

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lesson Title** | The World’s Most Famous Breakup Letter | **Teacher** | Bryant |
| **Grade Level** | 8th  | **Duration of Lesson** | 2 class periods |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lesson Topic** | The Declaration of Independence |
| **SC Standards and Indicators** | 8-2.3 Explain the roles of South Carolinians in the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. |
| **Common Core Strategy(ies) addressed** | Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. |
| **Academic Vocabulary** | DeclareDeclaration of IndependenceDelegate \*Many words in the Declaration of Independence itself will need to be addressed as students read through it. The teacher will want to have a pre-made list of words specific to his/her classes depending on how familiar they are with documents such as these.  |
| **Lesson Materials Needed (attached at end of lesson)** | Text for the Anticipatory Set – copied below, it should be hand written on a piece of notebook paper and folded appropriately Primary Source – a picture of the original Declaration of Independence - For smart boardCopies of the Declaration for students Paper bags from the grocery store OR plain white computer paper |
| **Content Narrative****(**What is the background information that needs to be taught to understand the context of the lesson? Be sure to include necessary citations) | South Carolinians served as delegates to the Second Continental Congress when the Declaration of Independence was debated. These delegates were planters who represented the Lowcountry elite rather than the people of the backcountry. Thomas Lynch, Jr., Thomas Heyward Jr., Edward Rutledge, and Arthur Middleton signed the document. Each of these men went on to serve in the state militia, defending the independence that they had claimed. They also served in government after the war. The Declaration, based on the ideas of John Locke, stated the ideals of democracy including the principles of equality, the natural rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” the purpose of government to “secure those rights,” and the “right of the people to alter or abolish” government when natural rights are not protected by government. It then made the case that the King, not the Parliament, had violated the rights of the colonists. The litany of actions that “He” did was designed to break the bonds between the King and his loyalist subjects in the colonies and to unify the new nation against a common enemy. Students do not need to know the following information based on the SC state standards; however it is important for the teacher to be aware of the following. At first, Rutledge, Middleton, Lynch and Heyward were not in favor of independence and the delegation voted against independence. This change still puzzles historians. Students do not need to know the other signers of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Lynch Sr. was a member of the South Carolina delegation to the Second Continental Congress but he suffered a stroke in 1776. Unable to sign the Declaration in 1776, a space was left for him to sign with the South Carolina delegation. Unfortunately, while traveling home, he suffered a second stroke and died and so never signed the document. Students do not need to know that Edward Rutledge was the head of South Carolina’s congressional delegation. Rutledge, Heyward, Jr., and Middleton were captured when Charleston surrendered in 1780 and held as prisoners in St. Augustine, Florida. They were all released as part of a prisoner exchange. Rutledge was elected and served in the state legislature from 1782 to1798 and was elected governor in 1798. Thomas Heyward, Jr., served as a circuit judge after his release from prison. Arthur Middleton again served as a member of the Continental Congress from 1781to 1782. After the war, Middleton rebuilt his rice plantations and lived at Middleton Place until his death.\*Information was found on the South Carolina State Department of Education website. This is the content narrative from the Support Documents. It can be found at:  http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/Standards-and-Curriculum/documents/Grade8.pdf |

