

**Title“Self-evident Truths” - Sources and Legacy II**

**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

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| <b>Lesson Overview</b>     | <p>“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.”</p> <p>Building on the Hourglass worksheet completed in the previous lesson, students will assemble a time line of the events.<br/>Then students will use a readers theater script to further develop the concept that the ideas that led up to the formation of this sentence came from many sources.</p> |
| <b>Guiding Question(s)</b> | Where did the ideas in this famous sentence come from?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**Learning Objectives (SWBAT)** Students will be able to recognize that the ideas in this sentence were developed from centuries of thought. They will participate in a readers theater to further demonstrate these connections.

**Essential Historical Skills Taught:**

**Historical Analysis and Interpretation**

Students will be able place quotations from lesson three on a time line.

Then, they will consider contributions by various political thinkers in the past as they participate in a readers theater.

**Historical Analysis and Chronological thinking:** Students will see the development of an idea over time. Students will participate in a readers theater showing a causal relationship and 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.

- Demonstrate understanding of the principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence by:

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- Explaining the major ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence and their sources.”

**Assessment Tool(s) –**

- The time line will allow students to see the ideas from lesson three in a chronological format.
- The readers theater format will allow students to reexamine the contributing ideas and see them in juxtaposition.
- After participating in the readers theater as a reader and also as audience, the student will be able to write a paragraph from the point of view of Thomas Jefferson explaining how he got his ideas and why they are important.
- As an alternative, more objective assessment, there is a worksheet included in the related materials folder that may be used instead of the paragraph if teachers prefer. It is called the “*Who said it?*” worksheet.

**Materials/Resources - located in Related Materials folder**

Time line sheet  
Readers Theater script  
“Who Said It” worksheet

**Modifications (to meet needs of diverse learners)**

- The time line should be accessible to all students as it is basically a cut and sort activity.
- The readers theater format is very appropriate for students who can read on the third grade level. Troubled readers may participate as audience. Students may wish to read the play more than once so they can read several parts. The readers theater format is used rather than a play format because reader's theater does not require costume, props, sets, or stage directions. If the teacher wishes to allow the time for students to make any of these things, students would most likely be highly motivated in these endeavors!

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

- Each student will be given a time line sheet. After cutting the part apart as strips, they can arrange the pieces in chronological order.
- Each student should be given a script of the readers theater. Parts should be assigned by teacher or chosen by the students.

**Closure:** The reading of the script and participating as audience should allow the students to see how the ideas that they glued into the puzzle in the previous lesson and sorted chronologically in the time line came together to inspire Thomas Jefferson to write this defining sentence for Americans and the rest of the world.

As a conclusion and as an assessment the teacher may use the “Who Said It?” worksheet, or assign a paragraph or essay written from the viewpoint of Thomas Jefferson explaining how he got these ideas and why they are important.

**In the four lessons:**

- Students will have memorized one of the most famous sentences in the world.

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- They will have worked together to analyze and then synthesize an understanding of the sentence.
- They will recognize that this sentence evolved from centuries of thinking into a beautiful jewel that succinctly states the republican values of equality and human rights.