



Cultural Views on Government Over Time

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Bailey Middle School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
7th Grade Social Studies

Keywords: Government, authoritarian, democracy, cultural shifts

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Over the course of human history, our view on government has been like a pendulum. At one end is the idea of authoritarian governments, where one man has complete control over a country and its citizens. At the opposite end is the idea of democratic governments, where people have more rights, freedoms and a say in how their country is run. Over time, that pendulum has swung back and forth between those conflicting ideas. For our 7th grade World History curriculum we cover five hundred years of history, therefore including events that have seen our society's belief in how governments should operate change drastically. My unit, *Cultural Views on Government Over Time*, will be a unit meant to help give students an understanding of how our society has developed, and evolved, its view on the role of government. The goal is to help students understand historical events by understanding the thinking of the time period.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 137 students in 7th Grade Social Studies.

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Cultural Views on Government Over Time

Michael Richards

Rationale:

Through our course of study, we will cover many important events in World History, and for most of the students it is their first exposure to these topics. Our 7th grade curriculum covers over five hundred years of history; in which we study some of the major historical shifts that have helped to shape our modern society. While students usually understand what happened, they do not fully understand the importance or impact of these events. The reason is because they are learning these events through their own twenty-first century perspective. The purpose of this unit will be to help students understand how our cultural view on the role of government has drastically changed over the course of our history. Throughout this unit, students will be expected to analyze primary and secondary sources that will provide them with better insight into popular thinking at the time.

Our course of study through the year covers some of the major historical shifts in our view on the role and importance of government in our society. Our history has been a constant struggle between two conflicting points of view on government. On one side there are those who favor an authoritarian government, in which one man has all power and control. On the other side, there are those who believe in democracy and giving the people within a country a say in who their leaders will be and how they run their country. Over the course of the year we cover topics, such as the French and American Revolution, the Enlightenment, World War II, and the Cold War. During these historical events we see the constant struggle between which political ideology is best suited for our society. These time periods represent major shifts in our history where mankind's view on which form of government is best has changed. While students tend to understand these events and their importance, they also fail to make the connection of their relevance on how these events truly molded our modern society. Therefore, the use of primary and secondary sources will help give students a better understanding of the popular view on the role government during that time period.

This unit will be one which will cover the entire year because it will start with students learning the importance of primary and secondary sources, and how to properly analyze them. As we move through the different topic of our curriculum, students will be expected to refer back to prior lessons in order to fulfill the expectations and goal of the overall unit.

Background:

As a Social Studies teacher it not only my job to teach important historical events, people, and time periods, but also to teach students how to analyze important historical texts and think critically about the information being presented to them. My instruction often includes having students read and think critically using primary and secondary sources, in order to help them better understand the content being presented. Using primary and secondary sources in teaching events that happened years ago also gives the students a window into the culturally accepted views of the time period. It helps to give them a better understanding of what it was like to be living during that time period, instead of them looking at these events with a twenty-first century perspective.

Working for Bailey Middle School, I am fortunate to have many resources available that allow me to further student learning in my classroom. Bailey was an A rated school based on test scores from the 2015-2016 school year, and for the third year in a row we have earned the title of Exceeding Growth. While we are a school in which 83.5% of our 7th graders are reading on or above grade level, we are always trying to push those numbers even higher¹. Therefore, while it is my job to teach my students history, it is also important that I continue to encourage my students to become more literate.

Bailey has a very large population for a middle school with 1,574 students enrolled. The school is located in an affluent area, where we have a strong parent population that attributes to the school's success each year. Our free and reduced lunch population at Bailey is about 20% which is much lower than the district average of about 51%. The make-up of our student population is as follows: 77% Caucasian, 8% Hispanic, 10% African American, 2% Asia, and 3% is a combination of two or more races.

My school is also unique in the fact that it is a part of our district's One-to-One initiative. The plan is to provide each student within the school access to a Chromebook laptop while in class. This gives teachers the ability to make their lessons more interactive and enjoyable for the students. By having Chromebooks in the classroom I have been able to utilize more of the education programs that are available to educators. By making our lessons and activities digital students tend to be more engaged in the content being presented and will also take more away from the lesson as well. This is just one of the many resources that Bailey provides to help teachers reach their students in the classroom.

Despite Bailey's consistent success compared to state standards in test grades and growth, we are always looking for ways to improve. For the second year, we have included in our schedule a thirty-minute period, known as Bronco Block, for both enrichment and remediation. Students work on digital lessons through Compass Learning in both reading and math during this time. Students are also given D.E.A.R time, as a way to help enforce their reading abilities. During this time, students are expected to

Drop Everything And Read, it is meant to give them an opportunity to practice the skill of reading while also getting to choose what they will read. This is also an opportunity for teachers to pull aside students who are struggling to help them get caught up or better understand content being covered. The goal of Bronco Block is to give teachers time they do not have in class to concentrate on the students who are struggling, while at the same time helping to enrich the students who are already performing at a high level.