**Lesson Set**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Content Objective(s)** | Students will understand the purpose and impact of the Declaration of Independence. They will also understand what the Declaration of Independence says and why it is an important historical document. In addition, students will learn which delegates from South Carolina were in attendance at the Second Continental Congress and signed the document.  |
| **Literacy Objective(s)** | Locate, gather, and process information from primary sources.  |
| **Lesson Importance** | The Declaration of Independence is an important historical document that announces to England (and the rest of the world) that the American colonies are free and independent of England.  |
| **Connections to prior and future learning** | **Previous/future knowledge:** In grades three and four, students learned about the Declaration of Independence (3-3.1) and how the American Revolution affected attitudes toward and the future of slavery, women, and Native Americans (4-3.4). In United States History and the Constitution, students will analyze the impact of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution on establishing the ideals of a democratic republic (USHC-1.3).\*Information was found on the South Carolina State Department of Education website. This is from the Support Documents. They can be found at:  http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Teacher-Effectiveness/Standards-and-Curriculum/documents/Grade8.pdf |
| **Anticipatory Set/ Hook (Engage)** | 1. Copy the (attached) note onto notebook paper. Fold the note the way that students would fold their own notes and put it in your pocket or some other convenient place.
2. As students enter the room, have them sit in their seats and clear their desks.
3. Set the tone that students are getting ready to get a lecture on classroom behavior.
4. Tell students that more and more of them are breaking school rules and it is time to re-set the expectations for classroom behavior.
5. Explain to students that lately you have notice a lot of note passing and that it is pretty clear that students are off task.
6. Explain that this is unacceptable behavior and that when you came into the classroom this morning, the custodian had left a note on your desk.
7. Tell students that normally you wouldn’t read the notes but that you have an indication that the note was from THIS CLASS and you figure that the best way to prevent future notes from being passed is to read it aloud to the class.
8. The kids will be HOOKED. They will want you to read the note no matter how many times you go back and forth through deciding whether or not to read it.
9. Read the note (attached below and cited from the website I found it) aloud to the class. As you are reading, pretend that you don’t know some of the “lingo” such as M.F.E.O. (made for each other).
10. The note is a break up letter from one “student” to another “student.” The note explains that one student is taking advantage of the other, not listening to the other, just doing what they want to whenever they want, without asking the other “student.” This fake letter includes many of the reasons that the colonists were breaking up with England.
11. At the end of the letter, tell the students that it is signed but that you are not sure if you should tell them who wrote the letter.
12. Finally, hand the letter off to students and let them read the signature for themselves. The signature of the letter is “The American Colonies.”
13. The name of the signature will quickly spread around the room. As students figure out the letter, admit that you wrote it but that it was in an effort to address today’s topic: “The World’s Most Famous Breakup Letter.”
 |

**Skill Development**

**Initial “explain” portion of the lesson. Introduce vocabulary, explain/demonstrate/model the skill required for the literacy objective, introduce content components.**

**The content portion is only a brief introduction; the bulk of the student learning will take place during the guided practice activity.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduce content components** | The teacher will explain that the fake letter that was read to the class demonstrates a modern-day and student-friendly look at the Declaration of Independence. Although the letter that was read was written by the teacher there are many elements of the Declaration that were included. In addition, there were some elements that were left out. Students are going to create their own student-friendly letters, making sure that they include examples from the original Declaration of Independence.  |
| **“I do”** **Skill from objective**introduce/explain/model | 1. The breakup letter that I wrote has many similarities as the Declaration of Independence. In fact, the Declaration of Independence can be considered the “World’s Most Famous Break up Letter.”
2. Distribute a copy of your letter to students (class set). Give students time to read the letter for themselves and ask students to identify how the colonists were feeling – show evidence from the note.
3. As a whole class, have students identify what the letter says that directly relates to how the colonists were feeling. Have students give examples from previous lessons leading up to the Declaration of Independence that support their claims. (French and Indian War, Taxes and Acts, Proclamation of 1763, etc…)
 |

