

FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

★★ Lesson Plan ★★

GRADES
6, 8, 12

ABOUT THIS LESSON

This lesson should be integrated into a larger unit on the Founding Documents. A study of the Founding Documents will help students understand the origins of fundamental rights and how they are protected by the structure of the U.S. government. The Founders believed that individuals were born with certain natural rights such as economic and religious freedom. The role of government is to protect these freedoms. These rights are first mentioned in the Declaration of Independence and listed in the Bill of Rights. The government created by the U.S. Constitution creates structural as well as substantive protections for these rights. An examination of the relationship among and between the founding documents will help increase awareness of the structural protections for economic rights and liberties.

AUTHOR

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LESSON OVERVIEW

The students will examine, extract, analyze and use primary-source documents, as well as their own prior knowledge, by engaging the three documents in ways that work their way up Bloom's Taxonomy, from simple to complex. They will go from identification of message and its specific support, to simple comparison/contrast of the three documents, to evaluating the documents for values and limitations, ultimately writing a short essay using all the documents as evidentiary support for a thesis.

Inquiry Questions:

- What are your fundamental freedoms? How are they protected?
- Students will analyze excerpts from the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
- Students will create a Venn Diagram to organize their analysis of the excerpts.
- Students will write a compact essay describing how the structure of the Constitution protects the fundamental freedoms of U.S. Citizens.

OBJECTIVES

6th grade students will:

- Develop a basic knowledge and ability to identify the fundamental principles of the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
- Understand the purposes of government and why government serves those purposes.
- Increase awareness and understanding of, and interest in, constitutional rights.

8th grade students will:

- Understand the basic principles and history of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
- Understand the historical sources and current significance of natural rights and economic liberties.
- Understand how the Constitution limits government, supports the rule of law, and protects individual rights.

12th grade students will:

- Develop a social understanding of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, and their relevance to the economic, political, and social development of the United States.
- Identify and compare natural rights and rights granted by custom or common law.

GRADE LEVEL(S)

6, 8, 12

CLASSROOM TIME

- One 55-minute class period

MATERIALS

- Smart Board/Projector
- Excerpts from the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights
- Venn Diagram handout

STANDARDS

6-8th Grade Common Core Standards Key Ideas and Details

- 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.

12th Grade Common Core Standards Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are your fundamental freedoms? How are they protected?
- What are your constitutional rights? How are they protected?
- How does the U.S. Constitution limit government, support the rule of law, and protect individual rights?

VOCABULARY

Declaration of Independence

- Unanimous
- Impel
- Self-evident
- Endowed
- Unalienable
- Deriving
- Consent

U.S. Constitution

- Vested
- Legislative
- Executive
- Judicial
- Inferior
- Ordain

Bill of Rights

- Respecting
- Prohibiting
- Petition
- Redress
- Grievances
- Warrants
- Oath
- Affirmation

PROCEDURE

1. Preview/Hook Activity:

- 6th grade: Describe a time you felt free? What did you do? Why could you do it?
- 8th grade: What is your most important right? Why?
- 12th grade: List five rights you have as a U.S. citizen and describe the source of each right.

2. Teacher will access student prior knowledge about the Revolutionary War and the Founding Era. Ideas will be posted on the board: King George, Monarchy, Colonies, Tea Party, Stamp Act, Intolerable Act, Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, etc. Teacher will circle the Founding Documents: Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights as the topic for today's class and introduce the inquiry question: What are your fundamental freedoms? How are they protected?

3. Independent Work - Document Analysis: Students will read excerpts from three different Founding Documents to develop a basic understanding of how these documents relate to one another.

4. The Students will write text from the documents into a Venn Diagram to help them visualize the evidence.

5. Partner Work: After analyzing the documents, students will work with a partner to share/compare their Venn Diagram evidence. They will add text that they did not have on their sheet.

6. Assessment: Using the Venn Diagram evidence, students will write a thesis statement or take a position on the inquiry question: What are your fundamental freedoms? How are they protected?

7. Whole Class - Share out: Students will share their thesis statements with the class and provide at least three examples of textual evidence from the speeches.

8. Further assessment - Homework: Students will write an essay in which they take a position regarding the Inquiry Questions and support their thesis with evidence from the documents.

PRIMARY SOURCE LESSON SUPPLEMENTS

EXCERPTS FROM THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

EXCERPTS FROM THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Article I

SECTION. 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Article II

SECTION. 1. The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows...