Bailey's mission is not to just help students recognize and achieve their academic goals, but we also realize that we are grooming the future leaders of our society. Therefore, it is important that students recognize the qualities of effective and influential leaders. At Bailey we have adopted the "Leader in Me" program which is meant to teach students how to develop the qualities that will make them effective leaders of the next generation. The program centers around the idea of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, which include being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, putting first things first, thinking win-win, seeking first to understand then to be understood, synergizing, and sharpening the saw. The idea is to embed these habits in our students now so that they will be highly effective individuals once they move on from their educational experience. It is a great program that we are continuing to grow into the culture of the school.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools has also implemented Instructional Leadership Teams(ILT) for all schools in the district. As a member of that team at Bailey, we are helping teachers focus on incorporating literacy into their daily instructions through the process of close reading and text dependent questions. With the new school year, ILT teams have a new focus in their respective schools. This year our focus is to incorporate Academic Conversations into classroom instruction. Not only are we giving teachers the resources needed to incorporate effective literacy strategies, but we are also helping them foster an environment in which student to student interactions and discussions are encouraged and practiced on a daily basis. The goal is for students to find deeper understanding and connection to content through discussions with their peers. The Instructional Leadership Team at Bailey works very hard to give teachers the training and resources needed to help them embed literacy in their planning and instruction.

Objective/ Standards:

Working as a teacher in North Carolina means that we follow two sets of standards when putting together our instructional lessons. I follow the North Carolina Essential Learning Standard for 7th grade Social Studies, as well as the Common Core Standards in all of my instructional practices. Standards that will be followed during this unit are provided below.

The North Carolina teaching standards that are implemented in this unit are as follows:

- Use historical thinking to analyze various modern societies
- Understand the development of government in modern societies and regions.
- Understand how cultural values influence relationships between individuals, groups, and political entities in modern societies and regions.

The common core standards being implemented in this unit are as follows:

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Content:

The purpose of this unit is for students to understand our modern view on the role of government in society. Classes will be looking at the path our society has taken to the point where democracy, a government in which people have a say in how the country is run, is the popular or accepted form of government. This has not always been the case, and it is important for students to study and recognize the time periods in world history that have helped to shape this modern view. Listed below is some of the content that will be used in the unit and the basic outline of its importance in understanding the purpose of this unit.

Protestant Reformation

Even though this was a religious movement, it has a place in this unit on the changing role of government. Martin Luther was an unknown man at the start of the sixteenth century, but he would change the world. Martin Luther came from humble beginnings, in which he did not exactly agree with his parents. Young Luther eventually had to stand up for himself against his father, who had wanted him to train for the legal profession.² Luther realized that he wanted to take a different path than the one that his parents had envisioned for him. So he decided that he was going to devote his life to Christianity, and he would eventually become a priest.

He was ordained a priest in 1507 and proceeded to take up the academic focus of his order, becoming doctor of Sacred Scripture in 1512 and, at the same time, assuming a professorship of the Bible at the newly founded University of Wittenberg in the Electorate of Saxony.³

As Luther began studying the scriptures he felt that there were discrepancies in what the scriptures said compared to the way the Catholic Church was acting and operating.

This is where Luther's main criticism against the Catholic Church came from. He was upset with the Catholic Church and their sale of indulgences to the people who were members of the Church. Indulgences were basically letters from the Pope that granted forgiveness of sin, but the only way to receive one of these indulgences was the pay money for them. Luther felt that the Catholic Church was taking advantage of people who had very little money to give, and who were concerned about life after death. At that time, the Catholic Church, and religion in general, was very powerful and had a strong influence on the daily lives of the people living in Europe. People were only concerned about making it to Heaven, and they put very little emphasis on their time here on Earth. As a result, to commit a sin was extremely concerning to people, as compared to today. Therefore, the Catholic Church was taking advantage of the fear of the afterlife, or fear of going to Hell, in order to make financial gains.

In another act of defiance Luther decided to take action to show his displeasure with the Catholic Church. He began creating a list of grievances that history has come to remember as the 95 Theses. However, mere words were not enough to have changed the course of mankind's history, there needed to be action. Luther then decided to take his complaints against the Catholic Church and nail them to the door of the Church attached to Wittenberg Castle on October 31, 1517. The act of nailing in turn represented the triumph of manly action.⁴ It is this action that would set into motion a string of events that would alter the course of history. One man's defiance against the most powerful entity in the known world at that time, would be the spark for a movement that would bring old institutions to their knees. The Protestant Reformation would severely decrease the power and influence of both the Catholic Church and the Pope in Europe. It would create a whole new branch of Christianity, Protestantism, therefore giving people a choice in which church they wanted to follow. It is one of the first events in modern history, in which the people realized that they had a voice and the ability to stand up to actions that they felt were unfair. This single act of defiance by one man, would inspire a series of events in our history that will help to shape our modern society.

The Enlightenment

The intellectual and creative explosion of ideas that came from the Renaissance time period would eventually give birth to another intellectual time period known as the Enlightenment. It is a pivotal moment in mankind's history, especially involving our view on the role of government or how government should be structured. It is during this time, that intellectual thinkers such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Baron de Montesquieu were considering and debating the type of government that is best for society. At that time, these were radical thoughts and opinions because most countries were ruled or controlled by powerful monarchs, who had absolute and total control over their governments and countries. The important thinkers and intellectuals of that time period were trying to decide whether that was the best government for our society, or if countries should consider other forms of governments.

