

Plan 1: The Politics of Revolution

Introduction:

In this lesson, students will focus on learning about the political issues that ultimately led to the French Revolution. They will also learn about the similarities and differences between the French Revolution and the American Revolution. Finally, they will examine how the French and American Revolutions influenced revolutionary activities worldwide and continue to do so today.

Subject Areas:

World History, Political Science, Current Events, and Social Studies

Grade Level: 9-12

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. View video clips from *Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution* and draw conclusions about revolutionary activities based partially on this viewing.
2. Participate in class brainstorming and discussion activities related to the causes of, key people in, and common outcomes of revolutionary activities in an historical context.
3. Compare the French and American Revolutions by using the content from a primary source to create a Venn Diagram.
4. Work in pairs to learn about a revolution from the past 200+ years that has been impacted by the French and American Revolution.
5. Create a project that shows the impact of the French and American Revolutions on a specific country and discuss whether or not that country was successful in implementing a successful governing body after its revolution.
6. Present their projects to classmates.
7. Complete a written response activity summarizing their opinions about the significance of the French and American Revolutions and their personal understanding of the politics of revolution.

Relevant National Standards:

McRel Compendium of K-12 Standards Addressed:

Historical Understanding

Standard 1: Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns

Standard 2: Understands the historical perspective

World History

Standard 32: Understands the causes and consequences of political revolutions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries

American History

Standard 6: Understands the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in shaping the revolutionary movement, and reasons for the American victory

Language Arts

Writing

Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Viewing

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

Thinking and Reasoning

Standard 3: Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences

Working with Others

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

Estimated Time:

Three 90-minute class periods or five 50-minute class periods plus additional time for extension activities.

Materials Needed:

- Television with VCR/DVD to view video clips from *Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution* (clips specified in lesson plan)
- Internet access to *Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution* website OR printed copies of the “Defining Revolution” and “America and France” content available at http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/what_is_revolution.html and http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/america_france.html
- **Comparing Revolutions** handout (provided with lesson plan)
- Access to the interactive “Revolution History” map that is part of the Global Revolution page of the Marie Antoinette site available at <http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/index.html>
- Optional: art supplies and access to computers with word processing and presentation software

Procedures:

1. To get students thinking about Revolutions, begin by viewing the following excerpts from the film *Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution*. Do not give students lots of background

information before they view. Instead, let them watch and use what they see in the discussion activities that follow. Both excerpts are from Part 2 of the film.

- approximate 11:24 beginning with “On July 14, 1879, the rituals of everyday life in Versailles marked the hour just as they always had.” to approximately 13:50 ending with “Within week, the social order that had endured for centuries fracture....”
- approximately 15:33 beginning with “The King and Queen were at the mercy of events which had moved beyond their control.” to approximately 18:10 ending with “We are lost, dragged away, perhaps to death....”

2. After viewing the excerpts, write the word “Revolution” on the board or overhead. Direct students to use a piece of scratch paper to write down their definition for this term. Once all students have written a definition for “Revolution”, direct them to share their definition with at least one classmate.

3. Facilitate a class brainstorming session/discussion about the definition/meaning of the term “Revolution”. Record key words and phrases from student definitions of “Revolution” on the board or overhead.

4. At http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_revolutions_and_rebellions there is a long list of revolutions and rebellions that span history. One interesting way to draw students in to the next discussion could be saying something like:

- “Many of you have heard of the American, French and Russian revolutions, but what about the great Jewish Revolt against the Roman Empire from 66-70 AD? Or the Balbona revolt in Transylvania in 1437? There are lots of examples of citizens revolting against governments throughout all of recorded history. Let’s take some time to think about what most revolutions have in common.”

Facilitate a short discussion about revolutions by referring back to what students saw in the excerpts and by using questions such as:

- In your opinion, what are some common reasons people might revolt?
- What kind of person do you think typically leads a revolution?
- Do you think a revolution is something that happens quickly or over time? Why?
- Once a government has been overthrown, how long do you think it would take for new leaders to establish a different form of government and make it run effectively?

5. Direct students to the Global Revolutions “Defining Revolution” page of the Marie Antoinette website available at http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/what_is_revolution.html. A printout of this content could also be distributed to each student based on the availability of technological resources. Explain to students that you will be working as a group to learn more about the revolutionary process and whether or not their answers to the discussion questions are accurate.

