

Revolution, Evolution, Constitution

Maureen Greenly

Introduction and Rationale

As a teacher of history, economics, culture, and geography it's the words spoken by George Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" that is my mantra of teaching. I am compelled daily in my classroom to transfer knowledge and information to my students that will help them to think about the past so that they can make better choices for their future and the future of our American society.

To strictly teach past events of history to my students seems arbitrary, it bores them and they don't have the buy in as to what this information means to their lives. My students become excited and passionate when I am able to provide modern examples and real life stories about people and events that they can relate to in our class that day. They want to argue the fact's, debate the issues and seek more knowledge and information when they perceive an injustice has been done to someone or to a group of people. I feel obligated to give my students these opportunities. I hope that by teaching them how to compare and contrast the causes and effects of events they are better able to change the outcome to one that benefits society. Students that are passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable members of our school and community will hopefully become empathetic, active, and informed citizens of our country tomorrow.

The purpose of this unit is to guide the students to identify how economic and political freedoms secure essential protections for individuals. By using the American Revolution and the Arab Awakenings to compare and contrast, I will be able to show my students how analyzing past events may help to secure a better standard of living for individuals and societies. The unit's lessons follow a path from events that lead up to a country's revolution, stages of a country's evolution, and lastly toward a country writing a constitution. I want my students to be able to understand that effective citizens are committed to protecting rights for themselves, other citizens, and future generations and by upholding their civic responsibilities.

The students themselves are a lesson in comparing economic freedom and political freedom. Although they all are citizens of the United States, living in the same state and in close proximity to each other, their access to these freedoms are clearly different. They are a real life example of the disparity that can exist in a society where "all people are created equal" and have access to the same rights.

Prior to teaching this unit, my students will have already completed a unit of study on the following Arab and Islam related areas:

1. Arabian Peninsula – the study of the culture, geography, and economic impact of the Arabian Peninsula at the crossroads of three continents.
2. Muhammad and Islam – the study of the beginnings of Islam that include the life of Muhammad, The People of the Book, and the meanings and development of the Quran.
3. The Growth of Islam – the study of how and why Islam grew quickly from the Arabian Peninsula to other regions of the world, the commonalities of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and the schism of Islam.

Demographics

This unit will be taught in my 7th grade Social Studies classes to students with varied learning levels. H.B. DuPont Middle School serves a diverse student body that is composed of Asian, African-American, Hispanic, and White students. The school is a traditional middle school with students in grade sixth through grade eight. The student body comprises of eight hundred and forty six students with a racial breakdown of seventy-seven Asian students, one hundred and thirteen Hispanic students, one-hundred and eighty four African-American students, and for-hundred and seventy two White students. As a result, H.B. DuPont is a real-life example of diversity in America. With such diversity within the walls of our school, come some real challenges when looking at and working with the differences in the socio-economic background of our students. Our student population hail from highly impoverished neighborhoods in the city of Wilmington, Delaware, that are prone to high crime and violence and lack resources that support higher learning, while others live in wealthy safe neighborhoods with better access to resources that support life-long learning opportunities.

Lesson One – Revolution

I will introduce my unit by asking my students “What is a revolution?” I will ask them to support their responses using prior knowledge of examples from history, characteristics that revolutions share, and stages revolutions go through.

I will ask my students to read the excerpt from the Boston Massacre and the event that began the uprisings in Tunisia. As they read, I want them to think about and identify how these events are similar and different and the characteristics that they each share.

Boston, March 5, 1770

“...the ringing of the meetinghouse bell brought out a number of the inhabitants, who..were naturally led to King Street...where they joined a number of boys, round the sentry at the Custom House...There was much foul language between them, and some of them, in consequences of his pushing at them with his bayonet, threw snowballs at him...

“The officer on guard was Captain Preston, who with seven or eight soldiers, with firearms and charged bayonets, issued from the guardhouse, and in great haste posted himself and his soldiers in front of the Custom House....In passing to this station the soldiers pushed several persons with their bayonets...This occasioned some snowballs to be thrown at them, which seems to have been the only provocation that was given...

“Captain Preston is said to have ordered them to fire, and to have repeated that order. One gun was first; then others in succession, and with deliberation, till ten or a dozen guns were fired...By which means eleven persons were killed or wounded...”