The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century unambiguously amounted to a decisive stage in human development.⁵ Historians look at this as an important time period in our history because it is where the ideas of democracy, and human rights and freedoms, are being openly debated and discussed. Therefore, inspiring future events that will lead to the formation of new, and powerful countries and governments that will have strong influence and power in our society. In order to understand the importance of this time period, one must know and understand the teachings of the Enlightenment philosophers. Most of these intellectuals believed in governments in which the power was shared, and that the people had the right to choose and elect their own leaders. Aside from Thomas Hobbes, the Enlightenment philosophers believed that people had the right to choose their leaders, and by having people elect their leaders it would deter leaders from becoming tyrants or allowing their power to influence their actions and decisions. Most of these men lived in countries that were controlled by monarchs with absolute power, and they had witnessed the corruption that comes from one person having too much power. As a result, Montesquieu believed there needed to be a separation of powers within governments. He stressed the importance of different branches of government, in which each branch had its role in helping to run the government. Through separation of powers Montesquieu believed that these branches would work together to run the country.

The common theme, and probably the most important, in the teachings of these Enlightenment philosophers was that people needed to have a say in how the country was be run and who was leading it. Some these philosophers believed in the need for what they called a social contract, or an agreement between the ruler and the ruled. Their versions of a social contract differed, but most of them agreed that the people and the government both had a role and obligation in running society. For Locke, he believed that government existed to protect people's natural rights of life, liberty, and property, and in return the people obey the laws of the government. He also believed that if government does not hold up its end of the contract, then the people have the right to overthrow that government. Rousseau also had his own version of a social contract. For Rousseau, he believed that the only form of government that can restrict, or make laws and regulations, for the people is one that is elected by the people.

The impact of the Enlightenment is one that is immeasurable. The ideas and writings of these philosophers have a major impact on shaping our society. The words of a few will eventually lead to the actions of many. People who were tired of being oppressed and forced to deal with corrupt leaders who were only concerned about themselves, will be inspired by the ideas of historical figures from this time period. This will cause them to band together and rise up against governments that they felt were unjust. These actions will lead to the fall of world powers, the fall of monarchies that had been in place for centuries, and the birth of nations formed on the ideas of these men.

Age of Revolutions

Revolutions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were inspired by the ideas being shared and debated during the Enlightenment. For centuries great empires born from the Age of Discovery ruled over their empires through the use of authoritarian governments. The empires grew large and powerful and stretched across oceans. However, unrest in these empires eventually grew, and people began calling for equality or independence. These uprisings were especially evident in the British colonies in the Americas, and later in France. Large populations were upsets with the conditions for which they were being forced to live, and they decided to fight for freedom.

The American Revolution was the first of a series of revolutions during the eighteenth century that were inspired by the writings of Enlightenment philosophers. The British crown had exercised the practice of Salutary Neglect for much of their time controlling the American colonies in North America. This meant that they had a hands-off approach to running these colonies. Laws were passed by Parliament that the colonies were supposed to follow, but they were rarely enforced. The colonies were allowed to basically govern themselves, through local colonial governments and leaders. However, after years of war between the British and the French, the crown was in desperate need to replace money spent during these conflicts. Parliament's answer to this was a series of new taxes on the colonists.

American colonists responded negatively to these new taxes. Upset that they were being forced to pay these taxes when they were not even represented in Parliament, the lawmaking body of England responsible for these new tariffs. Colonists openly protested these taxes by refusing to pay them, and even publicly tarring and feathering tax collectors and even burning down tax offices. Groups, such as the Sons of Liberty, would eventually form and look to cause chaos and unrest in the colonies, therefore causing the British to repeal the taxes. Colonists, dressed as Indians, even decided to protest the tax on tea by raiding a British cargo ship and tossing over a million dollars' worth of British tea into the Boston Harbor. This even is known today as the Boston Tea Party, but it anything but a party. This act of defiance would lead to the closing down of Boston Harbor, and the British crown decided to send large numbers of British troops to the colonies to maintain law and order. This would eventually culminate in the start of the American Revolution.

The newly formed Continental Army, led by George Washington, would be facing off with the most powerful fighting force the world had ever seen, the British Empire. Washington's army was a ragtag bunch of volunteer colonists. He often had to rely on the use of untrained militia to help supplement his fighting force. As the war was being fought, American colonists also decided to draft a document that would become one of the most important documents in the history of the United States. On July 4, 1776, our

Founding Father drafted and signed the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, to declare our freedom from the British crown. However, this document was worthless without a victory on the battlefield. And despite some early struggles, the Americans were eventually able to turn the tide of the war in their favor. The British, under the control of General Cornwallis, would eventually surrender at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. The signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 made the creation of the United States of America official.

Ideas of the Enlightenment were the foundation for the American struggle for independence. They would also be the basis for the creation of this new country. The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution include many of the ideas and beliefs of Enlightenment philosophers. The idea of democracy and individual rights and freedoms are the building blocks for the formation of the United States, and they will also be an inspiration for other to rise up against unjust governments.

The success of the American Revolution also served as a source of inspiration for other revolutions that will take place around the world. Most famously, it would inspire those in France to come together to overthrow a government that they felt was not sufficient. For decades France was relying on a system that allowed the wealthy to prosper and the lower class to suffer. After centuries of suffering under an unfair tax system, where those making the least were expected to pay the most taxes, and having no say in the Estates General, the Third Estate was always outvoted by the wealthier First and Second Estate, the people of France had had enough. Behind their calls for Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity the people of France rose together to try to bring an end to the Old Regime. Needless to say, a revolution had begun in France that would last for over a decade, and despite the chaos of it all, the French Revolution will be remembered as a struggle for equality.

