

American Founders' Month and National Arts in Education Week

Activities Overview

In Florida September is designated as [American Founders' Month](#). Additionally, [National Arts in Education Week](#) takes place during the week beginning with the second Sunday of September. In recognition of American Founders' Month and National Arts in Education Week the activities presented integrate social studies and visual arts standards.

Secondary – Script and Performance

Guiding Question: What does the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution mean to me?

In this lesson students will record a three to five minute group performance that demonstrates what the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution means to them. Through this process students will work individually and with other students to conceptualize the guiding question.

Materials

- Handout for students (evidence collection and character profiles)
- Preamble to the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence
- Rubric
- Smart Phone access to record and share each presentation

Related Standards:

- SS.912.C.1.2 Explain how the Declaration of Independence reflected the political principles of popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights.
- SS.912.C.1.3 Evaluate the ideals and principles of the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Federalist Papers) that shaped American Democracy.
- TH.912.F.1.1 Synthesize research, analysis, and imagination to create believable characters and settings.

[The Preamble](#)

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

[Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence](#)

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 . . . to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . . it is the Right of the People . . . to institute new Government.

Steps to delivery

1. Introduce the lesson by recognizing American Founders' Month and National Arts in Education Week. Let students know that they are going to create and record a group performance that demonstrates what the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution means to them. Let students know that they will first work individually to write an individual script before joining with two other students to create a group script.
2. Have students read the Preamble and the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence. Ask students to think about what the Preamble and the Declaration of Independence mean to them. Have students share their thoughts with a neighbor and/or with the class. Be sure to provide appropriate vocabulary acquisition support. Some terms to consider are Preamble, congress, elastic clause, chief executive, federal judiciary, judicial review, federalism, and supremacy clause.

3. Students will take on the role of both a script writer and an actor to articulate what the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution mean to them. Students should use the evidence collection graphic organizer to support this activity. Encourage students to cite evidence from each document. Explain that students can write from their modern perspective as an auto-biographic skit, from the perspective of a historical figure, or as a fictional character as long as the script accurately reflects the characters perspective.
4. When students finish reading the documents and drafting their individual script organize students into groups of three. Ideas for forming groups include: student selected, random, and ability level.
5. Explain to students that they will work together to rewrite, revise, and combine each group member's script into one final script. In this step students should maintain the character perspective as in the individual script. The character profile graphic organizer supports this activity. Make sure students consider scenery, costumes, props, character motivation, and vocal projection as they plan their presentation.
6. Once groups scrips are complete the teacher should review and approve them before instructing students to record.
7. Think of creative and district approved ways for students to publish, share, and discuss their work. Some methods include Office Sway, Weebly, and on public broadcasts in the school.

Rubric

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Script | There is no script. | Group script has a few flaws. It is not always clear what the actors are to say and do. Script shows an attempt at planning, but is incomplete. | Group script is mostly complete. It is clear what each actor will say and do. Script shows planning. | The Group script is complete and it is clear what each actor will say and do. Important movements, scenery, costumes, props, and character motivation are evident. |
| Performance | Performance is less than 1:59 minutes long. | Performance is 2-2:59 minutes long. | Performance is 3-3:59 minutes long. | Performance is 4-5 minutes long. |
| Setting the Scene | The student uses no props OR the props chosen detract from the presentation. | Student uses 1 prop which enhances the performance. | Student uses 1 prop that shows considerable work/creativity and which enhances the performance. | Student uses several props (could include costume) that show considerable work/creativity and which enhances the performance. |
| Founding Documents | Evidence of political principals are unclear or mostly represented inaccurately in the performance. | Two or three political principals are represented in the performance. | Three political principals are accurately represented in the performance. | Political principles of popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights are evident and accurately represented in the performance. |

Other social studies and arts collaboration

[Webinar](#): Integrating Social Studies and the Arts: Exhibit Proposal Project

[CPALMS Lesson Plan](#): Museum Exhibit Proposal: Examining American History from 1763 to 1815 through the Arts