

The Election of 1800: Revolutionary Stability

Lesson Plan Template

Title: The Election of 1800: Revolutionary Stability

Descriptive Subtitle: An exploration of the tactics, beliefs, and conflicts of early political parties and figures in America

Grade level: High school (9-12). This lesson specifically is being used in a 10th grade Honors Government class.

Topic/subject: Government: Elections, Primary Documents. History: Jefferson's Public Life and Politics

Tags: Election of 1800, political parties, Adams, Jefferson, historiography, controversy

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Duration: 90 minutes (intended for two 45 minute classes or one full block)

Overview: This lesson is intended for use in a Government class, though it could be easily adapted to a US History course. The lesson is a combination of a few different approaches: students will study primary writings of Jefferson and Adams, examine a range of online documents and images in a DBQ format, and explore historical interpretations through the use of scholarly texts.

Prior knowledge: Students should have a foundational understanding of US Government or History, and at least a passing awareness on the importance of George Washington as a political figure. [The Election of 1800](#) presentation (used in part for this lesson) on Google Arts and Culture would also serve for context and extensions in the classroom setting for students requiring additional background.

Standards:

VA State Standards for Government

GOVT. 1 The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills responsible citizenship

requires, including the ability to

- a) analyze primary and secondary source documents;
- c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media; g) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

GOVT. 6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections by

- a) describing the organization, role, and constituencies of political parties;
- d) analyzing the influence of media coverage, campaign advertising, public opinion polls, and Internet-based communications on elections;

VA State Standards for US History

VUS. 1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to

- a) identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;
- c) formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation;
- f) develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled;

VUS. 6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major events from the last decade of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century by

- a) explaining the principles and issues that prompted Thomas Jefferson to organize the first opposition political party;

Common Core Literacy Standards (Grades 9 and 10)

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Objectives:

Students will understand...

1. *The discord and disunity that existed in early American politics, including the views the Founding Fathers had of one another.*
2. *The issues that prompted/promoted factionalism in early America, as well as the fears and concerns of the citizenry.*
3. *The nature of political change and revolution in early America, and its applicability to understanding today's disagreements.*

Students will be able to...

1. *Interpret and weigh primary documents and secondary perspectives as they relate to the election of 1800 and today.*
2. *Express their views in discussion, writing, and reflection.*

Students will know...

1. *The transcendency of conflict across time and place.*
2. *The importance of factionalism in defining political culture and national identity.*
3. *The variation in interpretation on the Founders and their legacies.*

Steps/Procedure:

- Hook (5-10 minutes): Have students brainstorm answers to the following questions (these are contained in the Google Presentation):
 1. What adjectives would you use to describe the nature of elections today (in other words, how would you characterize the dialogue and candidate interactions)?
 2. What conflicts (if any) do you think existed between the Founding Fathers in the early days of our nation? Do you think they were more or less divided than today's politicians? Students can either write these down, or discuss in small groups and report back to the class. The teacher should lead a brief discussion to solicit ideas.
- Engage (15-20 minutes): Using the pdf presentation, students will read a brief excerpt from Thomas Jefferson regarding his thoughts about the election of 1800. They will answer questions on the provided [handout](#), and teacher can discuss responses afterwards. Students will then compare Jefferson's quote to a response from John Adams and contrast the sentiments conveyed.
- Engage (cont.) The 'Feuding Fathers.' Students will watch a brief [clip](#) from YouTube that contains opinions the Founding Fathers had of each other. They will compare these sentiments to the opening brainstorm they conducted at the beginning of class. What does this reveal to us about the nature of the time period?
- Active Learning (20-25 minutes): Teacher will distribute copies of, or allow online access to, content from Monticello discussing the election of 1800 (there are two variants available based on reading level of the class: [Version 1](#) and [Version 2](#)). Students should use the handout to take notes. Students may work alone or in pairs on the response as teacher allows.
- Active Learning (cont. 20-25 minutes): For the second part of the lesson, students will explore primary source documents linked within this [handout](#), and accessible [electronically](#) on Google Arts and Culture, that explore the criticisms levied against the candidates in the election of 1800, and draw some conclusions based on what they discover. They should work in pairs for this activity, and submit the assignment when they are done.*Teacher note: Students' electronic devices are a nice option for the images because they can zoom and scroll after clicking on them. Responsive design also incorporates scrolling rather than clicking one slide at a time, though teachers could

also project or print images for students to study.

- Reflect (10-15 minutes): For the last activity, have the students take a stand by setting up a continuum spectrum in the classroom (Completely Agree, Partially Agree, Neutral, Partially Disagree, Completely Disagree). The teacher will then pose questions to the students contained in the Google Presentation and solicit opinions or ideas from the class once they stand by the card that best represents their views.
- Now and Then (optional extensions): Teachers wishing to further the lesson may wish to incorporate the following extensions, either for homework or further in-class discussion:
 1. Have students reimagine the attacks made on the candidates in a modern setting. This could be accomplished by having students imagine/design tweets by the candidates, or else creating a short advertisement or speech.
 2. There is some critical scholarship on the revolutionary nature of the election of 1800 contained in *The Revolution of 1800* (ed. Horn, Lewis, and Onuf). Excerpts from this text would allow classes to further delve into the scholarship surrounding the election.
 3. In a US History class, this lesson flows naturally into a discussion of the outcome of the election, and the changes Jefferson sought for America. In a government class, this lesson connects to a study of the Electoral College and the controversy surrounding it.

Materials:

1. Google Presentation containing quotes, questions, and sketch of the lesson
2. Handout with questions and directions
3. Internet access, along with computer and projector for teacher use
4. Continuum cards for end reflection

Assessment(s): This lesson is formative, and teacher should assess students on their handling of the questions and class discussion as they see fit. A sample key and grading scale for the document study has been provided.

Assessment Criteria: Document study key and grading scale

Accommodations:

1. This lesson can also be conducted electronically: teachers can link to activities and have students work at a self-directed pace, and submit online (the hook activity could also be done via message board or group chat).
2. In addition to the two reading levels for the context essay, teachers can jigsaw the essay to further split up the reading among students.

Source List:

“A Nation Divided: The Election of 1800.” *Google Cultural Institute*. Thomas Jefferson Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 July 2016.

“Feuding Founders” *Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello*. YouTube, 8 June 2016. Web. 26 July 2016.

“From Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Priestley, 21 March 1801.” *Founders Online*. National Archives, 12 July 2016. Web. 26 July 2016.

Horn, James. "Election of 1800." *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello*. N.p., Spring 2000. Web. 26 July 2016.

"John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 14 June 1813." *Founders Online*. National Archives, 12 July 2016. Web. 26 July 2016.

"Letter from Alexander Hamilton, Concerning the Public Conduct ..." *Founders Online*. National Archives, 12 July 2016. Web. 26 July 2016.

"Nation Divided Over Presidential Election." *Monticello Newsletter 27.1 (2016)*: n. pag. Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Web. 26 July 2016.

The logo for Monticello, featuring the name "M. Jefferson" in a cursive script above the word "MONTICELLO" in a bold, serif, all-caps font.

M. Jefferson
MONTICELLO