Defining US: The American Experience
FCPS Teaching American History Grant

LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Subject __ Social Studies ________________________________ Grade: 4

Prepared by: Amanda Kane and Jane Zuidema

School: Bren Mar Park

Title or Topic: Introduction to the study of the Declaration of Independence

Instructional Time: 1 hour

PART I.

1. Essential Learning: (Big picture/concept to be learned.)
   The students will understand the founding documents of the United States

2. National History Standard (NHS): (Historical Thinking Standard)
   Standard 4: How democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols.
   4D The student understands events that celebrate and exemplify fundamental values and principles of American democracy.
   3-4 Describe the history of events, such as the signing of the Mayflower Compact and the Declaration of Independence, and the writing of the Constitution, The Bill of Rights, and the Emancipation Proclamation. [Demonstrate and explain the influence of ideas and beliefs]

3. Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL): (Identify by number and descriptor.)
   5a. The students will demonstrate knowledge of the role of Virginia in the American Revolution by identifying the reasons why the colonies went to war with England as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

4. Fairfax County Program of Studies (POS): (Identify by number and descriptor.)
   History:
   • examine important events and developments in Virginia’s history and present-day society and their influences on culture and lifestyles
   • determine how events and people in Virginia history influenced United States history, influence the present day, and will influence the future
Civics:

- learn about important documents in Virginia’s history and their influence on today’s governmental system

4. Learning Strategy(s) Objectives:
   
   *Tell what you know.* (Activate prior knowledge) Review events and public opinion leading up to the American Revolution.

   *Make predictions.* Participate in a discussion about the possible consequences of creating and signing a document such as the Declaration of Independence.

   *Make inferences.* Use context to understand the actual meanings of new words and the implied meanings.

PART II.

1. Assessment: (Describe here. Attach a copy of student instructions or assessment instrument.)
   If applicable, include student self-assessment.
   
   Assessment will be the grading of the student writing activity using a teacher-made grading rubric.

2. Instructional Strategies: (Describe step by step procedure. Include opener, teacher presentation and student activities.)

   **Opener:**
   
   Review the events and public opinion in the period leading up to the American Revolution such as Patrick Henry’s speech, The Stamp Acts, and the Boston Tea Party.

   Show a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence. Read some of the more familiar portions aloud.

   Discuss why this document was important.

   **Teacher Presentation:**
   
   Introduce a vocabulary/word list pertaining to the Declaration.

   Distribute Declaration of Independence reference papers and highlighters. Have students read the selection in pairs or as a group and highlight the most important ideas. Initiate discussion for clarification and check for understanding. Emphasize the three parts of the Declaration as:
   
   1. ideals or goals of the new nation,
   2. complaints of the colonists against the British King, and
   3. the reasons why the colonists wanted to be independent

   Read through the important parts of the Declaration and refer to the word list and the three parts.

   Explain assignment/student activities, and rubric for letter.

   **Student Activities:**
   
   Acting as colonists, the students will write a 3 paragraph letter to King George III. The first paragraph will list the goals or ideals of their nation, the second paragraph will enumerate the complaints they have against England, and the third paragraph will include the reasons why they want to be free of British Rule.
3. **Materials/Resources to be used:**
   - vocabulary/word list: teacher-made chart listing words or uses of words with which the students may not be familiar
   - reference page handouts, “Declaration of Independence”
   - highlighters
   - transcription of the Declaration
   - prepared template sheet for letter writing activity
   - rubric for scoring the students’ letters

4. **Differentiation:** (Include strategies for reteaching and special populations such as GT, ESOL and special education.)
   Use attached cloze activity and word search paper for the Declaration. Make vocabulary word cards, and/or encourage students to work with a partner.
   Extensions could include reading the Declaration in its original language and “translating” parts of it into everyday English. Students may also copy their corrected letters with pens onto parchment paper.

5. **Attachments:** (Assessments, rubrics, handouts that support the lesson.)
   - Declaration reference paper: contains a small facsimile of the Declaration and supporting text with information about the document. This is available at a website created by a regional cooperative for educational services.
   http://rims.k12.ca.us/symbols_freedom/pages/doi.html
   - Declaration transcription: An actual transcription of the original document is available at The National Archives website:
   - Letter template with directions: “A Colonist’s Letter to the King”
   - Grading rubric: “A Colonist’s Letter to the King Rubric”
   - Cloze exercise with word bank: This is a fill-in-the-blanks exercise about the Declaration with a word bank at the bottom, which was adapted from a Adlibs-type activity.
   http://familyeducation.com/printables/piece/0.2357,1-10581-537.00.html
   - Word search paper: This is an activity sheet that was created by putting the target words into the puzzle at http://www.puzzlemaker.com.