

Role Play Handout



Thomas Jefferson

Another reason you distrust Hamilton is his defense of a strong central government. You feel that a strong central government is what America fought to get rid of in the revolution. In fact, you are very much against all the power of the government being located in the North. You would rest easier if the location of the capitol were in Virginia.

Description of Role

Although the general public may not be aware, you are known among your peers for writing the Declaration of Independence – the document which inspired radical change in the world. The vision you hold for America is dangerously close to not being realized – if the nation cannot survive her infancy, all that was fought for, may be in vain.

You also realize that there is a gap between your vision - that “all men are created equal” - and reality. You have written about what a horrid institution slavery is, yet you keep 200 slaves to support your lifestyle. You are very torn on this issue – you want to see an end to slavery but are willing to leave it to future generations to figure out.

Although you respect Hamilton, you don't trust him. You feel he is destroying the goal of the revolution by his financial plans. On the one hand, you see his point, that America will not survive if it doesn't pay back all its debts, but you are not sure if Hamilton's plan is the best.

How to Portray the Role

Your biggest strength is your writing and your ability to listen. You are not an energetic speaker, but rather state your position with calm and reserve. You will contribute your ideas but never by dominating over, or shouting over others. Your closest friend at the dinner party is Madison.

Concerns

Your biggest concern, now and always, is to do whatever it takes to keep these United States united and the power of the central government at a minimum.

Role Play Handout



**George
Washington**
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Moderator

Description of Role

You are a hero of mythic proportion. Your leadership won the Revolutionary war against Great Britain. You presided over the Constitutional Convention and were unanimously elected to be the first chief executive of the United States.

You will be the moderator and writer at this dinner party meeting of the Founding Minds. Your job is to ensure that the group comes to an agreement on each of the topics on the agenda (See Worksheet A). Additionally, you will facilitate the discussion and make sure that all members are allowed to speak and make their points heard. Once a decision has been reached on an issue, you must fill in the corresponding blanks on Worksheet A: The Agenda. Once all parties are agreeable to the final set of agreements, have each leader sign the bottom of the document and turn it in to the teacher.

How to Portray the Role

You are very modest. Rather than trying to dominate over others, you want to hear everyone's positions before you make any decisions. In particular, you trust Hamilton and tend to support his ideas.

Give all sides a chance to air their grievances and work with each to come to a resolution. You may have to encourage one side to give in on an issue by promising them that another issue will be decided in their favor. Above all, keep the group working together and moving.

Concerns

You see a great irony – what the Revolution fought for (against an authoritative power) – this freedom, cannot last without a strong central power steering the New Republic in the right direction.

Since your home is in Virginia, you would like to see the capitol of the United States situated nearby.

You have taken a personal vow never to purchase another slave. In fact you have said that it is your fondest wish to abolish slavery slowly by some plan. However, the discussion of slavery tonight at the Dinner Party is an embarrassment to you and you want the subject dropped.

The new republic MUST stay united, at any cost. Your biggest concern is to keep them united – do not allow factions to develop, or separate from the common goal.

Role Play Handout



John Adams

Slavery disgusts you, however your respect for the law is greater. It was specifically put into the Constitution, that the Federal Government may not make any laws prohibiting or regulating slavery for 20 years, until 1808.

Description of Role

Your career, in fact, your whole life has been made by the American Revolution – which was, and still is, your life project – to see it through. You are the one who insisted each state draft its own constitution in May of 1776. You are the one who insisted on making George Washington head of the Continental Army and having Jefferson write the Declaration. It is your legal mind which saw the illegalities of Great Britain’s Stamp Act and rallied for support to overthrow the British.

It is 14 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed. The New republic survived for some time under the Articles of Confederation, and has survived under the Constitution with you serving as Vice-President under Washington for almost two years now. However, things are not looking good. The United States will never receive respect from other countries if we don’t become financially strong. The only way we can do this, according to you is to yield greater power to the Federal Government. In fact, you believe that Washington should be addressed as “Your Majesty.”