French citizens rose up to fight the absolute monarchy, and King Louis XVI, that had ruled France for centuries. As Louis XVI failed to solve the economic problems that his country was facing, he decided to call to order the Estates General, a legislative body that had not met in over one hundred years, to try to figure out a solution for the country's problems. However, at the meeting members of the Third Estate were demanding a change to the unfair tax system in France. They wanted the First and Second Estate, the wealthier individuals of French society, to pay more in taxes. When the Estates General decided to vote on these changes, the Third Estate was also calling for a change in how the Estates General voted. Traditionally, each Estate received one vote, so the Third Estate was always outvoted by the First and Second Estate. The Third Estate wanted the vote on the tax system to be based on a single vote for each representative of the Estates, and since representation was based on population, the Third Estate always had the larger number of representatives. Therefore, if one vote was given to each representative the Third Estate would be in the majority. Fearing the outcome, the day the vote was to be held for the new tax system members of the First and Second Estate arrived at the

meeting hall early, locked the door, and held the vote without the Third Estate being present. In an event that is considered by many to be the first act of the revolution, the Third Estate withdrew from the Estates General, met at the King's private tennis court, and made a pledge, known as the Tennis Court Oath, to continue to meet until they had written a new Constitution.

After this event, the French Revolution took off. Being led by the intellectuals and professionals within French society, or the bourgeoisie, French citizens rose up against the Old Regime in France. French citizens would Storm the Bastille on July 14, 1789. They would march on Versailles and capture King Louis and his family. They would force him to accept their revolutionary government, and adhere to the rules of their newly drafted Constitution. There would also be the drafting of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which would outline the basic individual rights that would be afforded to all French citizens. This document closely mirrors the United States Bill of Rights that accompanies our own Constitution. However, the chaos would not end here. Eventually, the king would go back on his promises to accept the new government, leading to his execution. The French government would draft several more Constitutions, but the power void left by the end of the monarchy in France would lead to a power struggle and a time of the French Revolution known as the Reign of Terror.

The Reign of Terror is an eighteen-month period of the French Revolution in which Maximilien Robespierre and his Committee of Public Safety was searching for those that they thought were against the ideals of the revolution. They would be punished through their execution by guillotine, a large machine that used a single blade to chop the head off an individual. Robespierre's time did not last long, mostly because he began accusing the wrong people of being anti-revolutionaries. Eventually, he would be imprisoned and executed by the same machine that had driven his short period of chaos. The French Revolution comes to an end with the crowning of Napoleon Bonaparte, a famous French general, as emperor of France. Napoleon would wreak havoc on Europe, and it would eventually take a coalition of European powers to finally bring his reign to an end. In the end, the monarchy would be restored in France and Louis XVIII would come to power as the king of France. Even though it may seem as if the French Revolution was unsuccessful and the country came full circle back to where it was at the start of all the chaos that is simply not true.

The ideals of the French Revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity, would live on in future revolutions in other areas around the world. The American and French Revolutions are significant in world history because the people of the revolutions stood up to strong authoritarian governments. They set into motion the idea that democracy and individual rights and freedoms could not be ignored. These revolutions taught the world that the voice of the people would no longer remain silent and unheard, that people were tired of being ruled with an iron fist. The ideas of the Enlightenment had taken center stage

during the American and French Revolutions, and their effects will become contagious to all those fighting corruption and oppression.

Rise of Authoritarian Governments

Despite the impact of the Enlightenment and the success of revolutions around the world that brought an end to authoritarian rule, the idea of democracy would soon have a new foe to contend with. At the turn of the twentieth century, the effects of the Industrial Revolution could be felt in both Europe and North America. The growth of industry also meant the development of mechanized warfare, where countries were now developing powerful weapons in large quantities. When war broke out in Europe in 1914, the world witnessed destruction and carnage that had never been witnessed before. After four years of war that had devastated large areas of Europe, and caused a loss of life that tore young men from families across the globe, the Allied Powers wanted to make sure that they punished the aggressor in this situation, Germany. The Treaty of Versailles was the peace treaty that brought the Great War to an end, but it also established very harsh punishments for the country believed to be at fault for the entire conflict. The most significant punishment from the treaty was the large amount of reparations that Germany was expected to pay to the Allies. The punishments set forth by the Treaty of Versailles would set into motion a string of events that would bring authoritarian governments back into the spotlight of world history.

