

Title“Self-evident Truths” - Sources and Legacy

Lesson Author: Jeanette Curtis

Key Words: Republican ideals, Declaration of Independence

Grade Level: History/Civics - 3rd grade also appropriate for grades 4 and 5.

Time Allotted: One 45 minute class period

Lesson Overview	“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Each student will be given a copy of the Hourglass worksheet. The teacher will use the notes provided and the Sources and Legacy power Point to teach the ideas that led up to the formation of this sentence. Using the provided puzzle pieces, students will construct, a pictorial representation of the concepts.
Guiding Question(s)	Where did the ideas in this famous sentence come from? Where has the influence of this sentence been felt since 1776?

Learning Objectives (SWBAT) Students will be able to recognize that the ideas in this sentence were developed from centuries of thought and that they have influenced other documents about human rights in the years since 1776. They will use summarizing and note taking skills to organize the ideas into a graphic organizer.

Essential Historical Skills Taught:

Historical Analysis and Interpretation

Students will be able to compare and contrast quotations from different primary sources in history placing them in a visual framework signifying before 1776, after 1776 and recognizing ideas not fitting into the picture. They will consider multiple contributions by various political thinkers in the past and assimilating them into this sentence which is a clear statement of American beliefs about the rights of humans.

Historical Analysis and Chronological thinking: Students will see the development of an idea over time. Students will construct a graphic illustration showing the influence of ideas about human rights and the development of ideas across time and across continents.

- VA SOL and/or national standards

Virginia SOL 3.11 The student will explain the importance of the basic principles that form the foundation of a republican form of government by describing the individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and equality under the law.

National History Standards, Part II United States History Standards

“Students Should Understand: The causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory.

America on the World Stage

Teacher Scholars Program

- Demonstrate understanding of the principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence by:
- Explaining the major ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence and their sources.”

Assessment Tool(s) – The finished puzzle will show students a graphic organizer of the flow of ideas from ancient times, through the funnel of the Declaration of Independence and then spreading out to influence human rights all over the world.

Materials/Resources - located in Related Materials folder

Sources and Legacy PowerPoint

Hourglass lesson points for teacher

Hourglass Puzzle pieces sheet

Hourglass puzzle form.

Hourglass puzzle completed (for teacher reference)

Modifications (to meet needs of diverse learners) – Because of the PowerPoint and the simplicity of the puzzle, any student should be able to assemble the puzzle. More advanced students will be able to see the philosophical connections more clearly. No one should be frustrated by the discussion.

Instructional Procedures/Process (How will you guide your students through this activity)

Each student should be given a puzzle form and a set of pieces. It may be visually pleasing to have the puzzle form on a different color of paper than the pieces. Teacher may pre-cut the pieces or students may cut out the pieces. As the teacher proceeds through the lesson, the students will glue the pieces into the appropriate spot on the hourglass puzzle form sheet as the teacher teaches each section. The hourglass shape illustrates that ideas came from different sources and were crystallized into this one wonderful sentence in the Declaration of Independence. Then this famous sentence has gone forth to influence people all over the world.

The teacher will use the **Sources and Legacy PowerPoint** and the document: **Hour glass lesson points – Background Information** to teach each “puzzle piece.” The students will be using the skills of summarizing and note-taking as they glue the pieces on to the puzzle form.

Closure: The hourglass shape should help student to see that the ideas for the sentence came from different people and different times. Students should be able to explain in their own words how the hourglass shape demonstrates the flow of ideas from European thinkers, funneling through Thomas Jefferson's famous sentence and then spread forth to influence human rights statements in the years since 1776. They should also be able to identify the ideas that do not fit.