

Declaration of Independence 10th Grade Lesson Plan

10th Grade Lesson Plan (50 minutes)

Topic: Philosophical Foundations & Impact of the Declaration

Objective

Students will:

- Analyze Enlightenment ideas
 - Evaluate justification for revolution
 - Interpret historical arguments
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Warm-Up (5 min)

Prompt:

- “When is it justified to overthrow a government?”
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Lecture (15 min)

Teach:

- Enlightenment influence (Locke-style thinking)
- Social contract theory
- Structure of Declaration:
 1. Preamble
 2. Grievances
 3. Conclusion

Discuss:

- Risks taken by signers (treason = death)
-

Activity (15 min)

Document Analysis

Students examine:

- Preamble
- Grievances

Questions:

- What argument is being made?
 - Is it persuasive?
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Debate (10 min)

Prompt:

- “Was the American Revolution justified?”

Split class into:

- YES vs NO
-

Exit Ticket (5 min)

- Which argument in the Declaration is strongest? Why?
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10th Grade Quiz

1. What Enlightenment idea influenced the Declaration?
2. What are the three main parts?
3. Why was signing risky?
4. Give one example of tyranny listed

Answer Key:

1. Natural rights / social contract
2. Preamble, grievances, conclusion

3. Could be executed for treason
4. Taxes, army, no trials, etc.