

LESSON PLAN

Establishing Independence

Level: Low Intermediate, Intermediate

Suggested Length: 1 or 2 class periods

Civics Test Questions

- #8—What did the Declaration of Independence do?
- #9—What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?
- #61—Why did the colonists fight the British?
- #62—Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
- #63—When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
- #64—There were 13 original states. Name three.
- #69—Who is the “Father of Our Country”?
- #70—Who was the first President?
- #99—When do we celebrate Independence Day?

Key Vocabulary

- British rule, independence, self-government, representation, unfair, organize, general
- agree, document, express, announce, promise, life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, adopt
- soldier, Revolutionary War, Continental Army, hero
- democracy, rights, values

Objectives:

Students will:

- identify the 13 original states on a map of the United States
- identify problems leading to the Revolutionary War
- identify the purpose, author, and date of adoption of the Declaration of Independence
- identify the rights defined in the Declaration of Independence
- identify July 4 as Independence Day
- identify George Washington as the first President and Father of the Country
- explain Thomas Jefferson’s role in U.S. history
- discuss the meaning of an excerpt of the Declaration of Independence

Materials:

Wall maps of the world and the United States

Handouts: **The Colonies Under British Rule**, **The Declaration of Independence**, **The Father of Our Country**, **All Men Are Created Equal**, **Review—Establishing Independence**, and **Civics Test Questions—Establishing Independence**

8.5” x 11” visuals

Intermediate Level Establishing Independence Lesson Answer Key



Lesson Overview and Notes to Teacher:

This lesson covers the causes of the Revolutionary War, the roles of the Founding Fathers, and the creation of the Declaration of Independence. It also explores the meaning of an excerpt from the Declaration. It is not necessary for applicants to explain the excerpt for the naturalization test, but it is important to understand the context. Instructions for each handout are described below. The **Key Vocabulary** on the first page of the lesson plan is generally more advanced than the words in the vocabulary lists for the reading and writing portion of the test. However, learning these words will help the students develop a deeper understanding of the concepts in the lesson. Consider teaching these key words as part of your introduction to this lesson.

The lesson includes readings about the history of the original states, the Declaration of Independence, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson. Use the same process for reading each handout with your students. This process is described below in the instructions for the handout *The Colonies Under British Rule*. At the end of each reading, students can practice the specific test items covered in that handout. Suggested discussion questions can be used for whole-class and small-group discussion or for writing assignments. For review, students can practice irregular past tense verbs from the lesson by creating their own sentences. There is also a word scramble of the names of the 13 original states. The final handout is a summary of all the Civics Test items covered in the lesson.

The Colonies Under British Rule: Write the word **independence** on the board and ask the students what it means (**freedom, separating from another country**). Ask the students if their native country has ever fought for independence. Explain that this lesson focuses on the American colonists' fight for independence from Great Britain. Using a world map, have a student show where the colonies were located in relation to Great Britain. Explain that these colonies later became the original states. Read off the name of each state as the student locates them on a U.S. map. Model the names of the states and have the students repeat after you. Remind the students that they will only need to name three of the 13 original states for the Civics Test. Explain that they will not need to locate the states on a map during their interview.

To begin the reading, have the students read the paragraphs on the handout silently. Tell them to underline any new words while they read. When they finish, read the paragraphs aloud while the students listen silently. As you read each phrase or sentence, pause to ask if there are any words they do not know. Read the paragraphs out loud again, this time without stopping. As a final step, go back to the beginning of the reading and model each sentence one at a time with the students repeating after you. If you wish, call on volunteers to take turns reading each sentence aloud. Then have the students fill in the answers to the Civics Test items at the bottom of the handout and review them together. Model the pronunciation of each question and answer.

The Declaration of Independence: Write **Declaration of Independence** on the board. Ask the students what **declare** means (**announce, say officially**). Discuss

the painting in the handout. Review the reading as previously described in the instructions for the handout *The Colonies Under British Rule*.

The Father of Our Country: Display the painting of George Washington on the board. Ask the students what they know about him. Write key words from their answers on the board. Review the reading as previously described in the instructions for the handout *The Colonies*

Under British Rule. Refer to the discussion questions at the bottom of the handout and have the students work in pairs or small groups to discuss leaders from their native countries. If you wish, use these questions for a writing assignment.

All Men Are Created Equal: Display the painting of Thomas Jefferson and the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence. Review the reading as previously described in the instructions for the handout *The Colonies Under British Rule*. Explain to the students that the excerpt

is well-known and often quoted. Have them read the original language and compare it to the simplified text. Discuss the meaning of each line. Ask the students what impact these words have on their life in the United States.

