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CCC / TAH Seminar
Final Project
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REBELS & FOUNDING FRAMERS:
THEIR HUMANITY REVEALED

A TWO WEEK UNIT PLAN

Overview:

Many high school students--many Americans in general, for that matter--have put certain revolutionary leaders and founding framers on pedestals. The larger-than-life elite are idolized as heroic, virtuous, and committed patriots with unwavering devotion to their principles. It is certainly not the intent of this curriculum unit to maliciously sully the reputations of our forefathers. Rather, by modeling and teaching historical reading and thinking via the use of an interactive website and primary source documents, students will develop the *habits of mind* that will promote critical thinking and a willingness to acknowledge inconsistencies & contradictions in their leaders. Research and classroom activities will further assist students in learning, as Martin and Wineburg propose in *Seeing Thinking on the Web*, that “historical knowing becomes about asking questions, reading sources closely, and analyzing and synthesizing across multiple accounts.” (317)

Background:

It is assumed that students have a general understanding of the Revolutionary Era and its leaders, and that this prior knowledge will carry over to this unit. It's suggested that this unit be intertwined with the study of the U.S. Constitution or that it serve as a culminating activity for that study.

MA Frameworks:

US.3 Explain the influence and ideas of the Declaration of Independence and the political philosophy of Thomas Jefferson.

- Read: The Declaration of Independence (1776)
- Consider reading: The Suffolk Resolves (1774) & The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1786)

US.4 Analyze how Americans resisted British policies before 1775 and analyze the reasons for the American victory and the British defeat during the Revolutionary war.

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

- The Boston Massacre
- The Boston Tea Party
- The Battles of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill
- Samuel Adams, John Adams, and John Hancock
- Consider reading: The Massachusetts Constitution (1780)

US.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 (e.g., Shay's Rebellion) leading to the Constitutional Convention.

- Read: The Northwest Ordinance (1787)

US.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.

- The distribution of political power
- The rights of individuals
- The rights of states
- Slavery
- Benjamin Franklin
- Alexander Hamilton
- James Madison
- George Washington
- Read: The U.S. Constitution

US.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.

- Read: Federalist Paper #10
- Consider reading: Federalist Papers #s 1, 9, 39, 51, and 78

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

- The influence of the British concept of limited government
- The particular ways in which the Bill of Rights protects basic freedoms, restricts government power, and ensures rights to persons accused of crimes
- Read: The Bill of Rights
- Consider reading: Magna Carta (1215) and the English Bill of Rights (1689)

US.10 On a map of North America, identify the first 13 states to ratify the Constitution.

US.11 Describe the purpose and functions of government.

US.12 Explain and provide examples of different forms of government, including democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, and autocracy.

US.13 Explain why the United States government is classified as a democratic government.

US.14 Explain the characteristics of American democracy, including the concepts of popular sovereignty, and constitutional government, which includes representative institutions, federalism, separation of powers, shared powers, checks and balances, and individual rights.

US.15 Explain the varying roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in the United States.

US.16 Describe the evolution of the role of the federal government, including public services, taxation, economic policy, foreign policy, and common defense.

US.19 Explain the rights and the responsibilities of citizenship and describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties, and interest groups.

US.20 Explain the evolution and function of political parties, including their role in federal, state, and local elections.

US.21 Describe how decisions are made in a democracy, including the role of legislatures, courts, executives, and the public.

US.22 Summarize the major policies and political developments that took place during the presidencies of George Washington (1789-1797), John Adams (1797-1801), and Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809).

- The origins of the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties in the 1790s
- The conflicting ideas of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton
- The Alien and Sedition Acts
- The Louisiana Purchase
- Consider reading: Washington's Farewell Address (1796) and Jefferson's First Inaugural Address (1801)

Learning Goals:

Students Will:

- Begin to read documents historically, using strategies of sourcing, contextualization, careful reading, and corroboration
- Learn to use the Historical Thinking Matters website (historicalthinkingmatters.org) and be prepared for independent work on subsequent investigations
- Become knowledgeable about the lives and contributions of 15 - 20 key individuals associated with the U.S. Revolutionary and Constitutional eras

- Become adept at using subscription data bases and reputable history websites in conducting their research
 - Take accurate notes using graphic organizers, or save information to their “P” drive; write a Works Cited page using MLA style
 - Student “pairs” investigate together!
- Each student reads /examines at least *four* primary source documents related to h/her person / topic
 - Engages in the thinking & reading strategies practiced week one online at *historicalthinkingmatters.org*
 - Together, students carefully answer any questions accompanying the primary documents
 - They draft an essay in response to a writing prompt “they” formulate based on the unique situation and qualities of “their rebel” or “framer”
 - Peer conferencing and writing of the final essay follows
 - Using “high” (computer driven) or “low” (books & overhead projector) technology, students choose an image and/or symbol to represent the essence of their “person.” This image will be incorporated into a mural scene on Mrs. Silva’s classroom wall.
 - As a whole class, (perhaps with “elected representatives?” ☺), students collaborate on the unifying themes and mural design. Approved design will be traced onto the wall and all students will participate (varying degrees, based on interest, desire, creativity, etc) in its “painting.”

Procedures

1. Instructor leads class in a Carossel-type KWL activity to spark interest and ascertain what students already know about key U.S. Revolutionary and/or Constitutional era “rebels” and “framers.”
2. Project is discussed & explained.
3. Student-Pairs choose their “people” to research.
4. The first 3-4 days are spent in the computer lab, following the *historicalthinkingmatters.org* website’s instructional / modeling lesson (about the Spanish-American War) to introduce students to the strategies of sourcing, contextualization, careful reading, and corroboration. (Please refer to lesson I’ve downloaded from the site.)
5. The next 2 class days are spent in the library and/or computer labs, where the students will have access to a wealth of Internet databases, websites, texts, and printed excerpts from primary source documents. The librarian and I will provide 1:1 assistance / direction as needed.
6. HW assignments will involve additional research as needed, writing of the essay drafts, and research on potential “images” or “symbols” for the class mural.
7. On the third day of the second week, students will peer edit their essays. They will polish them and complete their final copy for HW.
8. On the final two days of the project, students will trace their images onto the wall in the classroom. The actual painting may take a couple more days.

9. When the mural is completed, we will invite another class in to join us for the student oral presentations of their essays and to enjoy our “Rebels and Founding Framers” tribute.
10. Please note: Instructor will provide sample note-taking graphic organizers, a wide variety of primary source documents (to get some students started!), and specific rubrics for the essay and the mural.