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TAH Program – 2008  
A More Perfect Union  
Prof. Gary Hylander

## **Review of U.S. History I Through Exploration and Evaluation of Primary Documents**

Returning to Bourne High School, the juniors come into their last history requirement – U.S. History II, late 1800s to the present. The unusual circumstance for these students is the selected track of history courses they must follow from 8<sup>th</sup> grade through graduation. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the students take U.S. History I, early American history through the Civil War. During freshman and sophomore years, the students take World History I and World History II respectively. Thus, the students have a two year hiatus from U.S. History during their first half of their high school careers. This scenario becomes more complex with the eventual graduation requirement of passing the U.S. History portion of the MCAS. These factors make it critical that the students, in the beginning of their junior year, get a thorough review of the U.S. History I curriculum.

This lesson plan promotes a strong understanding of U.S. History from the late 1700s to the early 1800s. Through exploration and evaluation of the primary *documents to read and to consider* as outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Education's Frameworks the students will gain a better understanding of the foundations of U.S. History. Though some of the documents may be from outside the targeted time frame of study, the students will be asked to draw connections linking these documents to the development of the United States as an emerging nation. The students will explore the collection of documents and look for common themes and values that helped shape the America which we live in today. Furthermore, the students will use their newfound understandings of the primary documents to develop their own governing document in the form of the class rules which will be adhered to throughout the academic year.

### **Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks**

#### The Political and Intellectual Origins of the American Nation: the Revolution and the Constitution, 1763-1789

US1.2 Explain the historical and intellectual influences on the American Revolution and the formation and framework of the American government.

*Seminal Primary Documents to Read:* Mayflower Compact (1620)

*Seminal Primary Document to Read:* the Declaration of Independence (1776)

US1.5 Explain the role of Massachusetts in the revolution, including important events that took place in Massachusetts and important leaders from Massachusetts.

*Seminal Primary Document to Consider:* the Massachusetts Constitution (1780)

US1.6 Explain the reasons for the adoption of the Articles of Confederation in 1781, including why its drafters created a weak central government; analyze the shortcomings of the national government under the Articles; and describe the crucial events leading to the Constitutional Convention.

*Seminal Primary Document to Read:* the Northwest Ordinance (1787)

US1.7 Explain the roles of various founders at the Constitutional Convention. Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention and the “Great Compromise” that was reached.

*Seminal Primary Document to Read:* the U.S. Constitution

US1.8 Describe the debate over the ratification of the Constitution between Federalists and Anti-Federalists and explain the key ideas contained in the Federalist Papers on federalism, factions, checks and balances, and the importance of an independent judiciary.

*Seminal Primary Documents to Read:* Federalist Paper number 10

US1.9 Explain the reasons for the passage of the Bill of Rights.

*Seminal Primary Document to Read:* the Bill of Rights (1791)

### **Time Frame**

This unit plan is designed for five classes. Each class is sixty six minutes.

### **Objectives**

1. To interpret U.S. I primary documents
2. To draw connections from U.S. I primary documents to the America we live in today.
3. To describe political, economic, and social/cultural conditions that sparked and shaped the U.S. I primary documents.
4. To draft an essay based on their exploration of the primary documents and self-reflection of values important to the individual student.
5. To develop their own document (class rules) that will govern class conduct throughout the school year.

## **Background**

In order to conduct this unit, the teacher should read, and have a thorough understanding of each of the Seminal Primary Documents listed in the Frameworks section. A strong understanding of the political, economic and social/cultural climate surrounding the drafting of each of the Primary Documents is essential in guiding the students in their exploration and evaluation of each of the documents. The teacher should also keep an open mind to the interpretations of the students in as much as they often see the documents through a lens we, as educators, may not have utilized. Honor their ideas, and share with them yours.

Although this unit is suggested as a review of U.S. History I in the beginning of the academic year in U.S. History II, it could also be appropriate in a couple different scenarios. This unit would be a good way to conclude a course on the U.S. Constitutional period. It could also serve as a capstone unit for a U.S. History I course. Another possible way to utilize this unit would be through an MCAS prep course for the History portion of the test. Ultimately though, this lesson is best served as a jumping point for a class that needs a quick review of early U.S. History in order to get a more sound understanding of what is to come in a course that will explore post Civil War America to the present.

Only by gaining a better understanding of where we came from as a nation, can a base of citizens (students) preserve and refine our nation's democracy (paraphrase – see Bibliography #2). Though the students will have an easier time understanding the documents with a solid foundation in early American History, the unit ultimately can be used for any group of students ranging from completely new to the material, to very well-versed in U.S. History I Primary Documents.

## **Materials**

1. U.S. I *Seminal Primary Documents*. See Frameworks Section. 5 copies of each.
2. Projector and Screen for classroom PC.
3. Opening Day “History Is . . .” PowerPoint Presentation.
4. Billboard paper, markers, and other materials necessary for poster presentations.
5. Computer lab with PC's for 25 students. PC's equipped with Microsoft Word.
6. Bourne High School (or generic) Analytical Writing Rubric
7. Sample History Writing Assignment Outline.
8. Bourne High School Essential Understandings Matrix.

