**Author:**

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**Lesson Title:**

Mastering the Declaration of Independence

**Suggested Grade Level:**

8

**Estimated Lesson Time:**

45min

**Abstract:**

Students will learn about the different parts to the Declaration of Independence and how it contributed to public and political sentiment in the American Colonies. The lesson will first focus on the document itself, and then move on to its direct and indirect consequences, along with observations of how it influenced later important American documents. We will be splitting into groups most of the class and then reassembling ourselves to consolidate everybody’s ideas.

**Student Prior Knowledge:**

Students will have known about the time when the document was published, and will also already know the difference between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

**Standards:**

SS.8.A.3.7 - Examine the structure, content, and consequences of the Declaration of Independence.

**Goals:**

Students will be able to describe the document's content and be able to explain its consequences and how it affected public opinion.

**“I can” statements:**

I can tell the difference between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

I can list at least three ways the Declaration of Independence affected the colonies.

I can explain, in a few sentences, what the Declaration of Independence is trying to say.

I can explain, in a few sentences, what the British thought of the Declaration of Independence.

**Resources:**

<http://www.cpalms.org/Courses/CourseDescriptionSearch.aspx>

**Procedures:**

1. Read some of the main parts of the document in class from the overhead, taking notes of the main ideas. (10min)
2. Splitting into groups of 4 and having each group think of the main ideas and write them on the board. (5min)

* For ADD/ADHD students: Instead of groups of four, ADD/ADHD students will have no more than three people in their group. Have a timer placed near the students so that they can see it. Check up on this child’s group more often than the other groups, making sure they’ve written down something new each time.
* For students with dyslexia, provide a shorter excerpt of the document discussed on the overhead and add a list of certain words with their definitions. Provide extra time if needed and make sure to ask if they had any problems with reading the document, clarifying certain sentences that may have confused them.
* For students with Asperger’s Syndrome or autistic children, provide both oral and written directions. Encourage discussion in their groups by checking up on their group more often and asking questions to steer them in the right direction of the main idea of the document. If needed, give them a few extra minutes.

1. Getting back into groups, and writing down some of the consequences of the document on the board (5min)
2. Discussion about what the students wrote down, adding anything they may have missed (10min)
3. Comparing the British government's reaction to the colonials' reaction to the document, and noting this down on a chart on the board for the students to copy and keep (10min)

**Assessment:**

Students will turn in an assignment where they summarize the document in their own words in a paragraph, then use sentences from the parts of the document we read as evidence to explain the consequences.