Little did these men know but by drafting that final edition of the Treaty of Versailles in June of 1919, they were not bringing lasting peace but instead setting in motion events that would lead to a second global war. The overall purpose of the provisions set forth in the Treaty of Versailles were meant to punish Germany for its role in the outbreak of World War I. The architects of Versailles erred in letting their passions get in the way of rational politics, an error manifested in the 'war guilt' clause and the unwieldy reparations scheme.⁶

The reparations that were set forward by the Treaty of Versailles, coupled with a global depression are going to send the German economy into a tailspin, in which the country would experience ninety percent unemployment and their currency would be left worthless. The German people were going to be left desperate and suffering, and the Weimar Republic which was established at the conclusion of World War I, would be unable to solve the problems plaguing the country. These conditions in Germany would leave the country primed for the arrival of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. The National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, a charismatic and persuasive leader, played on the environment of desperation, and made promises to the German people that their suffering would end once the Nazis had political control of the country. He promised the people exactly what they wanted to hear, that he could return Germany to its former glory and status in the international world. By 1932 the Nazi Party was the largest political party in Germany, and with each election the party gained more

and more power. With that outcome, Hitler and the Nazis took a stranglehold over political power, and never let it go.

The events in Germany mirrored events that were happening throughout Europe. In Italy, a man by the name of Benito Mussolini had seized power and implemented his own form of authoritarian government, known as Fascism. In a Fascist state, all decisions and power flow through one man, who rules his country as a dictator. The people become subjects to the state, or country. In Fascism, the people are nothing more than resources that exist to help the country, and its leader reach their goals. Fascism would be the model for Nazism in Germany once Hitler had taken power in 1933. Authoritarian governments were not just isolated to these two countries. Revolutions were being fought in other areas, like Spain and Russia. In both countries, the economic depression has taken a harsh toll on the citizens, and they were easily influenced by these strong leaders promising to bring change. In Spain Francisco Franco, being largely funded and equipped by both Mussolini and Hitler, had seized power and brought Fascism to another of the European nations. During World War I, Vladimir Lenin was leading a revolution that brought an end to the rule of Czars in Russia. Lenin wanted to implement the ideas of German economist Karl Marx, and create a society where all resources, means of production, and labor were equally divided amongst the citizens. Lenin's death in 1924, would lead to the rise of Joseph Stalin, who will become one of the most ruthless and violent dictators in histories. Countries across the globe had new governments and leaders that would be a threat to the very existence of democracy.

Ultimately, the democratic nations of the world had to come together to once again defeat the German enemy. The nations of England, France, and eventually the United States knew they had to fight and stop Hitler, not just because it was the right thing to do, but also because they knew democracy could not survive in a world where it was surrounded by dictators. As Hitler began trying to spread German influence throughout Europe the task became obvious, not just to stop Hitler from world domination, but also to preserve the idea of democracy. The United States of America plays a large role in the events of World War II. At first, Franklin Roosevelt tried to keep the country out of the war, but he also signed the Lend-Lease Act in 1940 proclaiming that the United States would be the "great arsenal for democracy." After the tragic events at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States had no choice but to enter into the global conflict.

World War II brought about global destruction and death rivalled by no other conflict in history. Society was witnessing a pivotal moment in history because had the Axis Powers been successful in their conquests, then our world would look much different today. The role of government in society had shifted once again. Economic depression and desperation had paved the way for strong dictators to gain power and influence. World War II was more than just a battle of nations, it was also a battle of ideologies where differing types of governments, different types of lifestyles were pitted against each other on the battlefield. For six years the nations of the world were locked in

constant battle, but as the dust settled the Allied Power would arise victorious once again, democracy would prevail against fascism. The United States and the Soviet Union would arise from World War II as the world's only superpowers. These two nations would be linked by their status in the world following their role in bringing an end to the Axis Powers. However, it would also define the course of history over the next fifty years.

The second half of the twentieth century would consist of a competition between the Soviet Union and the United States, between a communist dictatorship and democracy, between two different ways of life. As the influence of the Soviet Union spread to Eastern Europe after World War II, and communist dictatorships were established in these countries, the democracies of the world were once again being threatened. For nearly fifty years the United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a Cold War, where there was no fighting, bullets, or bloodshed. Instead these two nations were competing with each other in terms of military capabilities and technological advancements. In the end, the Soviet economy was unable to match the productivity and wealth of the economy of the United States. By the end of the 1980's the Soviet Union was in extreme debt, and on the verge of collapse. Revolutions were occurring throughout Eastern Europe, and communist dictatorships were being brought to an end. The Soviet Union would cease to exist in 1991, and the former nation of Russia would be reborn. Communist dictatorships had failed, just like all other forms of totalitarian governments that had come before. Once again, democracy had overcome forces that threatened the ideas of liberty and freedom.

Society's view of government during our history has been complicated and always changing. Society has gone through periods where authoritarian governments were the accepted form. Governments where the people were controlled by strong rulers who demanded law and order, gave the people few rights and freedoms, and only select individuals were given the power to rule. However, as history has taught us, people are not meant to be oppressed. The ideas of liberty, freedom, and equality could only be restrained for so long. Eventually the people will seek to gain their independence and their freedom from forces attempting to keep them under control. Today, democracy is the accepted and popular form of government in our society. The majority of countries around the world have governments based on the ideas of democracy. These are governments that grant people the power and say in who their leaders will be and how their country will be run. The long road that has brought society to this point has been tedious and full of obstacles. Freedom and liberty come with a price, and they are not without their challenges. If history has taught us anything, it is that there will always be those who will attempt to hold back the masses and seize power and control for themselves. There will always be threats to democracy, there will always be threats to our freedom, but it is important to remember that there is no greater reward than the ability to choose.

