

Jefferson's International Relevance: The Declaration of Independence

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

Melissa Mitchem

mcm3yd@virginia.edu

Casablanca American School

Route de la Mecque, Lotissement Ougoug, Quartier Californie

Casablanca, MA 20150

Type of Lesson

Document Analysis

Duration

1-2 class periods

Objectives

Overview

In this lesson, students will discuss the idea of globalization existing, not as a late twentieth century phenomenon, but as a process taking place as early as the late eighteenth century. Thomas Jefferson was tasked to write a declaration of independence in 1776 after American colonists protested harsh laws, such as the Stamp Act, put upon them by Great Britain. When Jefferson finished writing the declaration, it was spread throughout the colonies and inspired many colonists during the American Revolution. The document also made its way around the world and was used as a model for the Manifesto of the Province of Flanders in 1790. Jefferson's declaration was mentioned as an inspiration in other such documents, including the Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation of 1918 and Vietnamese Declaration of Independence in 1945. The importance of Jefferson's ideas thus

transcends both time and space since they were put to paper.

Prior Knowledge

This lesson is designed for students in international or American schools abroad as well as students in the United States with limited exposure to American studies and history. It is designed for an American history class, but depending on the curriculum, it could be adapted to suit a world history classroom. Students who have been studying the causes of the American Revolution will find this lesson relevant to their studies. Exposure to 18th century primary sources is recommended prior to this lesson, but it is not imperative.

State Standards

Virginia Standards of Learning: 6th grade US History to 1865

USI.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by

a) identifying the issues of dissatisfaction that led to the American Revolution;

b) identifying how political ideas shaped the revolutionary movement in America and led to the Declaration of Independence;

c) describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry;

d) explaining reasons why the colonies were able to defeat Great Britain.

Virginia Standards of Learning: 8th Grade Civics and Economics

CE.2 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by

a) explaining the fundamental principles of consent of the governed, limited government, rule of law, democracy, and representative government;

b) explaining the significance of the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights;

c) identifying the purposes for the Constitution of the United States as stated in its Preamble;

d) identifying the procedures for amending the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States.

Common Core Social Studies: English/Language Arts Standards- History/Social Studies- Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will understand that globalization has been a phenomenon throughout human history.

Students will know that other nations produced independence documents after Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence.

Students will know the similarities and differences between Jefferson's Declaration of Independence and other declarations of independence, such as lists of complaints against colonial powers and proclamations of independence.

Students will know the key components in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (stated grievances against the king of Great Britain, declared the colonies' independence from Great Britain, affirmed "certain unalienable rights" (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness), established the idea that all people are equal under the law.

Students will know key terms including: globalization, sovereignty, grievance, unalienable, and tyranny.

Students will be able to analyze primary source documents, such as the American Declaration of Independence.

Students will be able to compare and contrast various independence documents.

Students will write a paragraph response to the lesson's essential question.

Essential Questions

To what extent was/is Jefferson's Declaration of Independence an example of globalization?

Procedures

1. 10-15 minutes

*All Worksheets can be found in the "Jefferson's International Relevance: The Declaration of Independence Lesson Plan" in "Related Assets" section under the Handouts and Downloads section.

Warm-Up:Open the PowerPoint Presentation entitled “JIR Declaration,” (see Handouts and Downloads under "Related Assets") and project the third slide onto a screen. Have students come up with three examples of globalization in today’s world on a sheet of paper. After a few minutes of silent writing, begin discussing students’ responses. Delve deeper into the idea of globalization by posing these questions during the discussion:

-Is globalization good or bad?

-When is it good? When is it bad?

-What item has been most influential in causing globalization?

-When did globalization begin?

2. 15-20 minutes

Vocabulary:Pass out the worksheet “Vocabulary Terms & Practice” to students, and project the fourth PowerPoint slide on the screen. Have students copy down the vocabulary from the screen onto their worksheets. Read aloud and discuss the terms as they do so. Then have students complete the sentences with their new vocabulary words. Go over the answers with students once they have finished. Use the answer key to assist you if needed.

3. 30-35 minutes

Sorting:Prior to the lesson, you will need to cut out the strips of paper from the “Declaration Sorting” sheet and bundle the strips with a paperclip or envelope. Students should work in pairs, so you will need to cut out sets of strips enough for half of the class. The strips should not be labeled as to what document they are. Also pass out the sheet “Vocabulary Hints for Sorting” to help students as they read. Have students begin the activity by sorting the strips into categories by their choice. Give them hints about how to group, such as similar language or subject matter. Students should fill out the “Sorting Questions” worksheet as they work. Circulate around the room to see how students are grouping them. As students finish up, begin a discussion of how they grouped documents. Then have them sort the strips into two categories: which documents are part of the American Declaration of Independence and which ones are not. Again, have students complete the worksheet as they sort and discuss how they sorted. Then reveal to students where the documents came from using PowerPoint slide seven. Ask students why the documents could be so similar. Show PowerPoint slide eight so that students can see the order the declarations came in. Discuss the significance of the dates.

4. 25-30 minutes

Case Study:Prior to the lesson, select one of the countries below that your class will learn more about (or read all case studies using the jigsaw strategy mentioned in the differentiation section):

-Southern Rhodesia (Africa)

-Czechoslovakia (Europe)

-Vietnam (Asia)

-Venezuela (South America)

Hand out the corresponding worksheet for the region you selected (Example: "Case Study: USA & Vietnam"). Read aloud the American case study with students. Connect what is written about the Declaration of Independence with the excerpts the students saw when sorting. Then have students read independently and answer the questions. Discuss the students' responses when they have finished using the answer key.

5. *10-15 minutes*

Take-Home Point: Hand out the worksheet "Take-Home Point" and project PowerPoint slide nine on the screen. Give students 10-15 minutes to write a paragraph that answers the question. Tell students that they need to use evidence from the lesson to support their answer. Rephrase the question if students are struggling to understand: has Thomas Jefferson's declaration had a global effect? You can use their responses to gauge students' understanding of the lesson.

Related Assets

Handouts and Downloads

- [Jefferson's International Relevance: The Declaration of Independence Lesson Plan](#)
- [Jefferson's International Relevance: The Declaration of Independence Powerpoint](#)

Materials

Materials Needed

-Computer and projector for PowerPoint

-PowerPoint Presentation ("JIR: Declaration")

-Worksheets: "Vocabulary Terms & Practice," "Declaration Sorting," "Sorting Questions," "Vocabulary Hints for Sorting," "Case Study," and "Take-Home Point."

-Answer key

-Paper clips or envelopes

-Scissors

Technology Needs

-Computer and project for PowerPoint

-PowerPoint

Assessment

Students will complete a formative assessment by writing a paragraph response (“Take-Home Point”) to the question: To what extent was/is Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence an example of globalization?

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

–The teacher can select one case study to use with the entire class or use all of the case studies in a jigsaw activity. The class could be broken up into groups of four or five students, and each student is assigned a case study. Then students with the same case study read and discuss it together and return to their original groups for a report.

-When completing the sorting activity, pair students together with different reading abilities. Stronger readers can help other students make sense of the primary sources.

-Instead of having students write a response to the essential questions, students could video-tape themselves answering the question on a Smart phone or camera and submit this response to the teacher.