**Guided Practice**

**This is the inquiry portion of the lesson, student-centered & often cooperative learning strategies used, teacher acting as facilitator, also known as *Explore*.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **“We do”****Activity Description**Include student “explore” components and opportunities for them to explain their learning. | 1. Show on the smart board a picture of the original Declaration of Independence. Ask students to comment on its appearance. Students should note that it is old, it is faded, the words are very small, and the words are written in straight lines despite that there are no lines in the document. This will lead to a discussion of how the colonists wanted their Declaration of Independence to be perfectly worded, clearly explaining to the King all the reasons that they should be independent from him.
2. Distribute a copy of the Declaration of Independence to students (everyone get’s their own copy, it is an important historical document that they should understand and have access to).
3. Allow time for students to read individually or take turns reading the letter aloud.
4. Point out the different parts of the Declaration to students. The first part of the Declaration explains that when the government does not protect the rights of the people, the people have a right to form their own government. The second part of the declaration lists specific things that HE – King George – has done to anger the colonists. The final part of the Declaration is about how the United States wants a clean break-up from England. Also, point out that this is a Declaration of War and that if the Revolutionary War was lost, the Declaration would not be as important to us today as it is.
5. Discussion: Cause and Effect: What reasons did the colonists have to write the Declaration of Independence? What are the effects of sending a document such as this to the King of England?
6. Divide students into pairs or groups of 3-4. Give them pieces of computer paper OR brown paper grocery bags. If using paper bags, have students cut them and lay them out flat. Their final product will be written on either of these two papers. Using the brown paper bag adds a visual effect similar to the original document. However, it is not necessary. – Remind students that they need to create a rough draft before they begin their final copy.
7. Instruct students to write their own version of the Declaration of Independence. Remind them that it was written in 1776 and that some of the language is unclear/hard to read for young people today. Tell students that they need to present the Declaration in three distinct parts and that they must use historically accurate facts in their own version. Remind students that they need to word their document carefully because when you “break up” with your mother country, you will go to war.
 |
| **Checking for Understanding-“Informal” Assessment** | The teacher will walk around the room talking to student groups about their projects. Students will be asked to grade themselves, using the project rubric, to make sure that they have completed all necessary components of the assignment. In addition, students will present their documents to the class and be graded on the rubric below.  |

**Closure**

**Teacher will re-visit content and answer students’ questions developed during the Guided Practice component. Summarize the lesson, clarify content, and revisit content and literacy objectives.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Content Solidified** | Students will present their project to the class. Any errors or inaccuracies will be discussed with the class so that “wrong” information is not mistaken as correct. During presentations, students will be encouraged to ask questions about word choice, sentence clarity, etc…  |

**Independent Practice**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **“You Do”** | Students were asked to complete the following assignment independently after the group project was completed, presented, graded, and reviewed. Student Reflection: Write 1 paragraph (or more) to answer the following questions. This will demonstrate your understanding of the lesson and prepare you for your test at the end of the unit. Why were colonists “breaking up” with England? Why could the Declaration of Independence be considered the “World’s Most Famous Break-up Letter?”Explain how you would go about writing a letter like this to your boy/girl friend.What are the effects of writing a letter like this to a boy/girl friend? Explain how the King of England would have felt while reading this letter. What actions both the colonists and England took as a result of reading/writing this letter?  |

**Summative/ “Formal” Assessment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessment** | Students will present their Declarations of Independence to the class. Each final project will be graded for the following…1. Clarity of handwriting, accurate spelling and punctuation
2. Part 1 - introduction
3. Part 2 – list of reasons
4. Part 3 – conclusions
5. Signatures – make it official (also counts as putting your name on your project, which students often forget to do)
6. Signatures of signers from South Carolina – Edward Rutledge, Arthur Middleton, Thomas Heyward Jr., and Thomas Lynch Jr.
 |

**Differentiation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **During Lesson** | Students in an “honors” class should be able to read through a word-for-word transcription of the declaration of independence. Students in “lower” classes may benefit more from a shortened or condensed version of the Declaration of Independence.  |
| **Assessment** | All students will take the assessment at the end of the unit. Students with special needs may have a reduce number of questions (multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions).  |