Teaching Strategies:

This unit will focus mainly on disciplinary literacy, in which students will learn how to access and comprehend discipline-based texts and engage in literacy skills, strategies, and practices specific to history.⁷ Disciplinary literacy allows students to develop and master higher level literacy skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and making connections. Disciplinary literacy teaches students skills that employers are looking for in today's highly competitive job market. The demand for developing literacy in preparing students for today's job market, is greater than any other time in our history. Jobs today require certain skills and higher level thinking that practicing disciplinary literacy can help students to develop, therefore helping to prepare them for their future careers.

A generation ago, jobs in factories foundries, and mills commonly required no reading, and many other jobs (e.g., law enforcement, practical nursing, trucking) required reading in limited amounts, but this has changed. The rising correlation between education and income is evidence of the increasing literacy orientation of many workplaces.⁸

Analyzing historical documents and primary sources lends itself well to the development of higher-level literacy skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving. Historical documents about certain or specific events often come from multiple sources and individuals. Therefore, in order to understand an event and decide on the credibility of stories being told in primary sources historians often have to carefully analyze these texts to decide what actually happened. Teaching students to read like a historian teaches students to evaluate the source and context of the textual information and corroborate it with other texts. This leads students to think more critically about what they read and to write better essays, even if they tend not to end up with more historical information.⁹ Teaching disciplinary literacy through history will be beneficial for the students as they move forward in education and into their future careers because it helps them to develop the skills needed to be successful.

Therefore, it is imperative that secondary teachers allow students to develop the higher-level literacy skills that our workforce demands. Yet research shows that the educational system is failing to reach these goals with most students. Even though there is a growing demand for higher-level literacy and education has placed a strong emphasis on literacy, assessment data suggests that adolescents today read no better, and perhaps marginally worse, than a generation ago.¹⁰ There are a number of strategies that could be used to help students accomplish this, and there are different strategies that will be used during the course of this unit to allow students to reach a deeper understanding of the information being presented.

Academic Conversations

One strategy that will be incorporated into this unit will be the use of Academic Conversations through Socratic Seminars, Think-Pair-Shares, group discussions, and class discussions. Historical documents are extremely complex and often difficult to read and understand. Allowing students to discuss the information being presented will bring them to a deeper understanding of the text, by allowing them to hear from different perspectives and different points of view. Academic conversations attempts to teach students the skills needed to participate in exchanges between people who are trying to learn from one another and build meanings that they didn't have before.¹¹ In order to incorporate these strategies, students must understand what a good conversation requires, and the skills needed to have an actual academic conversation.

These skills include being able to elaborate and clarify, support ideas with examples, build on and/or challenge a partner's ideas, paraphrase, and synthesize conversation points. By teaching students to incorporate these skills, we are empowering students to communicate well in different situations, such as whole-class discussions, small groups, workplace meetings, social gatherings, and family interactions.¹² As we help students to develop these skills within the classroom, the depth and value of their conversations will increase. Students will learn to work through confusing and difficult passages together, instead of simply giving up if they do not understand a text.

Children will be more apt to assimilate new or complex concepts when required to explain, elaborate, or defend one's position to others, as well as to oneself; striving for an explanation often makes a learner integrate and elaborate knowledge in new ways,¹³

Another important part of academic conversations is allowing students to bring personal connections or experiences into the discussion. Simply reading a text and then answering questions about that text will not help students internalize the information being presented. However, by allowing students to incorporate their own experiences and emotions, it helps them connect to the text and give deeper understand of the historical events or perspective that they are learning about.

The teaching of reading and writing at any developmental level should have as its first concern the creation of environments and activities in which students are motivated and encouraged to draw on their own resources to make 'live meanings.'¹⁴

However, if there is to be meaningful academic conversation occurring within a classroom there must be guidance. While teachers must understand the importance of giving up some classroom control to the students, in order for the conversations to be meaningful there must be some guidelines from the teacher, such as providing students with a purpose for the text and language frames for discussing the text. Establishing a purpose for any text is the starting point for any type of discussion because it provides

students the initial framework on which they can build an understanding of the text.¹⁵ Establishing a purpose for what students are to discuss and the language they should be using will provide them the proper guidance for the type of language and discussion they should be focused on for their task. Another form of guidance would be to also provide students with language frames. The use of language frames to direct academic conversations will allow students to engage in the use of academic vocabulary.¹⁶ Therefore, allowing students to discuss the sources and text being presented, it allows students to gain a better understanding of the information within the text, but it also provides them with skills they could utilize for their entire lives.

Group Work

Group collaboration is always key to student understanding of topics, but perhaps it most vital in secondary education. The development of secondary students is enhanced when students are engaged in sustained interactions and allowed to work with one another¹⁷. Allowing students to work in groups will not only afford them the opportunity to work on tasks with their peers, but that interaction will also allow them to develop social skills that they will need throughout their adult life. Group work is also important because it teaches students the value in being able to work with and problem solve with their peers. This helps them to prepare for careers where they will be expected to work with others in order to complete a task or job. There will be parts of this unit where students are expected to work with their peers to complete activities. Productive group work is usually in the form of two to five students working together on a task in which they must rely on each other in order to complete it.¹⁸ It is through collaboration and discussing with their peers that students will be able to answer the challenging questions and make the challenging connections that this topic will present to them.

