

Founding Freedoms

America's Founding Documents

Elementary Curriculum



Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™	
Compelling Question	How have the founding documents shaped the United States of America?
Standards and Practices	<p>Students will analyze causes of the Revolution by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying the impact of taxation without representation. • Evaluating how new religious and political thinking empowered individuals to question royal authority and increased a spirit of independence <p>Students will analyze reactions to the Declaration of Independence by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the British injustices outlined in the Declaration of Independence and the principles of government proposed to resolve those injustices • Assessing the challenges for future generations to expand the freedoms expressed in the Declaration of Independence. • Evaluating various methods of communication and argumentation used by Patriots to further their cause. <p>Students will evaluate the reasons for the effect of the development of a new American government by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing the powers and responsibilities of government on the federal and state levels under the Articles of Confederation • Identifying early challenges to the new nation including Shays Rebellion and the structural weaknesses of the federal government.
Staging the Question	Read the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence, interpret into modern language, and discuss what the founders were communicating to Great Britain and the colonists by writing a document declaring independence.

Supporting Question 1		Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
Why did the colonists seek independence from Great Britain?		Who were the men leading the colonies in the fight for independence?	How did the Constitution and Bill of Rights establish a new government in the United States?
Formative Performance Task		Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Create a cause and effect chart, including dates, of events leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence.		Read biographies of the four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence. Compare and contrast their lives. Discuss how their upbringing and careers affected their cause.	In groups, read a section of the Constitution and Bill of Rights and interpret into modern language. Share your section with the class and review the interpretations as a whole document.
Featured Sources		Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Source A: Timeline of the Revolution, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/americanrevolution/timeline.htm</p> <p>Source B: Stamp Act 1765, https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/stamp-act-1765</p> <p>Source C: Townshend Acts Image, https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/townshend-acts</p> <p>Source D: Declaration of Independence https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript</p>		<p>Source A: William Paca, https://www.dsdi1776.com/william-paca/</p> <p>Source B: Charles Carroll of Carrollton, https://charlescarrollhouse.org/the-carrolls/personal-biography-2</p> <p>Source C: Samuel Chase, https://www.dsdi1776.com/samuel-chase/</p> <p>Source D: Thomas Stone, https://www.nps.gov/people/thomas-stone.htm</p>	<p>Source A: United States Constitution https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/the-constitution</p> <p>Source B: Bill of Rights https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights</p>
Summative Performance Task	Argument	How have the Declaration of Independence, Washington’s Resignation, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights shaped our nation? Construct an argument (e.g. detailed outline, poster, essay) that discusses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical and contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.	
	Extension	Write a short story, imagining you are lived during the American Revolution and early American government. Explain how these documents shaped America.	
Taking Informed Action		<p>ASSESS Have a class discussion on how these documents impact our daily lives.</p> <p>ACT Write and create a newspaper headline and paragraph about one right found in the Bill of Rights, highlighting how it impacts something you do today.</p>	

Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry provides students with an opportunity to evaluate the necessity and importance of the founding documents, specifically Washington’s Resignation as Commander in Chief, the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. In examining the compelling question--“How did the founding documents shape the United States of America?” students explore the history of early America including the political climate, the economic impacts, and the collegiality of the founders. Students work with these primary source documents to understand the challenges faced by the founders during the creation of a new nation. The goal of this inquiry is to provide students with an opportunity to examine the impact of these founding documents.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take three to five 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “How have the founding documents shaped the United States of America?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence and counterevidence from a variety of sources. The inquiry concludes with students Taking Informed Action on a related issue in a classroom setting.

Staging the Compelling Question

The Staging the Compelling Question exercise provides teachers with an opportunity to begin the Taking Informed Action sequence of tasks. To do so, teachers may have students engage in a think-pair-share activity to develop a list of American Ideals. Students will refer to these ideals when reading about the founders and interpreting the Constitution and Bill of Rights

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“Why did the colonists seek independence from Great Britain?”—invites students to consider the perspective of all colonists during the colonial period when America was part of Great Britain. The formative performance task asks students to create a timeline of events and causes that led to the Declaration of Independence. Featured Source A provides dates and context for the events to be added to the timeline. Featured Source B shows one of the events in more detail. Featured Source C portrays an event through imagery. Featured Source D illustrates the result of the events on the timeline.

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“Who were the men leading the colonies in the fight for independence?”—has students explore the Marylanders who signed the Declaration of Independence and worked to form a new country. The formative performance task calls for students to compare and contrast the lives of these men and to identify what in their backgrounds lead them to leadership. Students will discuss the challenges these Marylanders faced and how their lives affected their goal of Independence. Featured Source A is a brief biography of William Paca. Featured Source B highlights Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Featured Source C details the life of Samuel Chase. Featured Source D focuses on Thomas Stone.