**Reflection**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lesson Reflection**(What went well in the lesson? What might you do differently the next time you teach it? Evaluate the success of the lesson) | The kids LOVED the introduction to the lesson and I think it really helped them relate to what the Declaration of Independence was. I also think that the students benefited significantly from the in-depth look at what the Declaration says. One thing that I may do differently next time: I think that stressing the importance of putting your name on this document was significant. I have seen other lessons where the teacher reads through select portions of the Declaration of Independence and asks students to come to the board and sign if they agree (or discuss why they disagree). I think that this is a valuable lesson in the significance of the document. I think that the lesson was very successful. I don’t think it would have worked as well if students talked about my letter during class change (like they do when we are doing something fun in class). It was nice that each class really thought that the letter was from someone in THAT class. Asking students not to talk about the letter I wrote was a significant part of the success of the lesson. I did not create the original anticipatory set on my own. I found it at: http://speakingofhistory.blogspot.com/2008/10/teaching-declaration-of-independence-as.html You can watch a video here of this teacher reading the note to the class. It was a great set-up for the lesson itself.  |

**Materials Needed for Lesson**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Lesson Materials** | **The Note:** http://speakingofhistory.blogspot.com/2008/10/teaching-declaration-of-independence-as.html ***I'm not sure how to start this letter but I feel we need to talk. I've been thinking about us a lot lately. Things used to be so great - it was like we were M.F.E.O. I mean everyone said it was perfect. I really thought we would be together forever but then things changed.******I feel like you started to take me for granted. You just started to do whatever you wanted and never even asked me about anything or how I felt.******I've been thinking about this for a while and I don't want to hurt you but I think it is time we broke up. I mean it's just not going to work. I need some time by myself to see what it is like on my own. I'm sorry things didn't work out but I do think YOU are the one to blame. Sorry but "US" is over.******The American Colonies***Primary Source can be found at: <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/scan.htm>Exact Transcription of the Declaration can be found at: <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html>Abridged Version of the Declaration of Independence:I purchased a copy of I Think: US History: The American Revolution from Teacher’s Discovery online. There are many other good lessons in this source, but it is not worth purchasing for this one document.  |

**Project Rubric:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3** | **2** | **1** | **0** |
| **Student Names are on the document** | All names are clearly written at the end of the document where the signatures belong. | Names are at the end of the document but are illegible. | Names are not at the end of the document at the signature section and may be illegible. | Names are not on the document. |
| **Clear, Legible writing** | All writing is clear and legible. | There are a few words (<10% of the document) that are hard to read or could be mistaken for other words. | There are many words that are hard to read and could be mistaken for other words. (10% - 20% of the document) | Over 20% of the document is illegible.  |
| **Grammar, spelling, and punctuation** | All grammar is correct. Spelling and punctuation is correct. | There are less than 3 grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. | There are between 3 and 5 grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.  | There are more than 5 spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.  |
| **South Carolina Delegate “signatures” are on the document** | All names are clearly written at the end of the document where the signatures belong. | Names are at the end of the document but are illegible. | Names are not at the end of the document at the signature section and may be illegible. | Names are not on the document. |
| **Part 1 of Document Introduction** | Reasons that colonists believe they have the right to “break up with England” are clearly outlined.  | Students have included at least 5 reasons that they have a right to “break up” with England. | Students have included at least one reason why they have a right to “break up” with England. | The introduction is not included. |
| **Part 2 of Document** | There is a list of things (15) that England has done to cause the letter to be written.  | There is a list of things (10-14) that England has done to cause the letter to be written. | There is a list of things (5-10) that England has done to cause the letter to be written. | List of grievances is not included, or there are less than 5. |
| **Part 3 of Document** | A well written conclusion to the letter is written. Students have included a thorough outline of the things that they (as a new country) have a right to do.  | A conclusion to the letter is written. Students have included a basic outline of the things that they (as a new country) have a right to do.  | A conclusion to the letter is written. Students have not included a list of things that (as a new country) they have a right to do.  | There is no conclusion written. |
| **Time Management and On-Task Behavior** | Students were on task and working 100% of the time. | Students were asked to get back on task 1 or 2 times. | Students were asked to get back on task 3 – 4 times. | Students were asked to get back on task 5 or more times.  |