INDIANA UNIVERSITY CENTER ON Representative Government

Dawn Crone • Brownsburg High School • Brownsburg, IN

BRINGING THE DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE TO LIFE

Using **Engaging Congress** from the **IU Center on Representative Government**

Purpose: Participants will collaborate to connect founding principles to current curriculum standards and use CORG's Engaging Congress digital tool to design engaging, classroom ready lesson activities.

Lesson Created by: Dawn Crone, James Madison Fellow (2020)

Title: Is the Declaration of Independence propaganda?

Target Grade Level 9-12	**Time of Lesson** 50 minutes

Indiana Academic Standards for Target Grade Level

USH.1.1
Read key documents from the Founding Era and analyze major ideas about government, individual rights, and the general welfare embedded in these documents.

Declaration of Independence Principle

Social Compact: To "sell" the idea of revolution to the colonists using the Declaration of Independence as a form of propaganda. The Continental Congress wanted support of the populist in the revolution and in creation of a new government.

Engaging Congress Source

Unit: A Balancing Act (The Federal Budget)
Primary Source: The Boston Tea Party Lithograph with focus on the call "no taxation without representation".

Explain Engaging Congress Unit Connection

The Boston Tea Party and call to action "no taxation without representation" became a source of propaganda through print and language sharing leading up to the Declaration of Independence.

Activity Description

Students will watch Engaging Congress "A Balancing Act" video then complete the analysis of the Boston Tea Party Lithograph in the Balancing Act unit. Following their individual or group analysis, discuss the call to action of "no taxation without representation".

Is this a form of propaganda? Have students explain and give examples. This event was December 16, 1773 and spread throughout the colonies. By 1776, the Olive Leaf Petition has failed and now the Committee of Five write the Declaration of Independence.

Share Dunlap Broadside of the Declaration of Independence explaining it was displayed throughout the colonies and the map of where the Declaration of read publicly.

Students will then read the Declaration of Independence through the lens of the document being propaganda to get colonists to support the American Revolution and split with the King of England. Students will circle a minimum 15 words that could be interpreted as propaganda to rouse colonists to the cause. In groups. students will discuss their word choices and why they could be seen as propaganda. As a group answer the question is the Declaration of Independence propaganda? Explain with examples.

Then students will create a blackout poem with their document and products will be displayed in classroom.

Primary Source Link(s)

https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/declara/declara4.html Library of Congress Dunlap Broadside

Additional Source(s)

https://declaration.fas.harvard.edu/sites/g/files/omnuum10521/files/declaration/files/map_for_website_-_printable.jpg Map of DOI readi

Expected Learning Outcomes

*Analyze historical events leading to the American Revolution by explaining the significance of the Boston Tea Party, the failure of the Olive Branch Petition, and the creation of the Declaration of Independence.
*Interpret visual and written primary sources by examining the Boston Tea Party lithograph, the Dunlap Broadside, and public readings of the Declaration throughout the colonies.
*Evaluate the concept of propaganda by identifying persuasive techniques, emotional language, and calls to action used in Revolutionary era documents and images.
*Determine whether historical documents can function as propaganda.
*Identify and analyze persuasive word choices in the Declaration of Independence by selecting at least 15 words or phrases that could influence colonists to support independence.
*Collaborate in academic discussions by sharing interpretations, defending viewpoints with historical evidence, and responding to peers' ideas during group activities.
*Develop historical arguments by answering the question, "Is the Declaration of Independence propaganda?" and using examples.
*Demonstrate understanding through creative expression by producing a blackout poem using language from the Declaration of Independence that has been identified as "propaganda".
*Connect historical communication methods to modern media literacy.

Modifications / Differentiation

1. Differentiation Strategy (Target: Grade Level / ELL / IEP)

https://www.gilderlehrman.org/declaration-independence/annotated/preamble Online annotated Declaration of Independence explaining references and defining words. High School Level

https://www.nps.gov/thst/learn/education/vocab.htm Vocabulary list of key terms in Declaration of Independence.

2. Differentiation Strategy (Target: Grade Level / ELL / IEP)

https://constitutioncenter.org/declaration/about-the-declaration-of-independence/audio-of-the-declaration-of-independence National Constitution Center read version for students to listen to.

There are many other versions of The Declaration of Independence read aloud by famous actors or groups.

List any required materials and/or attach worksheets / graphic organizer / classroom materials

https://www.archives.gov/founding docs/declaration transcript printable Declaration of Independence for student use

Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils for the blackout poetry activity.

Projector or similar way to show students video, lithograph and Dunlap Broadside to discuss as a class.

List all sources / links used (content and instructional)

https://www.weareteachers.com/blackout-poetry/ Description and examples of black out poetry.

https://thedaringenglishteacher.com/make-poetry-fun-with-blackout-poetry/ Description and examples of black out poetry.

https://theartofeducation.edu/2024/04/april-from-text-to-art-how-to-explore-blackout-poetry-in-your-art-room/