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“How did the Constitution and the Bill of Rights establish a new government in the United States?” asks how the founding documents determined the course of a new nation. In the formative performance task, students interpret sections of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to share with the class. They combine their interpretations to achieve a complete modern elementary school interpretation of the documents written by the founders. Featured Source A is the US Constitution. Featured Source B is the Bill of Rights. Completion of this task should help students move to the Summative Performance Task, in which they write a story about how the founding documents impacted the lives of colonists.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the causes, effects, and results of the American Revolutionary period specifically through the founding documents. Students should be able to demonstrate their understandings of this relationship and use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students write creatively based on the question, “How have the founding documents shaped the United States?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments will vary.

Staging the Compelling Question

Featured Source

Source A: Trumbull, John. *Declaration of Independence*. 1818, United States Capitol Building.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

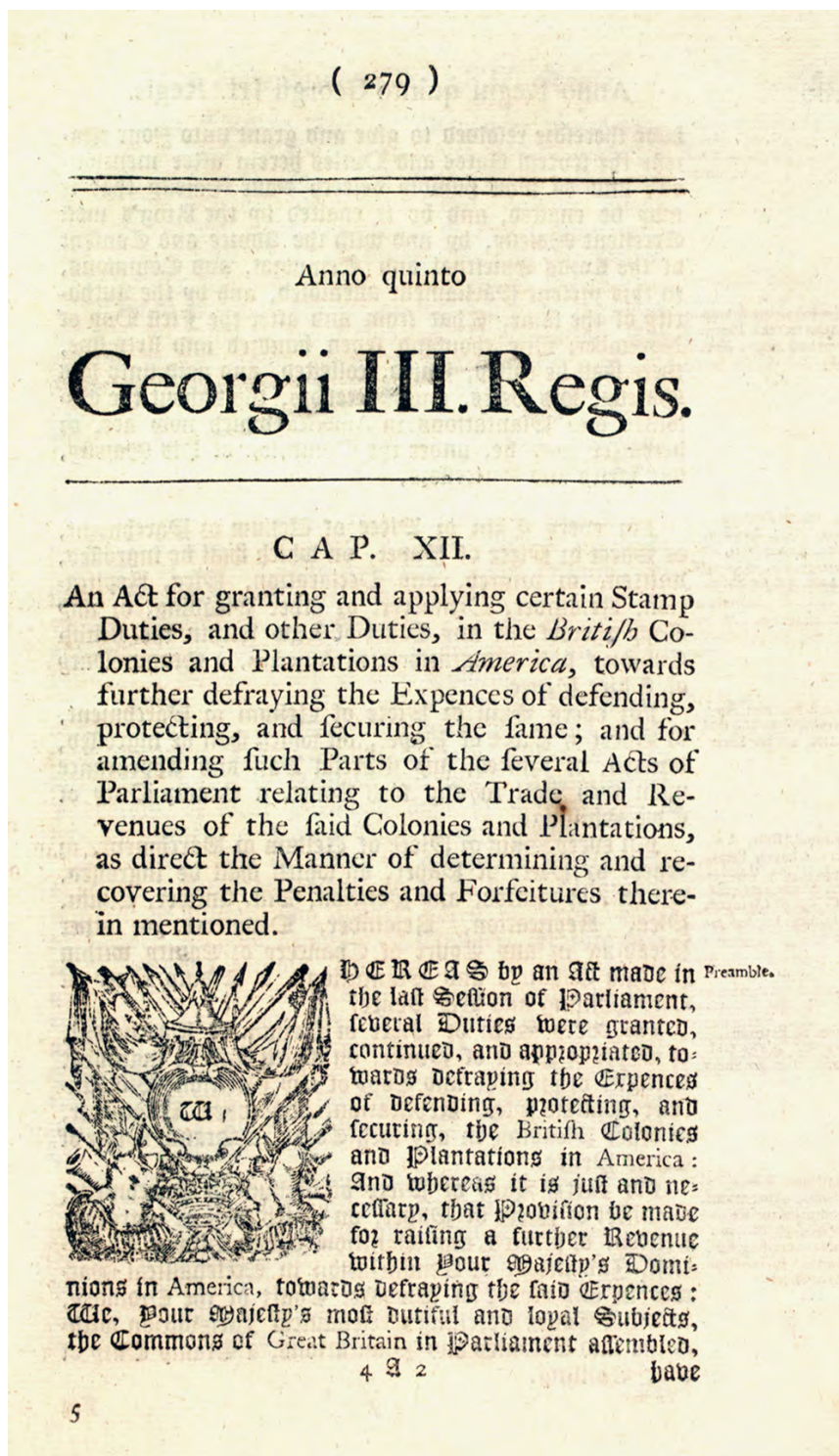
Source A: National Park Service. "Timeline of the Revolution." January 4, 2021.

Accessed from: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/americanrevolution/timeline.htm>

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source B: The Stamp Act, Gilder Lehrman Institute, 1765.