Article III

SECTION. 1. The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour ...

Article V

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all...

Source: www.constitutioncenter.org/constitution

EXCERPTS FROM THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

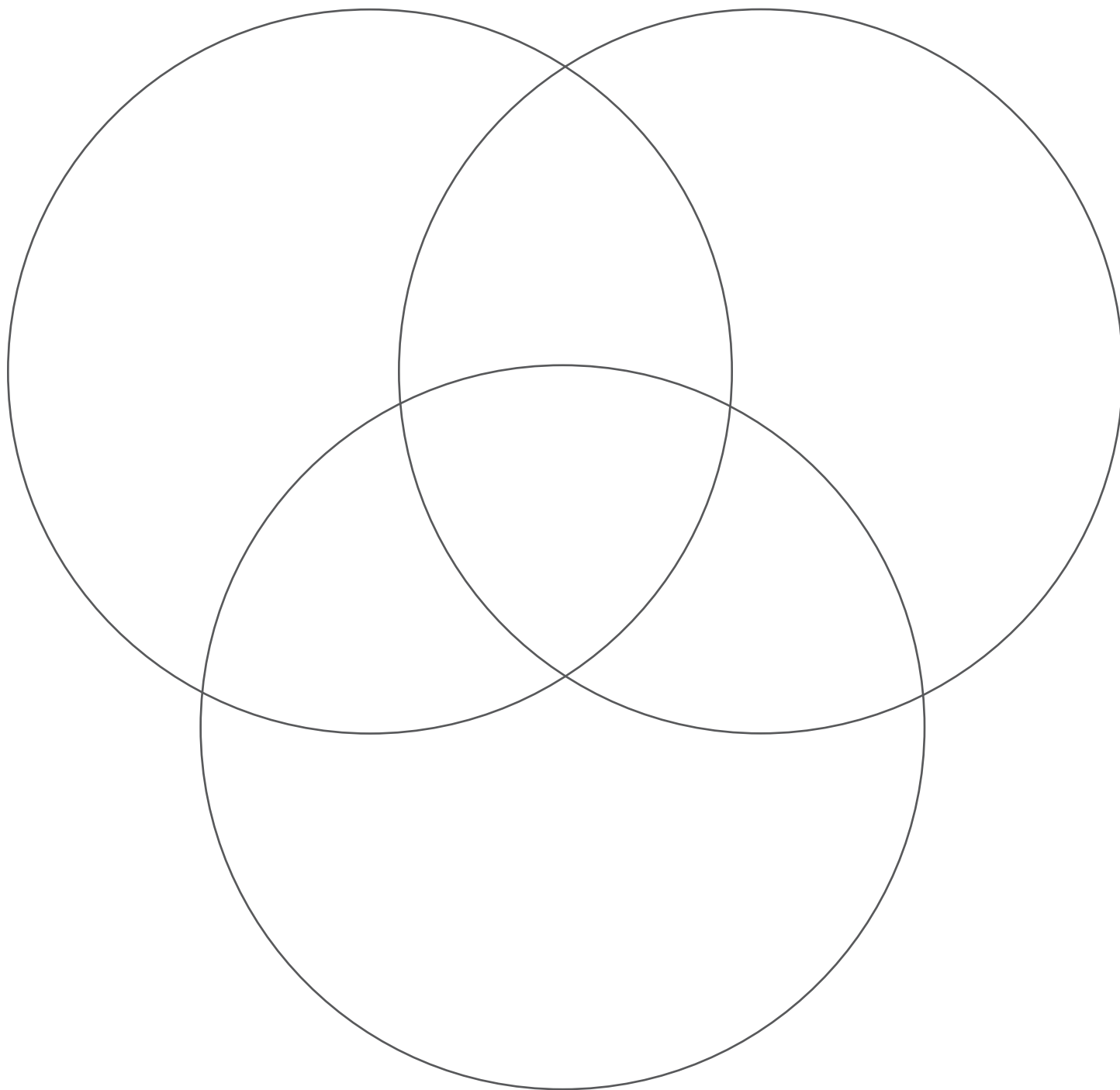
Source: www.constitutioncenter.org/constitution

LESSON WORKSHEET

Name: _____

Date: _____

Textual Evidence: In the circles below, record words or phrases that are Truths, Trends, or Unique ideas.
(Truths center circle – words repeated more than 3 times. Trends shared circle – words that are repeated 2 or 3 times. Unique Ideas outer circles – words only present in the excerpt).



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