SOAPStone

Middle school students, especially seventh grade lack the experience with primary sources and historical documents to be able to properly understand them. Seventh grade is their first real exposure to primary sources, and many of them struggle with understanding them at the beginning of the school year. One of the strategies that would be incorporated into this unit to train students to properly break down these complex texts, would be the use of SOAPStone. This teaching strategy forces students to break down documents into categories that easier to understand and follow, therefore giving them a better grasp on the meaning or purpose of the text as a whole.

This method first has students consider the speaker of the text. The first task of historians, when analyzing historical documents, is paying attention to the author or source when reading any text.¹⁹ The second thing students must consider when using this strategy is the occasion, or when the document was written. Referring to the year or time period of a document, and who said or wrote it, allows them to rely on background

knowledge to understand what event the document may be referring to. The students must then determine who the audience of the speaker of the document is. Knowing the audience allows students to consider why the speaker is using the type of language or writing style in the document. Students must then determine the purpose of the document. Why is the author writing that document? Is it a letter that is meant to defend the author's position, or is it a speech meant to persuade the reader in some way? Then students must determine the subject of the document. They need to determine what historical event or time period the document is referring to or explaining. Lastly, students must determine and consider the tone of the author or document. By breaking the historical document down using this method, it will allow the students to comprehend the text, and understand how it connects to the topic being discussed.

Classroom Activities:

The seven lessons in this unit are meant to be integrated into our seventh grade curriculum over the course of the entire school year. The first lesson will occur during one of the first weeks of class in which students will be introduced to primary and secondary sources, giving them a better understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources. Students will first be asked to try to come up with a definition for a primary source within their groups. Some students may have an understanding of what a primary source is already, while others may need to break the word down to come up with a loose definition. This will allow students to hear from different perspectives, as to what the definition could be.

As students talk about ideas from texts, they test their ideas and compare them to peers' ideas about the same text. Some points are confirmed while others are changed or discarded. In conversations, questions and inferences about the text are often explored and answered, and, as a result, comprehension of the text improves.²⁰

After sharing some of the definitions with the rest of the class, students will be given a true definition of a primary source. Students will then watch a short animated video²¹ that will give them information on the difference between a primary and secondary source. Students will then complete an activity to help them understand how historians use documents and context to help them understand how and why historical events took place. They will do this through a Lunchroom Fight Activity.²² For this activity students will take the role of the principal of a school. They need to decide who to punish for a fight that occurred in the lunchroom one day. Students will be provided with the testimonies of those who witnessed the fight, and have seen how the two students interact with each other. Students then need to decide, based on the evidence who was at fault. Students will be paired with someone who holds the opposite view on the situation, and they will have a conversation on who they believe should be punished for the fight. They must provide evidence from the testimonies to back up their opinions. Students will then

fill out a Suspension Report in which they will explain who should be punished for the fight and provide evidence from the testimonies to back up their decision. This activity shows students what it is like for historians who have to read different accounts of an event and make a decision on how the event really happened.

The second lesson for this unit will be given during our study of the Protestant Reformation. Students will first review what it was like to live during the Middle Ages. Students will be given time to first write down the descriptions of the Middle Ages, and the class will come together to discuss what life was like during this time period. Students will have to pull from information that they learned last year in order to complete this task. The teacher will then quickly review the important historical events and figures from the Protestant Reformation covered in a previous class. Students will then begin their analysis of Martin Luther's 95 Theses, the most important historical document for the Protestant Reformation.

Hanging around the room will be ten excerpts from Luther's 95 Theses. Students will pair up with their table partner, and they will be given some post-it notes. With their partner, students will go to each excerpt, read it, and summarize it in their own words on the post-it note. They will then stick their summary next to the original excerpt. This will also allow students to analyze the work of other students, and use it to help them develop their own summary. Once students have gone to each excerpt they will return to their groups. Each group will be assigned one of the excerpts. Groups will work together to read over the summaries attached to the quote, and using their interpretation, as well as those of their peers, groups will decide what Martin Luther was upset or complaining about in the quote. This activity will give students a better understanding of Martin Luther's main concerns and complaints about the Catholic Church that sparked a movement which will cause a break within Christianity itself.

The third lesson of this unit will be used during our study of the Enlightenment. The lesson will start with students coming up with an explanation of what individual rights are and provide some examples that they have heard of or know. The teacher will then review what the Enlightenment was and the historical figures that are associated with the time period. This will be a review of information covered from another class period. Students will then work as a group to complete their student activity. Each group will be given quotes and excerpts from the works of Enlightenment philosophers. They will also be given a graphic organizer with different themes or categories, such as individual rights, role of government, balance of power, state of nature, and social contract. As a group, students will read the quotes and excerpts, and determine which category the quote goes under. Groups will then be assigned one of the Enlightenment figures they have learned about, and they will create a poster trying to persuade people to believe in or follow that philosopher. This will force students to use persuasive language while also conveying the ideas or beliefs of their assigned philosopher.

