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TJ Project: The American Revolution and Sustaining the New Republic

Themes: Conflict and compromise
Foundation of government and Ideology
Sacrifice, diversity and unity

Rationale: To address California State Standard 11.1:

Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.

1. Describe the Enlightenment and the rise of democratic ideas as the context in which the nation was founded.
2. Analyze the ideological origins of the American Revolution, the Founding Fathers' philosophy of divinely bestowed unalienable natural rights . . .

Overarching Purpose: *I want my students to:*

- Understand how people shape history and are shaped by it
- Understand the evolution of ideas and how critical timing determine if they will take root
- Perceive the challenges faced in the past in the context of that time period and to evaluate them using “historical thinking”
- Realize that it didn’t have to happen the way it unfolded – in fact, it was highly improbable that things would work out the way they did, against such enormous odds
- Appreciate the incredible risks taken, sacrifices made, commitment to a vision, extraordinary leadership and a unity enriched and strengthened by diversity

Setting: This unit of study is designed to be used with 11th graders in a US History course over five days where the class period is 55 minutes. (A sixth day is required for assessment.) Although it was created with AP students in mind, modifications can easily be made to use with college prep students.

Expected Outcomes / Learning Objectives:

1. Students will identify the events leading up to the American Revolution.
2. Students will describe the impact that various parliamentary actions had on various colonists in the context of mid-eighteenth century America.
3. Students will identify the role Thomas Jefferson played in writing the Declaration of Independence.
4. Students will evaluate the arguments for and against the colonists' declaration of independence and the revolutionary war.
5. Students will analyze the conflicts and compromises that ensued in maintaining "nationhood" once the revolution was achieved.

Materials / Resources:

- "1776" a Musical Play – Opening Montage
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPmvZ-IgGk0>
- Lecture Notes (See Appendix)
- *A Companion to the American Revolution*, edited by Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Blackwell Publishers, 2000)
- *Patriots – Brotherhood of the American Revolution* (Barnes & Noble Audio – Portable Professor, US History, taught by Joseph J. Ellis, 2004)
- Role Play Handouts and accompanying Worksheets
- DBQ on the American Revolution (Optional – taken from the AP exam)
- Primary Source Documents:¹
- "The Great American Fourth of July Parade," A Verse Play for Radio, by Archibald MacLeish, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975)

Instructional Procedure:

Day one - Introduction

1. Lesson Opener – Students will watch a short video clip (the Opening Montage) of "1776" – a Musical Play. This is easily found on YouTube.com. Following the viewing, class discussion:
 - a. Who are these people?
 - b. Where are they?
 - c. What are they doing there?
 - d. Why are they yelling at John to sit down?
 - e. What is John asking them to do? Why?
2. Brief lecture defining the American Revolution, an overview of what it accomplished and what it failed to do. (See Lecture Notes A in the Appendix)
3. Class work / Homework: Students will
 - a. read in their textbooks about events leading up to the American Revolution.

¹ To be added by students in the process of their independent researching throughout the lesson

- b. make a timeline based on their reading/research (The complexity of the timeline is based on the sophistication of the class.)

Days two and three – Setting the Context – Powerpoint Presentation of pre-Revolutionary America

4. Students are broken up into 12 teacher designated heterogeneous groups of 2-3 students. Each group is assigned a particular aspect of mid-eighteenth century Anglo-America. Their job is to create a 3-4 slide presentation providing the context of this time period. Teacher will then incorporate all the groups' slides into a Powerpoint Presentation that the students will present.
 - a. Structure of British politics
 - b. Administration of the colonies from 1696-1775
 - c. Intra-imperial communications
 - d. The changing socio-economic conditions and strategic importance of the colonies to the empire
 - e. Political development of the colonies after the glorious Revolution
 - f. Population and family in early America
 - g. Religion before the Revolution
 - h. Cultural development of the colonies
 - i. The emergence of civic culture in the colonies to about 1770
 - j. Ideological background
 - k. The Amerindian population in 1763
- Materials for this lesson are from *A Companion to the American Revolution*, edited by Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Blackwell Publishers, 2000). Each category listed above is a 3-5 page chapter from this book which would be run off and distributed respectively to each student in the group.
- Modification: For non-AP students, I would divide class into 9 groups of 4 students in the following categories:
- Political structure of Great Britain
 - Political structure of the American colonies
 - Economic and social structure of the New England colonies
 - Economic and social structure of the Middle colonies
 - Economic and social structure of the Chesapeake colonies
 - Economic and social structure of the Carolinas
 - Religion in the colonies
 - Intellectual or enlightenment influences
 - Population and demographics