How to Portray the Role

You often do not think before you speak. You are outspoken and forceful. You and Jefferson were once very good friends but have lately started to drift apart because of your differing views.

Concerns

Your biggest concern, now and always, is to do whatever it takes to keep these United States united and the only way you believe this can be done is by giving the Federal Government a more powerful role.

Role Play Handout



**Alexander
Hamilton**

Description of Role

You served in the revolution under Washington where you earned recognition. You were one of the key players in the drafting of the Constitution. Along with Madison and Jay, you wrote the Federalist Papers, winning support for the ratification of the Constitution.

You are most likely the smartest one in the room. Washington knows this – that is why he selected you to be the Secretary of Treasury. You take your job very seriously, as you do the cause of the Revolution for which you risked your life for. You have become depressed lately for you realize that unless America pays back her debts, she will never gain respect in the world. You have a plan for the Federal Government to assume the debts of the states and the citizens – to consolidate them together. You know this plan will work, because you are truly brilliant. Your problem is that you have to sell it to the other people here at the Dinner Party tonight and this is going to be very difficult because your plan involves strengthening the Federal Government.

In fact, the others will argue that your plan violates the Constitution. You have to point out the elastic clause – that the Constitution gives the Federal Government the power to do what it needs to do that is “necessary and proper” for the country.

You are a big supporter and member of the Anti-Slavery movement in New York. You abhor slavery but are irritated that others are discussing it tonight because it is not as important an issue as your financial plans to save the United States from falling apart.

You would like to see the capitol remain in New York, where it temporarily is right now.

How to Portray the Role

Your intelligence makes you come off a bit arrogant at times. Because of your strong views, you are often not well received. You don't get along with Jefferson or Adams. Your only ally in the room is George Washington.

Concerns

Your biggest concern is to keep these United States united and you believe this can be accomplished if your financial plan to consolidate and pay off the debts is accepted by the others.

Role Play Handout



James Madison

Any effort to end slavery is premature, politically impractical, and counterproductive. You need to make sure that Congress goes on record acknowledging that the Federal Government has NO right to end slavery. If you don't accomplish this, all states in the South, will secede from the union, including your own state, Virginia.

You are uncomfortable with all the power of the government being in New York - where the temporary capitol is along with the financial centers. You would like to see it moved further south to give the Southern states more reassurance that the Federal government is not gaining too much power.

Description of Role

You have made invaluable contributions to the founding of the New Republic – the United States of America. It is your efforts at the Constitutional Convention that helped to foster a living document that could be ratified by the states. Along with Jefferson and Jay, you wrote the Federalist Papers winning support for the ratification of the Constitution. Furthermore, your addition of the Bill of Rights ensured that individual rights would be protected as well..

You do not like Hamilton's financial plan. You feel that his idea to pay back the holders of the IOU notes (notes given to people for loaning the government food, supplies, etc., during the American Revolution) is unfair. These notes have been bought up for pennies by those wishing to make money from the government and therefore any money given would not go to the original owners of the notes. You argue for a plan to reimburse the original owners of the notes as well.

How to Portray the Role

Like Thomas Jefferson, you are also quiet and reserved and prefer to listen to others, although you find a way to be heard. Others have a tremendous amount of respect for you because what you do suggest always turns out to be right. Thomas Jefferson is your closest friend at the Dinner Party. You trust him and usually follow his lead.

Concerns

Your biggest concern is to keep these United States united. You will stop arguing and opposing Hamilton's financial plan only if there is a huge trade-off.

Role Play Handout



Benjamin Franklin

Others will argue that to get rid of slavery, the owners need to be compensated for the loss of their property. You propose that this can be done with the money the US government will acquire from land sales in the Northwest Territories. It is a practical solution and you make every effort to insist that it be done. You want the Federal government to take a strong role in accomplishing this.

The other thing you would like to see accomplished is the moving of the capitol to Philadelphia. After all, Philadelphia is centrally located and in neutral territory – it doesn't have slavery, as does the South, nor is it the financial center, as is the North. In fact, it is where the Constitution was created so its history lends itself well to seating the nation's capitol there.