6. Read “Defining Revolution” and discuss the common misconceptions about speed, leadership, reasons for revolting, and the implementation of new governments as part of the revolutionary process.

7. Explain to students that from an historical perspective, the French and American Revolutions have greatly influenced revolutionary activity on a global scale and that the impact of these historical events continues in the world even today.
8. To give students a sweeping overview of the French and American Revolutions, divide them into small groups and have them access the Global Revolution “America and France” page of the Marie Antoinette website available at http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/america_france.html. A printout of this content could also be distributed to each student based on the availability of technological resources. Provide each group with the **Comparing Revolutions** handout and review the directions for completing Part 1. Give the group approximately 20-30 minutes to read the article and work together to complete the Part 1 activities. All students should complete the activities and be prepared to discuss their ideas with the class.
9. After Part 1 of the **Comparing Revolutions** handout is completed, complete a copy of the Part 1 Venn Diagram on the board or overhead calling on students to share their ideas from the Venn Diagrams they created. As a class, discuss the answers to the questions on Part 1 of the handout.
10. Access the interactive “Revolution History” map that is part of the Global Revolution page of the Marie Antoinette site available at <http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/index.html>
11. Divide students into pairs and direct them to Part 2 of the **Comparing Revolutions** handout. Review the guidelines for completing Part 2 of the handout.
12. Provide students with class time to research the revolutionary activities in the country they have chosen. Encourage them to use primary sources and the related resources as well as the interactive map at <http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/index.html>, for completion of their project. Provide at least one class period to work on projects.
13. When all projects are completed, each pair should present their work to the class.
14. As a culminating activity, have students write a 1 page response to questions such as:
 - Why do you think the French and American Revolutions and the revolutionary activities of the people and leaders of this time have had such a broad impact on other revolutions worldwide even though they took place so long ago?
 - Do you think that these two revolutions will continue to impact revolutionaries in the global community over the next 100 years? Why or why not?
 - How has your understanding of the political causes of revolution throughout the world changed as a result of completing the activities in this lesson?

Assessment Suggestions:

1. A participation grade could be awarded for all discussion activities and appropriate use of group work time.

2. A completion or accuracy grade could be awarded for the Part 1 questions and Venn Diagram activity.
3. The Part 2 project could be evaluated using a number/combination of methods including self-evaluation, peer evaluation, a scoring guide, or an accuracy grade.
4. An accuracy or completion grade could be assigned for the written response activity.

Extension Activity:

1. Have students conduct additional research about the lives of people from various French social classes during the late 1700's. Direct students to make comparisons between the lives of royalty, court, and church officials vs. the common people. Compare the people of different social classes in the 13 colonies during this same time period. Tie this in to modern day studies by discussing how the plight of people in some of today's societies and that of the people they studied in the French and America revolutions are similar. A variety of types of graphic organizers could be created as part of this activity.

Related Resources:

American Experience: John and Abigail Adams

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/adams/peopleevents/e_french.html

Provides a summary of the French Revolution including causes, key figures, and political outcomes

Napoleon

http://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n_politic/frenchrev/page_1.html

Provides a summary of the key ideologies, people, and events related to the French Revolution

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>

Provides students with access to essays, images, documents, songs, maps, and a glossary of information related to the French Revolution.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Comparing Revolutions

Part 1:

1. With your small group, read “America and France” by accessing it at http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/america_france.html or using the printout provided by your teacher.
2. Complete the Venn Diagram on the following page by using the article to help you list specific similarities and differences between the French Revolution and the American Revolution.
3. Answer the study questions below after completing the Venn Diagram. Be specific with your answers and provide facts, reasons, and examples to support your ideas. Discuss these as a group before recording your answer.

Part 1 Study Questions:

1. As you read the articles “Defining Revolution” and “America and France”, what did you learn about the amount of time it often takes for a revolution to occur? Why do you think that people often mistakenly believe that revolutions are fast or the result of a short-term problem rather than a long-term political issue?
2. We are often led to believe that common people band together and carry out revolutions. In your reading, you learned this is a common misconception. Why do you think this idea is perpetuated, and what, in your opinion, keeps it from really happening?
3. When we read history and watch programming based on historical events, we often get the perception that the transition from one government to another is a quick, smooth process when a revolution occurs. In reality, it is not. Why do you think that forming an effective governing body takes such a long time?