Accessed from: <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/stamp-act-1765>

Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

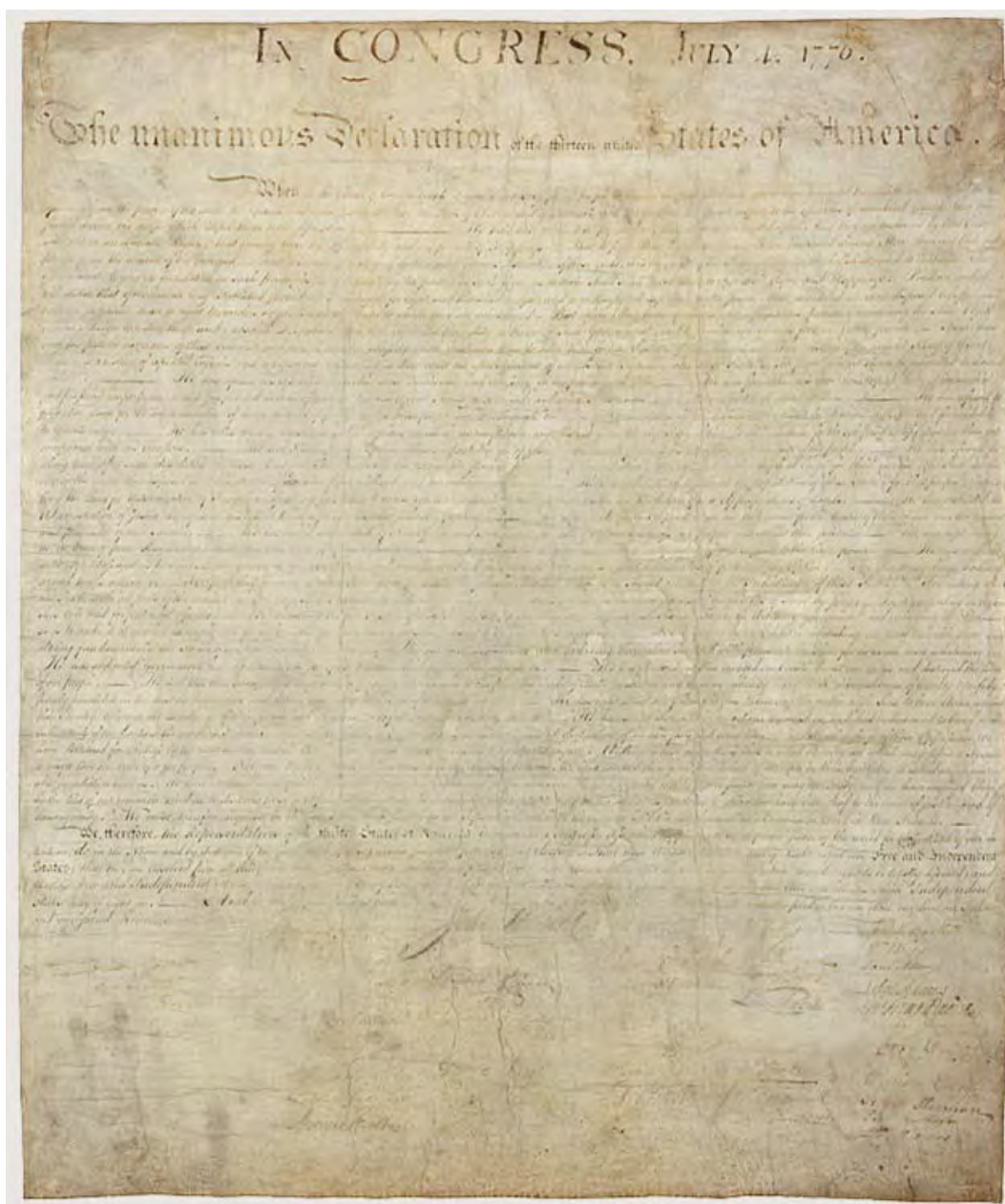
Source C: Townshend Acts, Encyclopædia Britannica.



Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source D: Declaration of Independence. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>



Accessed from: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Supporting Question 2

Featured Source	Source A: William Paca Biography, https://www.dsdi1776.com/william-paca/
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Supporting Question 2

Featured Source	Source B: Charles Carroll of Carrollton, https://charlescarrollhouse.org/the-carrolls/personal-biography-2
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Supporting Question 2

Featured Source	Source C: Biography of Samuel Chase, https://www.dsdi1776.com/samuel-chase/
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Supporting Question 2

Featured Source	Source D: Biography of Thomas Stone, https://www.nps.gov/people/thomas-stone.htm
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Supporting Question 3

Featured Source	Source A: United States Constitution, https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/the-constitution
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Supporting Question 3

Featured Source	Source B: Bill of Rights, https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights
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