

Reaching for Truth Lesson Plan

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Unit Essential Question: How has the United States changed as a nation over time?

Learning objectives:

1. Students will understand how the United States survives by over time.
2. Students will understand individuals have fought for equality since our country was founded.
3. Students will understand that slavery existed in all parts of the country.

Desired Grade Level: This lesson was taught to students in Grade 6 during the month of September, so, for many this was their first time really digging into primary sources and analyzing the broad themes of the sources.

Context: This lesson was one of the first taught in my unit. I will continue with our study of US History by discussing the events that led to the US Civil War. Providing students with the background knowledge that slavery was a national issue was key for them to understand the rising tensions that led to the Civil War. Additionally, it was important for my students to understand that groups of people throughout our history have used their voice to ask for change.

Duration: 2 class periods of 45 minutes

Resources:

- a. Primary Sources
 - i. Declaration of Independence
 - ii. Freedom Petition 1779 (from Reaching for Truth Workshop)
 - iii. Declaration of Sentiments 1848
- b. Historical Site & Museum Visit Options
 - i. **Moffatt Ladd House in Portsmouth, NH**
 1. <http://www.moffatladd.org/>
 2. A visit to the Moffat Ladd house would allow students to understand how Prince Whipple lived by visiting the home where he was enslaved and where he most likely wrote the Petition of Freedom. Students would learn about the spaces of enslaved and free people and how they interacted. Allowing them to visit and interact with the space will deepen their understanding of Price Whipple and the necessity of the Petition of Freedom.
 - ii. **Kingston, NH Historical Society Museum**
 1. <https://www.kingstonnh.org/historical-museum-committee>
 2. A visit to the Historical Society Museum would give students an opportunity to view Josiah Bartlett's home, a NH signer of the Declaration of Independence, as well as explore artifacts from

Reaching for Truth Lesson Plan

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Bartlett's life. This hands-on experience for students who help them see Bartlett as more than just a historic figure. Additionally, using the new research about his use of enslaved labor as well as the possibility of his owning an enslaved women, it would allow students to discuss issues of equality and race.

iii. Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, NY

1. <https://www.nps.gov/wori/index.htm>
2. A visit to this National Historic Park would give students an in-depth look at the women who were part of the convention in Seneca Falls in 1848. Through film, exhibits, and guided tours students will learn more about the how women earned their right to vote and continued to fight for their equal rights.

iv. Massachusetts State House in Boston, MA

1. <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/trs/trsbok/trstour.htm>
2. A visit the the State House would build on students understanding of Mumbet's fight to be free and allow them to learn more about the the Massachusetts Constitution.

Reaching for Truth Lesson Plan

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Structure of Lesson:

- Students have already been introduced to the unit's essential question when this lesson begins. The theme of Trimester 1 for all content area classes is survival so I designed my first unit to stay with the theme. Therefore, our investigation of how America has changed as a nation over time to survive had been previously discussed.
- To begin the activity I added the following prompt to my Google Classroom:

Americans have fought for inclusion as citizens of the (soon to be) United States and throughout the history of our country. One way we continue to survive as a nation is we grow and change.

How do citizens fight for this growth and change, allowing the United States to survive as a nation? Using the primary sources below as well as the picture book Mumbet's Declaration of Independence, students will analyze ways American spoke their minds to bring about change.

1. Each group must submit ONE GOOGLE DOCUMENT of the Primary Source Analysis by September 13th during class
 2. The Google Doc should be shared with all group members so they can all type in responses to the questions
 3. Students should attempt to complete all levels in the time allotted
 4. Students should be prepared to have their work shared with the class
- Included in Google Classroom are the three primary sources as well as visuals that explain the importance of sourcing and close reading historical documents, provided by SHEG. Before students began the activity, I taught a mini lesson on each skill and explained the Primary Source Analysis Guide would allow students to practice both skills whilst they worked in small groups with their chosen documents.
 - Students were given the remainder of the class period to work in small groups using the Primary Source Analysis Guide to analyze their chosen source. For my students not reading at the 6th grade level, they were given a copy Mumbet's Declaration of Freedom and they filled out the same guide.
 - Please see the Modifications section for more information
 - The follow day students had most of the class period to continue working on analyzing their source. During the last fifteen minutes of class, students submitted their Guides using Google Classroom and we began to discuss what they had found.
 - Discussion Questions
 - What changes were the writers of your sources looking to make?

