

Understanding American Values

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 3–5

Curriculum Focus: Social Studies

Lesson Duration: 2–3 class periods

Program Description

Pennsylvania: The Spirit of Tolerance (5:21) – Explore how tolerance became an American value with a look at William Penn's founding of the colony of Pennsylvania. *Liberty: The American Revolution* (5:52) – Take a look at the events that led to the Revolutionary War and why the 13 colonies fought for freedom from Britain. *The Pursuit of Happiness: Immigration* (3:50) – Between 1892 and 1954 about 22 million immigrants passed through the doors of Ellis Island. Learn why these people left their homelands in pursuit of a better life in America. *Ingenuity: New York City* (4:52) – From its tallest skyscrapers to its famous bridges, see why New York City is a symbol of American ingenuity.

Onscreen Questions

- How did tolerance become an American value?
 - How did liberty become an American value?
 - Why would someone want to leave home for a new country?
 - What ideas and inventions helped build New York City?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Students will identify events that led to the American Revolution.
- Students will describe the emotions and sentiment that led to the American Revolution.

Materials

- *Understanding American Values* video
- Reference books with information about the causes of the American Revolution
- Computer with Internet access (optional)
- Regular writing paper
- Pencils and erasers

- Black felt tip markers
- Heavy white card stock or bond paper, 1 per student (8 ½ by 11 in.)
- Black tea bags soaked in warm water, 1 per student
- Paper towels

Procedures

1. Before the lesson, put the tea bags in a container of warm water to steep.
2. Discuss colonial America and why the colonies sought independence from Britain.
 - What were the positive things about being ruled by a far-away government? What were the negative things?
 - What did the British government do that angered the colonists?
 - Were the colonists reasonable to want independence from Britain?
3. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Have each group use reference materials and the Internet to research the reasons for the American Revolution. Tell them to list at least four events that led to the war and discuss whether they think the colonists were reasonable to want independence. The following Web sites may prove helpful:
<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0856589.html>
<http://library.thinkquest.org/10966/docs.shtml>
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/E/revolution/revo2.htm>
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1776-1800/paine/CM/sensexx.htm>
4. Ask each group to share their research and opinions. Discuss the following question:
 - Would you have wanted independence as a colonist? Explain your answer.
5. Tell students to imagine they are colonists living in Boston in 1770, just after the Boston Massacre occurred. They have received a letter from a relative in Great Britain who is upset that the colonies are no longer loyal to King George III. The relative wants to know why the colonists are behaving ungratefully.
 - What would you say to this relative?
 - How would you convince someone that you and the other colonists are seeking independence from the king for good reasons?
6. Explain to students that they will write letters to those relatives, persuading them to accept and agree with the American fight for liberty and freedom. Ask students to think about how the Stamp Act or Boston Massacre might have affected their lives and the lives of others in colonial America.

Addressing creatively why the policies of King George III are unfair, students' letters should include at least two events that led to the desire for independence. They should also include a definition of liberty and why they want it badly enough to fight. Review the parts of a letter, and tell students that each should include the date (between March 5 and December 31, 1770), greeting, body, closing, and signature.

7. Before they write, have students take a tea bag sitting in water and rub it over a piece of card stock or bond paper to make it look old. Blot the excess water with paper towels and place the paper between two sheets of fresh paper towel to dry. Put a heavy book on top of the paper and set it aside to dry overnight.
8. Give students time to work on their letters in class or as a homework assignment. They may refer to the reference books or the Internet for more information about events leading to the Revolutionary War.
9. After students have finished drafting their letters, have them trade with a peer to edit for spelling, grammar, and correct letter format. Once letters have been edited, give students black felt-tip markers and have them write their final versions on the aged-looking paper. Tell them to write their letters lightly in pencil before tracing over them in black marker.
10. Display the finished letters in the classroom.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students clearly and correctly identified four or more events that led to the American Revolution; wrote thoughtful, creative letters that addressed all the necessary criteria and thoroughly explained the sentiment and emotion that led to the American Revolution.
- **2 points:** Students adequately identified at least three events that led to the American Revolution; wrote somewhat thoughtful, creative letters that addressed most of the necessary criteria and generally explained the sentiment and emotion that led to the American Revolution.
- **1 point:** Students identified two or fewer events that led to the American Revolution; wrote incomplete letters that addressed little to none of the necessary criteria and inadequately explained the sentiment and emotion that led to the American Revolution.

