Title: The Declaration of Independence: The Founding Fathers approve “Treason”

Subject Area/Grade Level: 8th Grade American History: Colonial Period through Reconstruction.

Investigative Question: Who would consider our Declaration of Independence an artifact of treason and why?

PA Academic Standards and/or Common Core Standards:

8.1.8.B: Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

8.3.8.A: Examine the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the United States.

8.3.8.B: Evaluate the importance of historical documents, artifacts and places critical to United States history.

R8.A.1.3.1: Make inferences and/or draw conclusions based on information from text.


Learning Objectives:

- Students will gain mastery on the concept of treason
- Students will gain mastery on the concept of historical point of view
- Students will gain mastery of time period/historical figures/concepts

Duration: The estimated time that will be necessary to carry out this APL in my classroom will not exceed two class periods.

Materials and Citations of Resources:

- Smart Board
- Copies of Declaration of Independence for student use. Preferably remakes of said document
- Declaration of Independence bdsdcc 02101 http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/bdsdcc.02101
- List of the drafters of the Declaration of Independence
Inquiry Based Instruction:

- **Questioning**- The questioning involved with this APL will open with the question, “What is treason?” Students will be expected to answer this question on their KWL chart. The second form of questioning will come after an examination of the document. Looking at the certain excerpts from the document students will focus on the key ideas of the document. “Why is this document considered treasonous? By whom is this document considered treasonous?” The third level of questioning will encompass the impact of the Declaration of Independence to two factions: The 13 Colonies/States of America and the Crown on England/British Colonists.

- **Researching**- Students will be guided through the APL with the use of a Smart Board, reprinted documents, key terms guide and photographs of people and documents.

- **Discussing**- Students will be lead in discussion of the topics questions and content by the instructor using an inquiry based instructional model. This model will be in the form of a KWL chart.

- **Creating**- Students will present from their notes a summary of key content that contains main ideas, players and be able to identify photos of key players.

- **Reflecting**- Students will be asked to write a written reflection on their presentation noting in their summary how their opinion of treason changed or didn’t change.

- **Assessment**- Students will present a written summary of their findings and that summary and oral presentation (if applicable) will be assessed using an instructor made rubric.

- Thomas Jefferson
  sc94.ameslab.gov/TOUR/tjefferson.html
- King George
  ed101.bu.edu/.../jhaj/Important%20People.html
Description of Procedures:

The following section compromises the Questioning Component of my APL: The students of my classroom will be presented with the following materials prior to the beginning of the lesson. A reproduced copy of the Declaration of Independence, a KWL chart, a key terms list, a number 2 pencil, and an instructor made summary sheet. All writing will be contained to materials focused on lesson.

The instructor will have the students place the KWL chart in front of them and then ask the class the following questions that will be answered in the “K” section of the chart. “What is treason?” The students will then record their answer in the chart by restating the prompt, “Treason is…..” Students will then be asked “Why were the members of the thirteen colonies considered to be in the act of treason?” The next question would be “Why is the signing of the document considered to be an act of treason?” These first three questions should be ably answered by the students.

The following segment is part of the Researching Component of the APL. Students will record what they want to know in the “W” section of the chart. The following areas should be covered in their “W” section. “I want to know after examination of the document” students should be able to answer the following three questions.
1.) Which members of the Continental Congress drafted the Declaration of Independence? 2.) What do you believe was the reaction of King George III after finding out the content of the third section of the declaration? 3.) Why were those who drafted and signed the declaration not concerned with the punishment of death for their actions? Those questions can be successfully answered after looking at three primary sources provided by the instructor. Students will first be led to read the bottom of the Declaration of Independence and will be assisted in depicting those names on the document that were actual drafters of such but will then be directed to the name Thomas Jefferson. A photo of Thomas Jefferson from the Library of Congress will be passed around and the actual photo will appear on the Smart Board in front of the classroom. Students will then be asked to research Thomas Jefferson from previous handouts and their text to find out more about him. Students will find out the following

A. A Virginian member of the Second Continental Congress

B. A member of the Committee of Five that also included Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Richard Henry Lee, John Adams and Robert Livingston

C. Drafted the Declaration based on the belief that all men had certain immutable rights.
D. He believed that these rights were guaranteed by human nature and not the government.

Students will then have a picture of King George III placed in front of them and his picture will as well be placed on the Smart Board. Students will then be guided into reading the third section of the declaration. Students will discover the following:

A. That the third section of the Declaration of Independence was a list of grievances against King George III.

B. It basically places all blame on King George III for the hindrance of human rights in the 13 colonies.

C. That the Declaration of Independence represented good government based on the election of peers and that King George III represented bad government and the oppression of human rights.

Students will then be placed in groups to help answer the following last question. Students will be placed in heterogeneous groups so that all groups have equal learners to handle information. The last question will state: “Why do you believe that those who drafted and signed the Declaration of Independence were not afraid of persecution and death for their action?”
Possible responses may include:

A. They believed that the idea of freedom was more important than their lives
B. They believed that ultimately they would win the war
C. They believed in the cause of freedom

The following section is the Discussing Component of the APL:

The instructor throughout the questioning and research components of the APL will take focused information and lead an open discussion on that information. Students will be expected openly discuss the following information:

1. How would you feel about being a member of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Continental Congress?
2. Do you believe the Congress was correct in wanting to free themselves of England
3. Is King George III a villain? Is Thomas Jefferson a hero?

- All questions are in open discussion format with no written assessment
The following component represents the **Creating Component** of my APL:

Students will create a summary based on the information they have learned from their KWL Chart and notes. The summary should include the following aspects:

- What is treason?
- Who was the main author of the Declaration of Independence?
- What were the main concerns of those drafting the declaration?
- Why was King George III blamed for the unhappiness of colonists?
- What are immutable rights?
- Is the punishment of treason worth the price of freedom of oppression?

The following section represents my **Reflecting Component** of my APL:

Students after the two day lesson will be asked to reflect in their journal about how they feel being an American today knowing about the sacrifice others were making over 230 years ago. Their response should be a page in length and be in the first person. The reflection should mainly focus on their thoughts of being an American and include the ideas of sacrifice and nationalism.
The following section represents my Assessment Component of my APL:

**Project Based Learning Rubric**

Mr. James M. Barak

- The following rubric will be the document used in scoring your project for this classroom assignment and explain what requirements are expected in your assessment.

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- Students will have mastered all key terms for lesson
- Students will have made proper connection from primary source to lesson objective.
- Students can explain at mastery level topics main ideas that should be no less than 5.

3

- Students have mastered some key terms for lesson.
- Students can make some connections from primary source to lesson objective.
- Student can explain at mastery level no fewer than 3 main ideas.

2

- Student will have mastered at least 2 key terms for lesson.
- Student can make at least one connection from the primary source to lesson objective.
- Student can explain at mastery level no fewer than 2 main ideas.

1

- Student will have mastered at least 1 key term for lesson.
- Student can make a broad connection from the primary source to lesson objective.
- Student can explain at mastery level no less than 1 main idea.
I chose the three primary sources from the Library of Congress for this lesson due to the complexity of the Declaration of Independence itself as an interpretable document and the two photos because I believe all students need a visual connection to whom the main players in a historical situation are.