

With Liberty Came Controversy

General

Grade Level

High School

Author Info

Matt Ridenour – Barringer Fellow, MTI

Type of Lesson

Challenge

Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Both

Duration

30-60 minutes

Challenge Question

What does a “good society” look like now that Americans are living under the liberty they find in the newly scribed Constitution? Step into the world of the late 18th century and judge for yourself.

Rationale

By completing this challenge, students will exercise the skill of historical argumentation. This involves the ability to define and frame a question about the past and to address that question by constructing an argument. A plausible and persuasive argument requires a clear, comprehensive and analytical thesis, supported by relevant historical evidence — not simply evidence that supports a preferred or preconceived position. Additionally, argumentation involves the capacity to describe, analyze, and evaluate the arguments of others in light of available evidence. Challenge your students to approach this challenge in this way.

Notes to Teacher

This is best used as an introduction to the very different opinions of Jefferson and Hamilton. It could be used as a segway to the Bank Debate, the notions of loose vs strict construction, and the opposition of the Anti-Federalists/Democratic Republicans to the the positions of the Federalists. Some additional ideas for using this lesson include: Finish the lesson with a debate about the merits of both positions, or conclude using a fishbowl discussion technique

(<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/teaching-strategies/fishbowl>).

Steps

1. Read the two excerpts provided (Hamilton's 'Report on the Subject of Manufactures' and Jefferson's 'Query XIX Manufactures'). These represent each man's opinion on what a "good society" should look like, considering the liberties found in the new republic. Each man found great flaws in the position of the other, and their debate became both public and controversial. NOTE: You may want to read with a dictionary nearby – some of the words may seem foreign, considering the time of the writing.
2. Next, select an image of your choosing from the general collection that best represents the position with which you side, considering the arguments of(Hamilton or Jefferson, respectively). Add that image to your collection.
3. Using the 'Work With Text' and 'Add An Image' widgets simultaneously, drag the image from Step 2 into the 'Add An Image' box. Then, using the 'Work With Text' box, write a minimum of three sentences that describe WHY that image best represents the position with which you side (Jefferson or Hamilton).
4. Finally, click on 'Preview Project' in the upper right hand corner. If it is to your satisfaction, complete the challenge and await further instruction from your teacher.