Vocabulary

colony

Definition: a region politically controlled by a distant country; a dependency

Context: Many people in the 13 colonies did not like being ruled by Great Britain.

freedom

Definition: political independence

Context: The colonies wanted freedom from unfair government controls, including British taxes.



liberty

Definition: freedom from unjust or undue governmental control

Context: Twenty-five years after the Liberty Bell was hung in Philadelphia, the city would find itself embroiled in a war for the cause of liberty.

monarchy

Definition: a state ruled or headed by a sole or absolute sovereign such as a king or empress

Context: Great Britain, which was a monarchy, originally controlled the 13 American colonies.

representative

Definition: one that serves as a delegate or agent for another; a member of a governmental body, usually legislative, chosen by popular vote

Context: In the summer of 1776, representatives from the each of the 13 colonies met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

tax

Definition: a contribution for the support of a government required of persons, groups, or businesses within the domain of that government

Context: The British placed high taxes on tea, paper, glass, lead, paint, and other items they sent to the American colonies.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Historical Understanding – Understands the historical perspective
- U.S. History: Era 3 – Understands the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in shaping the revolutionary movement, and reasons for American victory; Understands the impact of the American Revolution on politics, the economy, and society; Understands the institutes and practices of government created during the Revolution and how these elements were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights
- World History: Era 7 – Understands major global trends from 1750 to 1914
- Geography: Human Systems – Understands the forces of conflict and cooperation that shape the divisions on Earth's surface; Understands the pattern of human settlement and their causes

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
 - Culture
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
 - Civic Ideals and Practices
 - Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total

running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Pennsylvania: The Spirit of Tolerance (5 min.)

Founded in 1681 by William Penn, Pennsylvania was established as a colony tolerant of religious expression. Learn about the events and ideals that shaped Pennsylvania and its capital, Philadelphia.

II. Liberty: The American Revolution (6 min.)

Explore the causes of the American Revolution and the creation of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

III. The Pursuit of Happiness: Immigration (4 min.)

America was the final destination for many 19th-century immigrants. Investigate why they came to the United States and how they were treated on arrival.

IV. Ingenuity: New York City (5 min.)

One of the most famous skylines in the world, New York City represents the ingenuity and dedication of the people who built it. Explore some of the inventions that made the city what it is today.

Curriculum Units

1. Colonial Pennsylvania

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What do you know about Philadelphia, Pennsylvania?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question:

Q: Why did people settle in colonial Pennsylvania?

A: Pennsylvania was established as a colony of tolerance, where people could practice their religion freely. This revolutionary concept attracted many people seeking religious freedom.

2. Seeking Independence

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What does liberty mean to you?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question:

Q: What is democracy?

A: Democracy is a type of government in which power is held by its citizens through their elected representatives.

3. Building the United States of America

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What do you know about the United States Constitution?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question:

Q: When was the U.S. Constitution written and who wrote it?

A: Representatives from the 13 states, who gathered in Philadelphia for the 1787 Constitutional Convention, wrote the Constitution.

4. A Land of Opportunity

Pre-viewing question:

Q: Have you ever moved to a new place?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question:

Q: What happened to immigrants at Ellis Island?

A: At Ellis Island doctors checked the immigrants for illnesses, and officials asked questions about their background. Those who were ill received an X on their coats with chalk and they could be sent back to their home countries.

5. Lighting New York City

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What might life be like without electric lights?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question:

Q: Why did Thomas Edison choose to bring electricity to New York City?

A: Thomas Edison considered New York City "the place to be." The media was there, and the city had resources unimaginable in other places.

6. The Elevator and the Skyscraper

Pre-viewing question:

Q: What is a skyscraper?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question:

Q: How did the elevator transform city real estate?

A: Before elevators were installed in buildings, the most expensive real estate was on the bottom floor, which did not require walking up stairs. The invention of the elevator made a building's uppermost floors more the desirable and more expensive real estate.

