



Articles of Confederation
Thomas Jefferson Connection
TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Benchmark

SS.7.C.1.5: Identify how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to the writing of the Constitution.

Activity

Students will read excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and a letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison to make connections between the Declaration of Independence and Jefferson's concerns about Shays' Rebellion.

Materials

- * Jefferson Letter to Madison, one to project to the whole class
- * Thomas Jefferson Connection handouts, one per student

Instructions

1. Pass out the Thomas Jefferson Connection handouts, one per student.
2. Place students into pairs or have them work individually.
3. Direct student attention to Part A. Explain to students that they will read excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and answer the three focus questions. Instruct students to mark or highlight evidence in the text to support their answers.
4. Project the letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, January 30, 1797.
5. Direct student attention to Part B of their handouts. Explain to students that they will read excerpts from a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison in 1797 expressing his feelings about Shays' Rebellion and they will answer the three focus questions. Instruct students to mark or highlight evidence in the text to support their answers.
6. Direct student attention to Part C. Explain to students that they will compare and contrast the excerpts they viewed from Part A and Part B. Students should try to find at least two differences and one similarity between the two sets of excerpts. Then, instruct students to write a 3-5 sentence paragraph that explains the connection between the excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and the statements Thomas Jefferson made in his letter to James Madison in regards to Shays' Rebellion.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, January 30, 1797

Dear Sir
 Paris Jan. 30. 1797.

My last to you was of the 16th of Dec. since which I have received yours of Nov. 25. & Dec. 4. which afforded me, as your letters always do, a treat on matters public, individual & economical. I am impatient to learn your sentiments on the late troubles in the Eastern States, so far as I have yet seen, they do not appear to threaten serious consequences. These States have suffered by the stoppage of the channel of their commerce, which have not yet found other courses. This must render money scarce, and make the people uneasy. This uneasiness has produced acts absolutely unjustifiable: but I hope they will provoke no severities from their governments, a condiscernment of those in power that their administration of the public affairs has been honest, may perhaps produce too great a degree of indignation: and some characters wherein fear predominates over hope, may apprehend too much from these instances of irregularity. They may conclude too hastily that nature has formed man insusceptible of any other government but that of force, a conclusion not founded in truth, nor experience. Societies exist under three forms sufficiently distinguishable. 1. without government, as among our Indians. 2. under governments wherein the will of every one had a just influence, as is the case in England in a slight degree and in our States in a great one. 3. under governments of force: as is the case in all monarchies & in most of the republics. To have an idea of the course of existence under these last, they must be seen. It is a government of violence over sheep. It is a problem not clear in my mind that the condition is not the best. But I believe it to be inconsistent with any great

T. Jefferson

Madison, J. & Jefferson, T. (1797) Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. [Manuscript/Mixed Material] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mjm013361/.

Name: _____

Thomas Jefferson Connection PART A



Directions: Read the following excerpts written by Thomas Jefferson found in the Declaration of Independence, in which he provides the reasons why the United States is breaking away from Great Britain to become an independent country. Then, read the focus questions.

While reading the excerpts mark or highlight evidence found within the text that could be used to support answers to the focus questions. Then, answer the questions in complete sentences.

“When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another . . . a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

“That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute (create) new Government.”

“But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism (cruel use of absolute power), it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.”

Focus Questions

1. How does Thomas Jefferson explain the reason for a formal declaration of independence?
2. According to Thomas Jefferson, what should people do to a government that is trying to destroy the basic rights stated within the Declaration of Independence?
3. Why did Thomas Jefferson say that King George III was an unfit ruler?

**Thomas Jefferson Connection
PART B**

Directions: Read the following excerpts from a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison, in which he addresses his feelings towards rebellions (specifically towards Shays' Rebellion). Then, read the focus questions.

While reading the excerpts mark or highlight evidence found within the text that could be used to support answers to the focus questions. Then, answer the questions in complete sentences.

"I am impatient to learn your sentiments (opinions) on the late troubles on the Eastern states. So far as I have yet seen, they do not appear to threaten serious consequences. Those states have suffered by the stoppage of the channels of their commerce (trade), which have not yet found other issues. This must render money scarce, and make people uneasy."

"Societies (communities) exist under three forms, sufficiently distinguishable: (1) without government,"... "(2) under governments, wherein the will of everyone has a just influence, as is the case in England, in a slight degree, and in our states, in a great one; (3) under governments of force, as is the case in all other monarchies, and in most of the other republics."

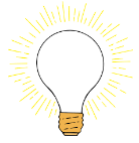
"I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions, indeed, generally establish the encroachments on the rights of the people which have produced them. An observation of this truth should render honest republican governments so mild in their punishment of rebellions as not to discourage them too much. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government."

