

LESSON PLAN

Building a Constitution

FOUNDATION: UNIT II. *What Are Human Rights and Where Do They Come From?*

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LENGTH	NEBRASKA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS	McREL NATIONAL STANDARDS
5 – 6 days	Government: 12.3.1, 12.3.3, 12.3.2, 12.3.5	US History: 12.1.1, 12.1.3, 12.2.1, 12.2.2 World History: 12.4.2

OBJECTIVES	TERMS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students will use previous knowledge about the Enlightenment thinkers to create their own constitution for an imaginary state or country.2. Students will analyze and use Enlightenment thinkers' beliefs to test out a hypothesis of what a state or country would be like if the purest beliefs could be a reality.3. Students will discuss the benefits and needs of each philosopher's beliefs as part of the assessment and presentation.	Thomas Hobbes John Locke Jean-Jacques Rousseau Voltaire

MATERIALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS" worksheet (attached)• "LET'S START A REVOLUTION: Deciding What You Want:" worksheet (attached)• "CONSTITUTION" Outline Worksheet (attached)• Large board, roll paper, or teacher-chosen presentation piece• Websites:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Jean-Jacques Rousseau http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Rousseau-socon.htmlRousseau's <i>The Social Contract</i> http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htmVoltaire (Francois Marie Arouet) http://www.lucidcafe.com/library/95nov/voltaire.htmlVoltaire's Philosophical Dictionary http://history.hanover.edu/texts/voltaire/volindex.htmlThomas Hobbes http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/philosophers/hobbes.htmlHobbes' Moral and Political Philosophy http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/John Locke http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/philosophers/locke.htmlLocke's <i>The Second Treatise of Civil Government</i> http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htmDeclaration of Independence http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html http://www.unl.edu/HumanR/teach/00/0000/media/DeclarationOfIndependence.pdf <p>Reference: Choices for the 21st Century Education Program, Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. A More Perfect Union: Shaping American Government. http://www.choices.edu/resources/documents/resourcebook_09.pdf</p>

(This lesson should be used as a chapter assessment and/or group project at the end of the Enlightenment period or between units on the American Revolution and the US Constitution.)

LESSON PLAN

Day One:

- I. Divide the class into four groups based on Enlightenment thinkers: Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Voltaire. The goal for each group is to create a new country and constitution based **ONLY** on the ideas of its given philosopher. Students may use the web resources listed above, or may be encouraged to find research on their own.
- II. To begin the project, hand out the **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS** worksheet.
 - a. Go over the directions and goals for the project to the class. Answer any questions that may arise.
 - b. Start with the four philosophers' ideas of government. The leaders of this new country are now looking for direction and ideas for drafting their first constitution. Assign students **Step One** on the **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS** worksheet.

Day Two:

- III. Have each group write out a list of beliefs and understandings about its philosopher's thoughts on the role of government within a country. Have the groups brainstorm topics like: individual rights, rules and control of government, leadership (single or council?), freedoms, and goals.
- IV. Next, students will decide which establishment they wish to change and why and will make a list of grievances. Have students complete **Step Two** on the **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS** worksheet.

Day Three - Four:

- V. Now students should be getting a feel for how their Revolutionaries wished to run the new country. Have students complete **Step Three** on the **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS** worksheet by filling out the **LET'S START A REVOLUTION** worksheet. The goal is to begin to put the ideas and beliefs down into actual laws and government control. Discuss the results in class.
- VI. Have the groups complete **Step Four** on the **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS** worksheet by creating posters advocating their causes. Display them in the room.

Day Five – Six: (Assessment)

- VI. Students will complete **Step Five** on the **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS** worksheet by writing the Constitution for their new country using the **CONSTITUTION** outline worksheet.
 - a. Have the group create a name, a country symbol, and flag for their country. Each should include an explanation and description to help others understand the meaning behind their choices.
 - b. Each group needs to present its flag, name, symbol, and a copy of their Constitution and Bill of Rights to the entire class.
 - c. If there is time, have the students set up the room for an "Art Expo". Allow the students time to walk around the room and shop for a country they would like to become a citizen of. For each country, have the students write down something they liked about the rules within the country and something they disliked. Take a class vote to see which country would have the most citizens and discuss what made it so appealing to different students.

LESSON PLAN

FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS

Throughout history, people and civilizations have been defined by the moment they chose to rise up and question the power structure in charge. In order for any one person to become great, he or she must begin with an idea that motivates an entire people to act.

YOUR GOAL

Using the ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers and the Declaration of Independence, your group will create a movement and define the goals and intent of its new Constitution.

STEP ONE:

1. *Research your group's Enlightenment philosopher.* Make a list of his beliefs and thoughts on the role of government.

