

Making Connections: The Declaration of Independence and The US Constitution

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

Bethany Meyers

Type of Lesson

Challenge

Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Both

Duration

30-60 minutes

Challenge Question

What were some of the grievances that the signers of the Declaration of Independence had against Great Britain and the King and how do we see these grievances reflected in our Constitution and Bill of Rights? Make a digital poster that explains this for your classmates.

Rationale

Students should understand the connection between the events and issues that led to the American Revolution and the government structure and freedoms that the Constitution provides. These two events/documents are directly related and hopefully after looking at the grievances and the Constitution, students will have an understanding of their importance and relatedness.

Notes to Teacher

Teachers- you may need to adjust some parts of this activity depending on the level of your students. You may choose to leave the word cloud activity out or to change the number of grievances for students to look at and explain. Also, higher groups may be able to work with the Constitution and other information about the revolution to go deeper into the Constitution and how many of the ideas come from the Revolutionary Era.

Steps

1. Use the word cloud tool to build a word cloud with the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence. Do you see some words that are obviously used in all the documents? Do some of them stand out as important to you? Be ready to reflect on these questions when the class discusses the similarities and differences.
2. Find the Declaration of Independence in your collection. Read through the Declaration of Independence paying particular attention to the grievances against the king.
3. Copy and paste two of the grievances that you think are the worst onto your digital poster.
4. Find the Bill of Rights in your collection. As you read through the documents, look for examples of how the founders addressed the two grievances you chose. Copy and paste these solutions onto your poster. You might not be able to find a solution to every grievance!
5. Explain in your own words how these protections relate to each grievance and how they protect us today from the complaints the colonists had before the war. If you could not find a solution, explain why you think you did not.
6. Add two to three pictures that help illustrate your point.