? Students are required to write a paragraph to explain their ideas; they must write five sentences that focus solely on the inference they have made about Thomas Jefferson and the reasons they have made this – these are likely to all be very positive and will be challenged as the unit of study unfolds.

Assessment

Formative: questioning, prompting and listening to discussions that takes places among different groups. Listening to the questioning, debate and discussion that takes place as the whole class come back together and share their 'big' ideas and concepts.

Summative: although the intention is that students work will be peer assessed, reading both student's work and feedback given will help understand the learning that is taking place and the level of skill in the work students are presenting.

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

By Resource: Less able students would perhaps benefit from working from abridged versions of the documents given with a vocabulary card to help students develop an understanding of key language in a supportive yet independent manner.

By Task: In completing the source analysis, less able students could be grouped together and given some key ideas and themes to look for. These could then be colour-coded and students be asked to read, find and highlight these key ideas in an appropriate colour before comparing and contrasting these documents.

Accommodations – Advanced Learners

By Resource: More able students will be encouraged to make further links and connections between what they have read in the documents provided and analysed and the quotes presented around the room at the beginning of the lesson.

By Task: In completing their homework, more able students could be challenged to incorporate and imbed a quote into their paragraph from the work they have undertaken over the course of the lesson as evidence to back up their idea.

By Outcome: more able students will be able to make more detailed and developed verbal contributions and the quality of their written communication will be of a higher level.