Description of Role

Next to George Washington you are the most respected and admired man in America. In fact, your reputation is renown in Europe. Not only are you an inventor, a scientist, a writer, the founder of the American Philosophical Society, but your contributions to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitutional Convention have been invaluable in the founding of this country.

You are getting on in age – you are 84 years old and do not have much time left. Before you leave, you have one last mission to accomplish – the abolition of slavery. It has eaten away at you since the Declaration of Independence – “all men are created equal” – and you saw a need to compromise at the Constitutional Convention in order to achieve unity. But you feel that the issue cannot be ignored any longer – America cannot gain respect in the world with such hypocrisy in her core. The longer we allow slavery to persist in the United States, the more it will divide us, and the more violent it will become in abolishing it.

How to Portray the Role

You are a man of vision with a very strong moral sense. However, your age has made it hard for you to argue as forcefully as you would like. Your last desire is to see this new nation acquire a sense of morality and end this horrible institution of slavery, which has become illegal in other parts of the world.

Concerns

It is urgent to get rid of slavery NOW. This is the opportune moment – it violates the principles that the Revolution was fought for.

Role Play Handout



Reporter for the Boston Newsletter

How to Portray the Role

Technically, you would not have been invited to this dinner party, so during this simulation, you should sit quietly and take notes. Follow the discussions and arguments closely so you can get word-for-word quotes and write an accurate article on the dinner party meeting afterward.

Description of Role

You will be portraying a Northern journalist working for the South Carolina Gazette attending this dinner party meeting of the Founding Minds. Your job is to obtain quotes from each of the delegates as they discuss important topics at the conference and write a Newspaper Article Storyboard summarizing the conversation (See Worksheet B). You not only want to write a high quality story for your newspaper, but you also want to make the Northern views and positions look like they came out ahead in the compromises. Additionally, your article must include a political cartoon or a drawing depicting the conference.

Concerns

Your major concern is to find all the evidence supporting the Northern position.

Role Play Handout

CHARLESTON, October 4.
LAST Saturday night, about ten o'clock, a disturbance happened on the Bay, between some French and Dutch seamen, by which means one of the latter received a ball in the forehead, of which he died instantly.
Thursday last Albert-Aerney Muller, Esq; was elected a Warden for ward No. 13.
Capt. Robert Cochran is appointed Harbour-Master for this Port.
Benjamin Legaré, Esq; is chosen Treasurer; and Peter Bounetheau, Esq; Town Clerk, of this City.
"It is no small pleasure to behold the military spirit again reviving in this city.—The noble example set by that veteran and useful corps, the Charleston Battalion of Artillery, whose handsome and soldier-like appearance on Wednesday afternoon last, has caused an emulation among several companies of the Militia, who propose to uniform, arm, and accoutre themselves completely.—Surely nothing can tend more to the safety of the Commonwealth, than a well disciplined Militia, who certainly are the best guardians of their liberties."
Yesterday the Schooner Gerard, Capt. Strong, arrived here from Philadelphia, with whom came passengers, Mrs. Milligan, (wife of Mr. Jacob Milligan) Mr. John Cumine, Mr. Miller, Mr. Hinton, and several others.

Reporter for the South Carolina Gazette

How to Portray the Role

Description of Role

You will be portraying a Southern journalist working for the South Carolina Gazette attending this dinner party meeting of the Founding Minds. Your job is to obtain quotes from each of the delegates as they discuss important topics at the conference and write a Newspaper Article Storyboard summarizing the conversation (See Worksheet B). You not only want to write a high quality story for your newspaper, but you also want to make the Southern views and positions looking like they came out ahead in the compromises. Additionally, your article must include a political cartoon or a drawing depicting the conference.

Technically, you would not have been invited to this dinner party, so during this simulation, you should sit quietly and take notes. Follow the discussions and arguments closely so you can get word-for-word quotes and write an accurate article on the dinner party meeting afterward.

Concerns

Your major concern is to find all the evidence supporting the Southern position.