

PERSPECTIVES ON THE DECLARATION: ARCHIVES UNBOUND

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project aims to enhance students' understanding of the importance of primary and secondary sources in historical analysis. It provides a structured approach to guide students in grasping the key elements of analysing primary source documents and applying these analytical skills to primary sources related to the drafting and publication of the Declaration of Independence, as well as the perspectives surrounding it. The primary sources used in this project are sourced from [Gale's Archives Unbound](#).

Throughout the project, students will engage in formative assessment activities to practice the skill of primary source analysis using the ACAP framework (Authorship, Content, Audience, Purpose). These activities are designed to help students develop a solid foundation in analysing primary sources before the final submission, which involves selecting and analysing two primary sources and crafting an essay that effectively synthesises their understanding of this pivotal moment in history through a comprehensive analysis of the chosen documents.

By systematically examining these primary sources and employing critical analysis, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the intricacies and complexities of historical events. Through this project, students will acquire the necessary skills to critically evaluate primary sources, thereby enhancing their ability to construct well-informed historical narratives and interpretations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- **Develop Historical Literacy** by engaging students in the analysis of primary sources, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of key events, themes, and historical contexts.
- **Enhance Critical Thinking Skills** by encouraging students to think critically and evaluate primary sources, enabling them to assess the reliability, biases, and perspectives inherent in historical documents.
- **Cultivate Research Skills** by providing students with opportunities to conduct research using reputable archival databases to locate and analyse primary sources related to the American Revolution.
- **Promote Historical Analysis and Interpretation** by guiding students in applying historical analysis methods to primary sources, enabling them to interpret and construct narratives that reflect a nuanced understanding of the American Revolution.

BRIDGE-IN:

This project would be most suitably placed in the syllabus after students have been introduced to the foundational concepts, events, and themes of the American Revolution leading up to the publication of the Declaration of Independence. It would be appropriate to include this project in the syllabus once students have developed a basic understanding of the historical context.

TEACHING CONTENT:

- Demonstrate how to navigate the Archives Unbound platform by sharing this [10-minute interface tutorial](#)
- Provide students with their [assignment guide](#)
 - Editable - please add submission requirements and due dates
 - Includes all the below URL's
- Assign contextual essays to read and have students [explore Archives Unbound](#)
 - [Contextual Essay #1: Introduction](#)
 - [Contextual Essay #2: Political Debate & Right to Rebel](#)
 - Optional: [In-class quiz on readings](#)
- Review the concepts of primary and secondary sources, analysis, and tips for working with historical documents using this [editable .ppt presentation](#)
- Assign students to find a primary source document from the [Introduction to American History collection](#) that they find interesting to discuss in class
 - Optional: [Use these guiding questions](#) for in-class discussion about their chosen primary source
- Assign a formative assessment on the primary source: [His Majesty's most gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday, May 23, 1776](#)
 - Students should conduct an ACAL framework analysis
 - Discuss the findings in class
 - Optional: Provide feedback or peer review
- Assign final assessment
 - Students should choose two sources from list on the student assignment sheet or get approval from you if they would prefer to analyse a different primary source.
 - Conduct ACAP framework analysis on each source
 - Write a 3–5-page essay that demonstrates how these primary sources help them better understand this moment in history, connecting it to their prior learning in class.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

Student's submission of:

- Primary Source exploration-in class discussion feedback
- ACAP Primary Source analysis of: [His Majesty's most gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday, May 23, 1776](#)

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

Student's submission of:

- In-class reading comprehension quiz
- Chosen Primary/Secondary Source ACAP analysis
- 3-5 page essay that demonstrates how this analysis helped students better understand this moment in history and connects to students prior learning in course