- Materials: Student textbooks and a variety of websites:
www.hippocampus.org; < <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/road.html>>; to name a few.

- 5. Powerpoint Presentation of group created slides. Students either e-mail to teacher their slides for homework or bring in on a memory stick to be assembled into a class presentation. While the teacher is compiling all the slides onto one Powerpoint, students are handed their role cards for the next day's lesson (see days four and five) for them to look over.

- 6. Questions for Discussion:
 - a. What accounts for the economic differences between the different colonies?
 - b. What accounts for the religious differences?
 - c. What accounts for the demographic differences?
 - d. What are some things the colonists had in common?
 - e. Which colonial region is impacted the most by the parliamentary actions of the British? How?
 - f. What are some things we share in common with the colonists? What aspects of their lives can we relate to?
 - g. In what ways are we different? What are some things we cannot relate to or understand?

- 7. Homework: Students review their particular role for their group assignment the following day. They will listen to their respective role and take notes on Joe Ellis's *Patriots* lecture series. This can be made available to them via teacher website, or a podcast.² In addition, students look for primary source documents representing the ideas that their role represents.

Days four and five: Role play of Dinner Party Meeting of the Founding Minds

- 8. Students are divided into teacher-determined heterogeneous groups of 8 students (six Founding Fathers, and 2 observers). Each student will be assigned a role with specific instructions:
 - a. George Washington and Moderator of the group (Worksheet A)
 - b. John Adams
 - c. Benjamin Franklin
 - d. Thomas Jefferson
 - e. Alexander Hamilton
 - f. James Madison
 - g. A reporter from a Northern newspaper (Worksheet B)
 - h. A reporter from a Southern newspaper (Worksheet B)

² The legalities of providing this via the web or podcast need to be looked into.

Questions for discussion – Once the groups have decided on each issue and signed the moderator’s Worksheet, the teacher then collects the worksheets and holds a class discussion debriefing:

- What personalities were the most difficult to work with? Why?
- Which Founding Fathers had the most convincing arguments? According to what we know today? According to what they knew then?
- What were the most difficult issues to deal with? What were the easiest?
- If you were actually at this dinner party in 1790, how would you have dealt with the various personalities and issues?

Assessment:

- 1) The individual reports from each role-play:

Moderator - Each Moderator (George Washington) should prepare a one-page “Statement to the Press” to be published in all newspapers throughout the states. It should reflect a neutral and unbiased perspective on the proceedings at the Dinner Party and should be addressed “To the Citizens of the United States of America.”

Founding Father – Each leader should write a one-page speech to be given to the citizens of their community summarizing what took place at the Dinner Party and how it benefits their interests.

Journalists – Using their storyboard, each journalist should write a one-page article to be submitted to their editors for publication. They should include pictures, primary source documents (from the Library of Congress or the National Archives) and their political cartoon.

- 2) Optional - A DBQ on the American Revolution ³

Extension: Students perform *The Great American Fourth of July Parade* for the class, inviting other classes to see.

³ This is the DBQ used for the 2005 APUSH exam with the addition of an excerpt from The Declaration of Independence added. This DBQ may be modified.

Additional Resources used that were not mentioned in the Materials:

Ellis, Joseph. *Founding Brothers – The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Vintage Books, 2002.

This book was very useful in providing information for the contents of the role cards for the simulation.

Jurgensen, Lynn, Editorial Manager. *Conflict and Compromise in History - The Presidency*. National History Day, Inc., ABC-CLIO, Inc. 2007.

This Resource Book was very helpful in providing a template for a role-play simulation.