Classroom Activities: Revolution and New Nation

Era 3: Revolution and New Nation (1754-1820s)

Standard 1: The causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the Revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory

Focus Question: Did the colonists have legitimate grievances against the English Crown?

- Provide students with one copy of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress, the Quartering Act, the Boston Non-Importation Agreement, the Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress, the Intolerable Acts, Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" Speech, Common Sense, and the Declaration of Independence. (Students would have one document per person.)
- Instruct students to examine their documents and list all of the grievances made by the American colonists.
- Compile a class list of the grievances made by the colonists in each of the documents.
- Next, provide students with a copy of the Proclamation by the King for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition and have them compare the colonists' grievances with those of the Crown. Have students speculate as to why the opinions of the documents would differ and how this might affect relations between England and its colonists.
- Use the information derived from the sources to create a class discussion on the legitimacy of the colonial rebellion.

Standard 2: The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society

Focus Question: Were liberties created, protected, extended, or suppressed as a result of the American Revolution?

- Provide student groups with copies of Pennsylvania: An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, the Northwest Ordinance, the Bill of Rights, the Alien and Sedition Acts, and An Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves. Ask students to examine the documents and determine whether civil liberties were created, protected, extended, or suppressed as a result of the Revolution.
- Ask students which other documents might be helpful in determining how widespread the creation, protection, extension, or suppression of liberties was in the two decades of post-Revolutionary America.
**Standard 3:** The institutions and practices of government as created during the Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to establish the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights

**Focus Question:** Determine who had a greater influence over the policies of George Washington: Thomas Jefferson or Alexander Hamilton.

- Have students complete basic research on the background, personality, political beliefs, and position on the Bank of the United States held by either Thomas Jefferson or Alexander Hamilton.
- Provide students with copies of *Jefferson's and Hamilton's Opinions on the Constitutionality of the Bank of the United States* and have them list the arguments made by the person they researched (Jefferson or Hamilton) and the arguments made by his opponent.
- Allow students to represent either Jefferson or Hamilton in a debate over the Bank of the United States or to write a persuasive memo to President George Washington, arguing their position on the bank.
- Have students consult *George Washington's Farewell Address* for information that Washington might provide in response to his two most vocal advisers.