STEP TWO:

2. *Choose an establishment to challenge.* Choice of establishment can be different forms of government and their leaders (kings and queens, past US presidents, historical world leaders), school and parental authorities, or issues that concern you about today's society (discrimination of gender, religion, politics, or inequality).
3. *Explain your choice with a one-paragraph response by group.* Why does this form of leadership need to be replaced or changed?
4. *Create a list of grievances.* Include 6 – 10 examples. Use the Declaration of Independence for a formal outline.
 - The list of grievances should be open but not limited to: unequal rights or treatment of citizens, opportunities, economics, freedom, and Enlightenment philosophies.
 - Organize your group's intention and goals by writing a formal letter of appeal to the establishment. This is a last effort to outline what you want to change before ideas turn to action.
 - o For each grievance, identify the problem: why it's unfair and how you expect it to change.
 - o Concluding paragraph will explain what will happen if things do change.

STEP THREE:

5. Answer the questions on the **LET'S START A REVOLUTION** worksheet.

STEP FOUR:

6. *Create a poster / billboard to get the word out to other Revolutionaries.*
 - Identify your cause.
 - Who do you want to volunteer? Soldiers, thinkers, leaders, etc.
 - Call for a meeting or a movement.
 - List rewards for freedom from establishment or what one can gain by joining your cause.
 - Point out problems in society under the current way of rule.

LESSON PLAN

STEP FIVE:

7. *Create a name, a country symbol, and flag for your new country.* You will be asked to explain how your group devised each of these to the rest of the class.

8. *Use your collection of information and ideas to create a new Constitution.* Use the **CONSTITUTION** outline worksheet as a template.
 - Must include a Preamble (Introduction: Goal of new found Independence).
 - Follow it with the use of ideals of Enlightenment in the form of a Bill of Rights.
 - Establish your new laws or change in government.
 - o Who will be in power? How will it be balanced?
 - o What is a utopian or perfect society? If a person breaks a law, how will it be handled? What examples of rules does a society need to treat each citizen truly equally? Will men and women be treated differently? Will the rich have a responsibility to take care of the poor?
 - o Have the Founding Assembly sign at the bottom.

LESSON PLAN

NAMES

LET'S START A REVOLUTION
Deciding What You Want

You are making a Declaration of Rights that you believe you are owed by the government. (For background, Read **Foundations: Unit II: What are Human Rights and Where Do They Come From?**)

Part I: To start, you must consider what the foundation of your new society will be. The questions below will help you and your fellow revolutionaries to organize your thoughts.

1. First, using your philosopher's ideas, decide which natural rights people should enjoy. (Keep in mind that natural rights are not determined by the government. They come from the fact that you are human.)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.

2. Now, consider your interaction with others. What possible problems might happen if everyone in your society has complete freedom of action?

LESSON PLAN

3. As an individual in this new society, are you capable of securing all of the natural rights you listed above? In what areas would you need help from others? Examples: law, job, money, trade.

4. Do you have an obligation to help the less capable members of society, such as young children or the elderly? If not, who will take responsibility for their needs?

Part II: Laying down the law

Political thinkers would call the world you have been asked to create a “state of nature” – the natural state of human beings not governed by an authority structure. Some philosophers contend that such a state would be accompanied by peace, prosperity, and harmony. Others see a war of everyone against everyone. The contrasting visions reflect the different views of human nature. Optimists believe that people are fundamentally compassionate, sharing, and peaceful. Pessimists consider humans selfish, grasping, and violent. These beliefs will influence your ideas on government and law.

5. Creating a government. In your society, based upon your philosopher’s ideas, how would the leaders of your government be selected? Should everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, or gender have a voice in the selection process? Will there be a voting process or will leadership be hand chosen like Britain?

6. How will disputes between members of a society be settled?

LESSON PLAN

7. With the establishment of a government, you must begin to define the authority of the government and the rights and responsibilities of the individual.
 - a. Government authority: What power should the government have to carry out its decisions? For example, should the government be empowered to punish individuals who refuse to follow its decisions?

 - b. Individual rights and responsibilities: Should you have a voice, direct (part of government) or indirect (by vote), in determining the decisions made by government? What is your loyalty towards this government?

8. John Locke saw the relationship between government and its citizens as a “social contract”. In Locke’s view, both sides of the social contract were bound by certain duties and obligations. Imagine that you have become dissatisfied with the government you have created. At what point would you be justified in rebelling against the government? Do you have the freedom to do so or is the government out of your control?

LESSON PLAN

THE CONSTITUTION OF _____

*We the people of _____, in order to form a
_____, establish _____, insure
_____, provide for the common _____, promote the
_____, and secure the blessings of
_____ to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this
Constitution for _____, based upon the philosophical ideas of
_____.*

Leadership Powers and Rights

Trials and Punishments of Crime

Power to make laws

Economics

Right to trade

Right to own or rent property

Power to tax

Individual Rights and freedoms

*Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the states present the seventeenth day
of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and
of the _____.*

In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names,