

A Little Rebellion is a Good Thing

Title: A Little Rebellion is a Good Thing

Challenge Question: What was the scope of Jefferson's influence on bringing the country from a government that was tested by rebellion and failed to one that was tested by rebellion and succeeded?

Grade level: Middle (6-8)

Topic/subject: (pick topics or subjects, as many as applicable. Add your own as needed)

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City: Pleasanton

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Lesson type: Group

Duration: 120-150 min

Prior knowledge:

Shays' Rebellion

August 1786 – February 1787

Angry farmers led by Daniel Shays in Massachusetts rebelled because they had no money to pay their bills and were being arrested. They had no money because the government didn't pay them for fighting in American Revolution, and it took six months for the government to suppress it. Significance of the revolt showed how hard it was to raise an army under the Articles. This led to the feeling that Articles needed to be fixed because they were weak: They had no power to tax and could only ask states for money. They could *plan* an army but not draft soldiers. They had limited power to enforce laws made by congress. It was difficult to make new laws. The colonists were so afraid of a powerful central ruler that they gave too much power to the states and too little to the federal, or central, government.

The Constitutional Convention

1787

There was a decision to form a new government and throw out the Articles so states could be strong, but the national government would be stronger. Men at Convention thought that because the state constitutions had bills of rights, a general one wasn't necessary. However, Americans were concerned that their freedoms could be taken away from them, just as the British had done. Jefferson wrote from Paris to Madison, telling him that a bill of rights was needed. In July 1788, most states ratified the Constitution after a Bill of Rights was promised to protect the rights of individuals and states.

Whiskey Rebellion

1794

There was a tax imposed on whiskey to help with debt. Many Pennsylvania farmers protested violently because they made money by selling whiskey. Washington led an army and ended the rebellion. Significance of the revolt showed that the government was more powerful under the Constitution.

State or national standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Objectives/Rationale: This lesson is designed to be a culminating activity to learning about both Shays' and Whiskey Rebellions, and the role they played in the timeline of changing American government. There will be a special focus on Jefferson's contributions during this time.

Outcomes: Students will create museum exhibits that make inferences on the larger themes of why the Articles of Confederation failed under one rebellion, and the Constitution survived under another.

Students will analyze the scope of influence and pivotal role Jefferson held in the creation of The Bill of Rights.

Steps:

Period/Day 1: Introduction to Sources and Web Tools

(Optional: Take this period to introduce the web tools and sources to students if they have not yet used them in prior activities. If your students are already familiar, you may skip Day 1.)

1. Guide students through the following Monticello supported resources for primary and secondary sources that may be used as artifacts in their exhibits:
 - Founders Online: <http://founders.archives.gov/>
 - Monticello Explorer: <http://explorer.monticello.org/index.html>
 - Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia: <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/tje>
2. Lead or have students self-direct their learning through the recommended free web tool tutorials:
 - Pixlr Editor (used for creating exhibit image):
<https://support.pixlr.com/hc/en-us/sections/200581900-Pixlr-Editor>
 - thinglink (posting text and hyperlinks to the image created above):
<https://www.thinglink.com/tutorial/Tutorials>

Period/Day 2:

1. Assign groups of 3-5 students to the following topics: Shay's Rebellion, Bill of Rights, or Whiskey Rebellion.
2. In groups, students will select 3 sources (primary or secondary, with at least one of each) from one of the websites listed above and digitally place them in their exhibit image. Students may use a picture of an empty room or blank wall as a background. Once the final exhibit image with 3 artifacts (Pixlr is suggested) is created, students will properly cite each of the 3 images, correctly identify it as a primary or secondary source, explain the source as evidence to the challenge question, and create a further question based on the information on the source's original cited website. (Thinglink is suggested to add citations, explanations, and additional questions.)
 - Challenge Questions:
 - Articles of Confederation/Shays' Rebellion:
 - What was Jefferson's reaction to the state of America during the time of the Shays' Rebellion?
 - What was the significance of Shays' Rebellion in gauging the success of the Articles of Confederation?
 - Bill of Rights:
 - What was Thomas Jefferson's role in the creation of a Bill of Rights?
 - What influenced him? Who did he influence?
 - Constitution/Whiskey Rebellion:
 - How did Jefferson's urging for a Bill of Rights help the Constitution get ratified?
 - What is the significance of the Whiskey Rebellion in gauging the success of the Constitution?
3. Students will share their group exhibit link with the teacher who will add it to the collaborative document to create a class virtual museum.

Period/Day 3

1. All student groups should have their own individual copy of the collaborative document online (or have a paper copy) to complete.
2. In groups, they will go through each of the exhibits of the class virtual museum. Students will study the artifacts, writing the claim (inference made in the description) and evidence (describing the artifact itself) as well as answering the challenge question for each one.
3. When each group has finished touring the class virtual museum, they will either share their collaborative document with the teacher or submit a hard copy.

Materials:

- 1 computer per group of 3 or 4 students
- Handout (in shared document online or paper copies for each group)
- Ability to save or print images/letters from websites
- Projector (optional for modeling tutorials on Day 1)
- If you do not have enough computers for student groups to create exhibits, have students write, print, or draw the artifacts and glue them to construction paper.
- Access to the following websites:
 - Founders Online: <http://founders.archives.gov/>
 - Monticello Explorer: <http://explorer.monticello.org/index.html>
 - Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia: <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/tje>
 - Pixlr Photo Editor Online (recommended): <https://pixlr.com/>
 - Thinglink (recommended): <https://www.thinglink.com/>

Assessment criteria:

- Part 1: Content (Exhibit)
 - Includes evidence, citation, reasoning, correctly identifies source as primary or secondary, and asks a follow-up question
- Part 2: Analysis (Class Virtual Museum)
 - Includes clearly stated descriptions and lists artifacts as evidence
 - Answers additional question for each artifact in all exhibits
- Part 3: Conventions:
 - Well-organized, contains minimal errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting

Accommodations: Multiple learning styles are present in this lesson, and the size of groups may vary based on grade level and ability. If there is a lack of technology or a technology modification is necessary, all parts of this may be done on paper as long as a student or teacher has access to the 3 resources listed at the top and the ability to draw or print a picture of a chosen artifact. This activity would be equally valuable completed in a “scrapbook style.”