Focus Questions

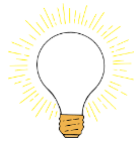
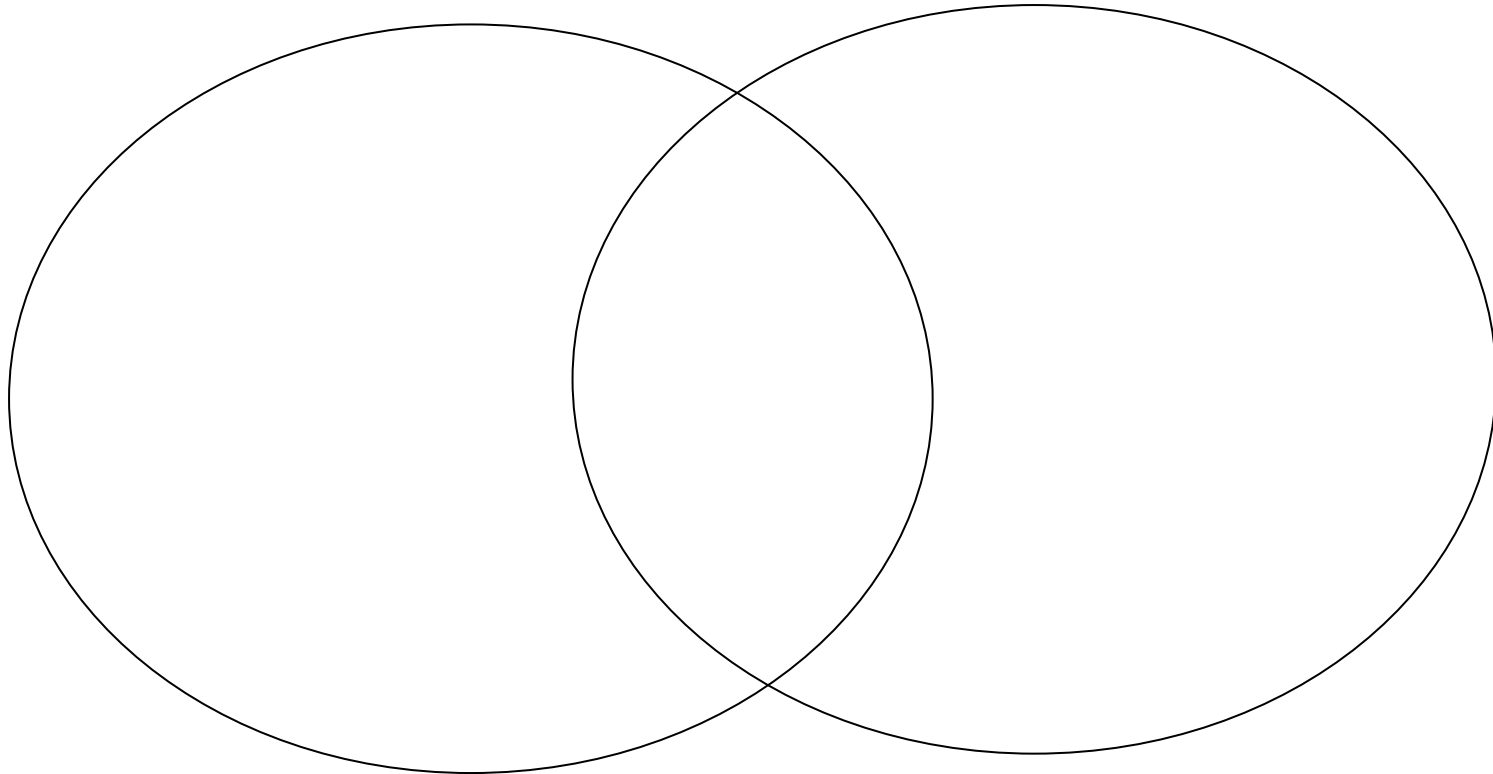
1. How does Thomas Jefferson describe the ways the rebellion has affected their daily life and the way that people feel about the rebellion?
2. What are the three ways in which Thomas Jefferson states societies can exist?
3. How does Thomas Jefferson feel about rebellion and what does he say it would need to create a fair government?

Name: _____

Thomas Jefferson Connection PART C



Directions: As you reflect back on the statements you just read from the Declaration of Independence and the letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison, fill in the Venn Diagram below. Try to find at least two differences and one similarity between the two documents.



Directions: Utilize the information recorded on the Venn Diagram to write a 3-5 sentence paragraph that explains the connection between the excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and the statements Thomas Jefferson made in his letter to James Madison regarding Shays' Rebellion.