## Procedures

### Day 1

- Students view “History Is . . .” opening day Power Point Presentation (Handout I).
  - o Students take notes on slides and eventually gauge the *values* (freedom, equality, self-reliance, etc.) they find to be the most important.
  - o At the conclusion of the presentation students will be given a selected Primary Document from U.S. I.
    - H.W. – Select 3 important values and read assigned Primary Document, look for your selected values in the document.

### Day 2

- Students partner up with other students who were given the same Primary Document. Today they will explore their document even more with help from their classmates as well as the instructor.
  - o In small groups, students will analyze their documents.
  - o They will look for similarities in their selected values.
  - o Distribute Essential Understandings Sheet (Handout 4) to students.
  - o Distribute Sample History Writing Outline (Handout 3) to students.
    - Help students make inferences of the political, economic, and social/cultural (P.E.G.S.) climates of the time periods when their documents were drafted.
    - H.W. – Create an outline for the Primary Document Writing Assignment

### Day 3

- Students will continue to work with their Primary Document groups today. They will prepare a short presentation about their assigned document – referencing the essential understandings and connecting the document to their selected values.
  - o Distribute Billboard poster materials to each group (markers, etc.)
  - o Have students make a poster with the document title, 3 bullets referencing P.E.G.S., and a list of selected values that specifically connect to the document.
  - o Distribute Bourne High School Analytical Writing Rubric (Handout 2).
    - Go over the Writing Rubric with the students. Clarify the driving question for the writing assignment. “To what extent do the values rooted in the primary documents impact our society today?”
    - H.W. – Create an outline for the Writing Assignment.

#### Day 4

- Class will meet in the PC Lab today.
  - o Students will work on the rough draft of their Primary Document Writing Assignment.
  - o Have individual conferences with students to gauge their progress and understanding.
    - H.W. – Complete Writing Assignment Rough Draft.

#### Day 5

- Students will each present the posters they made as groups. Make sure that students are taking notes on EACH primary document, not just the one they have already explored and evaluated through their writing.
  - o Move about the room during presentations to ensure attentiveness. Also, while moving about the room – check writing assignment rough drafts.
  - o Make a note of each group members' contributions for a class participation grade.
    - As a class – Develop a document that will govern classroom behavior throughout the year. Use the primary documents and selected values as a guide.
    - H.W. – Complete Writing Assignment Final Draft.

#### **Endnote**

1. Some handouts were actually copied/pasted to the final draft and thus will NOT appear on an electronic version of this document.
2. Format of Curriculum Unit based on Organization of American Historians' guidelines for Lesson Plans. <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/lessons.html>

#### **Bibliography**

1. Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>
2. Opening Day PowerPoint Presentation.
3. Sample Writing Assignment Outline – Jordan Geist

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## Scoring Guide for Writing

Bourne High School – Handout 2

To What Extend Do The Values Rooted In The Primary Documents Impact Our Society Today?

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	Teacher Points	Student Points
<b>Idea Development/ Details (Content)</b>	Ideas show little or no development. Details are either lacking or irrelevant. Reader is not engaged and is forced to make inferences.	Ideas are basic and weak, and details fail to support topic fully. The reader is not completely engaged.	Ideas are well to moderately developed with relevant details. The reader comprehends the main ideas, but may not be entirely engaged.	Ideas are well developed, relevant, and keep the reader fully engaged.		
					Comments	
<b>Organization (Format)</b>	Little or no organization exists. The reader is frequently confused.	Organization is rudimentary and weak. The reader is occasionally confused.	Organization is evident and the reader is able to move through the piece with little or no confusion.	Careful and/or subtle organization is evident. The text moves along so smoothly that the reader is fully engrossed.		
<b>Language/Style (Sentence Structure, Word Choice)</b>	Language is overly simplistic and rudimentary.	Language shows some variety; however, it tends to be simplistic.	The language is appropriate and functional, occasionally exuding a unique voice. Most importantly, it delivers the main ideas effectively.	Effective and appropriate use of language lends to an expressive and appealing piece that is a pleasure to read.		

## Sample History Writing Outline

Handout 3

### Introduction:

Hook: Why are these values important today?

Thesis: Explain how the primary documents have had a lasting impact on our society.

Plan of attack: Using your pre-selected information from the group work, create a sentence that will serve to organize your paragraphs. Connect at least three values to your assigned primary document.

### Body 1/2:

Discuss how the three values you selected show the origins and development of individual rights and connect those to your political, economic, and social/cultural inferences during the group work. Be sure to introduce authors, dates, and titles when using quotes.

### Body 3/4:

Discuss how the three values you selected show the origins and development of self government and connect those ideas to values we cherish today. Be sure to introduce primary document authors, dates, and titles when using quotes.

Conclusion: Restate hook, thesis and main points.