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NEH Institute “Thomas Jefferson: Personality, Character, and Public Life”
July 13-August 8, 2008 Boston, MA & Monticello, VA
Lesson 3

Lesson for: 8th grade United State History to 1877 class with both regular and special education students.

PASS Objective: IV. Analyze and describe key events and significant Individuals of the American Revolution.

Purpose: Students will better understand the Declaration of independence by developing a declaration of their own.

One of the main purposes of the Declaration of Independence was to proclaim independence from England to the world. The student must present their own declaration of Independence to their classmates.

The activity:

1. The students will be divided into groups.
 2. The students will be given this scenario:
The government is being run by a tyrant who has taken all the rights away from the people. He has declared that everyone must be a part of his church or be executed. He is in control of everything. If anyone disagrees with him then they just disappear. The Tyrant has hired an army who lives among the people. He has spies everywhere. Life has become unbearable. He has raised taxes to pay for a war. He has full control of all technology including all cell phones and video games. The price of gas and food are outrageous. He has cut off trade from all over the world.
You and several others have decided to go to war and declare your independence against the tyrant
 3. Each group must:
 - a. Name their country.
 - b. make a map of their country
 - c. Develop a Declaration of Independence. (The students must not use the words in the Declaration of Independence.)
 - d. Write down the pros and cons of starting a war.
 4. Each group must give everyone in the group a job. For example: making a map, writing a declaration, presenting the information to the class.
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4. Assessment: Each group must report to the class and display there information in a presentation.
 5. Suggestion; Put the strongest and weakest students together so that the projects are more balanced.