The fourth lesson of this unit will be used during our study of the American Revolution. Class will start with students reviewing the definition for the term revolution. The teacher will use student definitions to explain that the American Revolution was filled with revolutionary documents that are the foundations for our government and country, especially the Declaration of Independence. The teacher will first explain what the Declaration of Independence was and the story behind the signing of this historic document. The teacher will then explain that the Declaration of Independence is nothing more than a breakup letter. After explaining the different sections of a breakup letter, students will then construct a foldable which will have four flaps. They will label the outside part of the flaps Preamble, Natural Rights, Grievances, and Resolution of Independence. On the inside part of the flaps they will label them Introduction, Rights of the People/ Role of Government, Colonists' Complaints, and Colonists Declare their Independence. Students will then work with their table partners to analyze the Declaration of Independence, and find quotes from the document that belong under each heading of their foldable. The class will share some of the quotes they had provided for their foldable.

Continuing to work with their table partners, students will next be completing a Declaration Puzzle. They will be given a sheet with the headings Preamble, Natural Rights, Grievances, and Resolution of Independence. They will also be given quotes from the Declaration of Independence. Working with their partners they need to piece the Declaration back together again. Put the headings in the correct order, and properly place the quotes or excerpts under the correct heading. By relating the Declaration of Independence to a breakup letter, it is allowing the students to understand the true purpose of this revolutionary documentary. The colonists were upset about the way the British were treating them and as a result they decided to rise up in one voice to share their displeasure and break away from England.

The fifth lesson of this unit will be used during our study of the French Revolution. Students will start by watching a clip from *Les Misérables*, and writing down what is happening in their warm-up section of their notebook. Students will then turn to their table partner and share what they wrote down, and what they saw happening in the video. Students will then put themselves in the scene depicted on the video. They will write a journal entry as if they had been there and witnessed the event take place. They will need to make connections to the goals and messages of the French Revolution. The teacher will allow volunteers to share their journal entry with the rest of the class. This will allow students to critically think about and apply the information they have learned about the French Revolution into a journal entry.

The teacher will then quickly review the significance of the French Revolution and how it was inspired by the American Revolution. Students will then be analyzing the Declaration of the Rights of Man. This was one of the revolutionary documents that came out the French Revolution. To help students have better understanding of the link

between the American and French Revolutions, students will be comparing two documents from those historical events. Students will be provided excerpts from the Declarations of the Rights of Man. They will also be provided a graphic organizer with amendments from the United States' Bill of Rights listed. Working with a partner, students will analyze the excerpts from the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and decide which amendment from the Bill of Rights it is most closely associated to. They will then add the excerpt to their graphic organizer next to the amendment it closely resembles. At the end of the activity, the teacher will stress the similarities between the two revolutions, and how the success of the American Revolution inspired revolutionaries in France to stand up to a government that had existed for centuries.

The sixth lesson of this unit will be delivered during our study of the rise of authoritarian governments in Europe prior to World War II. The lesson will concentrate on the rise of Hitler and the Nazis in Germany. The goal is to help students understand how Hitler and the Nazis were able to gain power and control in Germany during the 1930's. The lesson will begin with classes reviewing the harsh punishments of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I. Next, students will be analyzing primary sources explaining what it was like to live in Germany after World War I through the completion of a Graffiti Write. Students will start by analyzing the primary source that has been assigned to them and pull out information that helps answer our guiding question, or purpose. The purpose of the Graffiti Write is to understand the living conditions in Germany after World War I. Students will then share the information from their primary source with the rest of their group. Groups will look for five keywords they notice repeating in the information from the primary sources. Groups will then use those five keywords to construct a definition or description of what it was like to live in Germany after World War I. Groups will then share the description with the rest of the class.

The teacher will then display images from people living in Germany during their depression in the 1920's. Students will be asked to comment on the images they are viewing by using sentence starters like *This reminds me of...*, *This makes me feel...*, *If I were in that situation I would want a leader who...* The teacher will use these responses to introduce how Hitler and the Nazis used these conditions as a way of seizing power. Hanging around the room will be examples of Nazi propaganda. Students will travel with their table partner to each of the pieces of propaganda. Students will then analyze the propaganda to figure out what the message was or how they were trying to take advantage of the desperation of the people of Germany at that time. Students should not only understand the conditions that arose in Germany after World War I, but also how the Nazis took advantage of the desperation in Germany at that time.

The final assessment for this unit will be project-based and it will be assigned toward the end of our study of the Cold War. This will be a group project in which students will be putting together a campaign to help spread democracy. Groups will be required to create a symbol for their campaign, a slogan, two pieces of propaganda, and a persuasive

speech or song convincing people that democracy is the best form of government. In their work students will be required to use examples from previous historical events or quotes from those who believe in the importance of democracy. Groups will have two days to work on the project and the third day will consist of group presentations. Students will be graded on overall neatness and effort, but also on their ability to refer back to previous topics and events to support their campaign.

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

Common Core Standards

In this unit will be using standard RH.6-8.1 by analyzing primary source documents and citing evidence from the text. Students will analyze primary sources throughout this understanding in order to gain a better understanding of what people thought was the role of government during different times in history.

This unit will also focus on standard RH.6-8.2 in which students will use certain reading strategies to help them come to a better understanding of the information within those documents. Students will then be expected to show understanding of the information being presented to them by formulated concise responses to discussion questions.

This unit will also focus on standard RH.6-8.4 in which students will perform reading strategies that cause them to identify key vocabulary within a text. Students will be expected to come to a better understanding of the meaning of these words. Therefore, giving them a better understanding of the text in general.

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