Reaching for Truth Lesson Plan

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- What surprised you about the sources?
 - Many students were shocked to learn that people were enslaved in both NH (Freedom Petition) and MA (Mumbet). This allowed for a great discussion on the history of slavery in the US and will be a touchstone as we continue to study US History.
 - I started by having students raise their hand if they knew enslaved people lived in NH, MA, VA, and SC. The students who read the Petition of Freedom and about Mumbet raised their hand for all four states, but most students only knew about slavery in the South. We talked about how the narrative of enslavement in the United States focuses on the South and why this happened.
 - I also asked them to make connections between the business of slavery and the industrialized North. My students studied the Industrial Revolution in Grade 5 and understood that many cities expanded in the north due to textile mills. They were able to make the connection that the mills and factories were able to be profitable due to the cotton from the south, implicating many more in the crime of slavery.
 - Since I teach the students of Newton, NH and Kingston, NH students have many questions about NH's signers of the Declaration of Independence since they learn Prince Whipple was enslaved by William Whipple of Portsmouth, NH. This led to questions about whether or not Josiah Bartlett, signer from Kingston, NH, also kept people enslaved. Research has recently come to light about Bartlett's use of enslaved labor as well as the possibility that he owned an enslaved woman. In the book, *Lives of Consequence: Blacks in Early Kittery & Berwick in the Massachusetts Province of Maine*, by Patricia Wall. Pg. 176 **Bartlett, Capt. (Josiah or Nathan)** 1746, Cumbo, Negro woman of Capt. Bartlett, baptized. We also have anecdotal evidence at the Moffatt-Ladd House that Prince and Cuffee chopped firewood for him, so he used slave labor. How were the sources similar?
 - I made sure to ask the Declaration of Independence groups to share some key lines first, which allowed the other groups to make connections between the documents.
- How were the sources different?

Reaching for Truth Lesson Plan

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- Were the writers able to bring about the change they wanted?
- Outcomes
 - By allowing students to work in groups to analyze the primary sources, it gave them the opportunity to have discussions about topic prior to sharing in a larger group.
 - By providing students the Declaration of Independence (something they had studied in Grade 5) and building on that background knowledge with the Freedom Petition of 1779 and the Declaration of Sentiments from 1848 they continued to build on time periods they had previously studied but with new information.
 - These documents left students with lots of questions which is a great way to kick off the school year and will allow students to continue to study these key topics in greater depth.
- Assessment
 - I worked with each group for portions of both days allowing me to see who needed help when analyzing sources and who already was proficient with the skill.
 - Each team turned in their Primary Source Analysis Guide using Google Docs which allows me to use who answered which question and will allow me assess their understandings of the source as well as their ability to analyze the source.
 - Students will continue to study additional ways America has fought to survive as a nation, taking formatives throughout the unit as well as summative at the end.

Modifications:

1. For my students who are below grade level in reading, I provided a copy of Mumbet's Declaration of Independence by Gretchen Woelfle. From Amazon: ""All men are born free and equal." Everybody knows about the Founding Fathers and the Declaration of Independence in 1776. But the founders weren't the only ones who believed that everyone had a right to freedom. Mumbet, a Massachusetts slave, believed it too. She longed to be free, but how? Would anyone help her in her fight for freedom? Could she win against her owner, the richest man in town? Mumbet was determined to try. *Mumbet's Declaration of Independence* tells her story for the first time in a picture book biography, and her brave actions set a milestone on the road toward ending slavery in the United States."
2. This book is available electronically, as an audiobook, and as a physical book. This allowed my struggling readers to participate in our discussion of Americans fighting for change without getting bogged down in the primary source documents.

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