Review—Establishing Independence: For the verb review, explain that these main verbs from the lesson all have irregular past tense forms. Write the main verbs on the board and elicit the past tense forms for each one. Then have the students create their own sentences using the past tense. Have student volunteers write their

sentences on the board for review. Ask the students to offer suggestions to correct any errors. For the word scramble, have the students rearrange the letters to create the 13 original states. Remind them that the state names could be one or two words. Practice the pronunciation of each state name together.

Civics Test Questions—Establishing Independence: The nine Civics Test items in this lesson are listed on this handout. This exercise can be used for pair work where

the students take turns interviewing each other, or can be assigned for homework.

THE 13 ORIGINAL STATES





Delaware

Maryland

North Carolina

South Carolina

Georgia

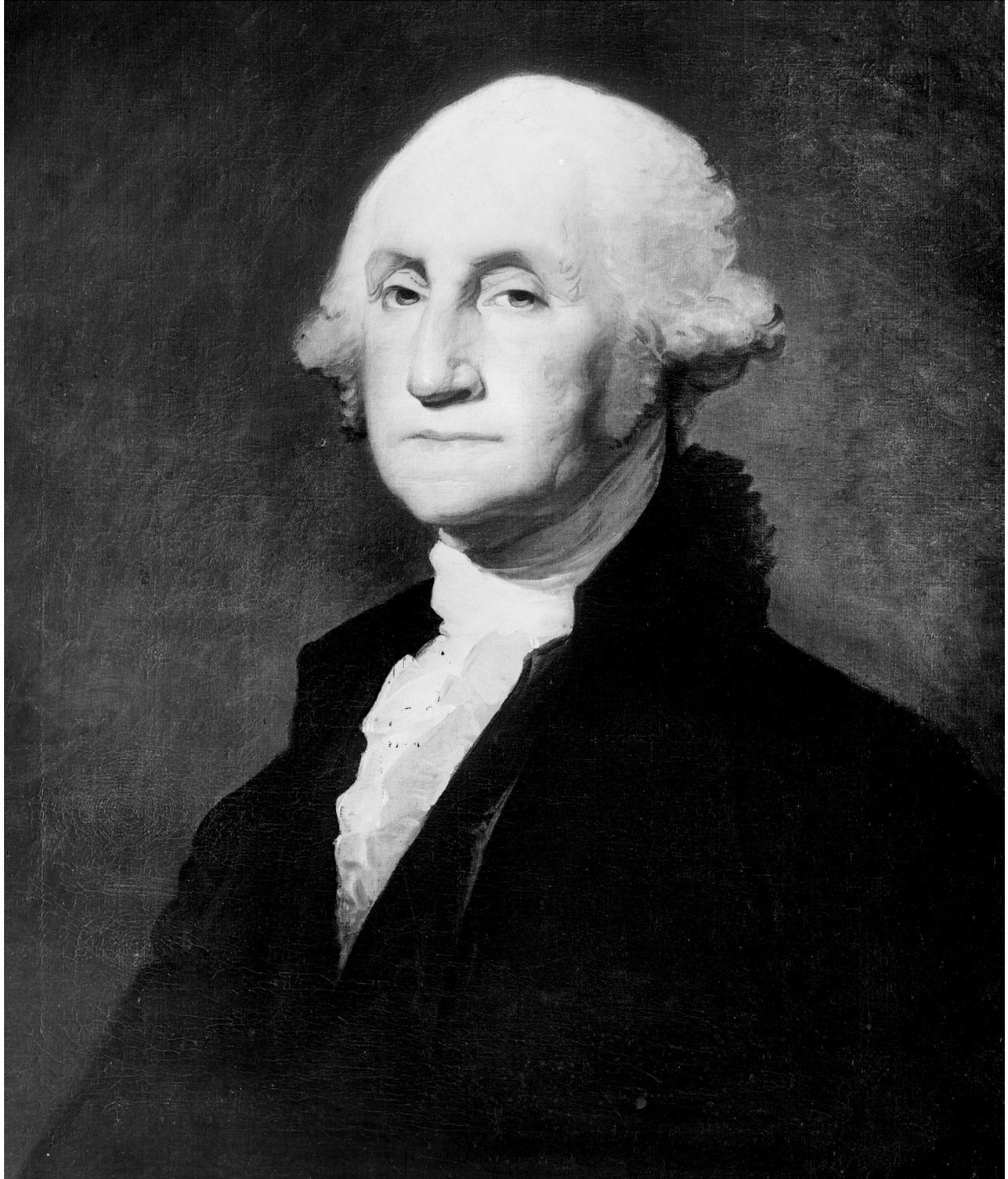
Virginia

Thomas Jefferson



Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-H8-CT-C01-104A.

George Washington



Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-det-4292549.

An Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal,
that they are endowed by their Creator with
certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are Life, Liberty and the
pursuit of Happiness.