Tunisia, December 17, 2010

“And nearly every day, he was bullied by local police officers. Since he was a child, they were mistreating him. He was used to it,” Hajlaoui Jaafer, a close friend of Bouazizi, said. The abuse took many forms. Mostly, it was the type of petty bureaucratic tyranny that many in the region know all too well. Police would confiscate his scales and his produce, or fine him for running a stall without a permit. Six months before his attempted suicide, police sent a fine for 400 dinars (\$280) to his house – the equivalent of two months of earnings.

The harassment finally became too much for the young man. That morning, it became physical. A policewoman confronted him on the way to market. She returned to take his scales from him, but Bouazizi refused to hand them over. They swore at each other, the policewoman slapped him and, with the help of her colleagues, forced him to the ground. The officers took away his produce and his scale.

Publically humiliated, Bouazizi tried to seek recourse. He went to the local municipality building and demanded a meeting with an official. He was told it would not be possible and that the official was in a meeting. "It's the type of lie we're used to hearing," said his friend. With no official willing to hear his

grievances, the young man brought paint fuel, returned to the street outside the building, and set himself on fire.” (Ryan 2011)

In what ways are citizens protected from their government? I would ponder this question with my students after reading the excerpts from the American Revolution and the incident in Tunisia. These events occurred over two hundred years apart but shared common themes. There was a lack of economic and political protection by the governments to secure citizen protection. Adam Smith was one of the first economists to argue that “The key ingredients of economic freedom are personal choice, voluntary exchange, freedom to compete in markets, and protection of person and property. Institutions and policies are consistent with economic freedom when they allow voluntary exchange and protect individuals and their property. Governments can promote economic freedom by providing a legal structure and a law-enforcement system that protect the property rights of owners and enforce contracts in an evenhanded manner. However, economic freedom also requires governments to refrain from taking people’s property and from interfering with personal choice, voluntary exchange, and the freedom to enter and compete in labor and product markets. When governments substitute taxes, government expenditures, and regulations for personal choice, voluntary exchange, and market coordination, they reduce economic freedom. Restrictions that limit entry into occupations and business activities also reduce economic freedom.” (Lawson 2008)

In this lesson, I want my students to know and be able to define economic and political freedoms, the similarities and differences between them, and how they are interconnected to each other. Milton Friedman promotes economic freedom “as both a necessary freedom and also as a vital means for political freedom. He argues that, with the means for production under the auspices of the government, it is nearly impossible for real dissent and exchange of ideas to exist. Additionally, economic freedom is important, since any transaction must benefit both parties to the transaction.” (Friedman 1962) For my students, it will be important to separate the differences between economic and political freedoms first and then give them the opportunity to discuss how they are connected to each other later.

Secondly, I want my students to understand the causes and effects of the American Revolution and the Arab Spring. I will introduce literature on the American Revolution that introduces specific events like the Proclamation of 1763, The Stamp Act, and The Boston Massacre. They will access an up-to-date interactive timeline of events occurring in the Middle East that describes events like the revolt in Tahrir Square, the protest in Amman, Jordan, and the unrest in Syria. (Gary Blight 2011) They will use a graphic organizer to show the results of their research on the causes and effect of events occurring before and up to the American Revolution and the Arab Awakening.

Lastly, I want my students to compare and analyze the similarities and differences between the events that led up to the American Revolution and the Arab Spring. My students will work in cooperative groups to analyze their graphic organizers. I will ask each group to choose one event on the American Revolution and the Arab Awakening that they will focus on. I will ask my students questions that will guide them to the realization that the lack of unsecured political and economic freedoms led people to protest and rebel against their government.

Lesson Two - Evolution

I will introduce the second lesson by asking my students to brainstorm the definition and characteristics of Evolution. I will ask my students to read the excerpt from Patrick Henry and the uprising in Egypt. As they read, I want them to think about and identify how these events are similar and different and the characteristics that they each share.

Patrick Henry, March 23, 1775

“There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free-- if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending--if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained--we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace-- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! “ (Bazyar 1995)

Egypt, July 2011

“ Internet was cut off in Egypt. Mobile phone companies were ordered to suspend services. With tools of communication disrupted the regime was hopeful that they had things under control. Simultaneously they started standard arrests of Muslim Brotherhood leaders. Things seemed for them under control. But they weren't. With every stupid panicking move by the regime, the narrative of its weakness was only reinforced for the people. People saw a regime that was scarred of the internet and they rightfully calculated that this was their golden opportunity.

Friday was an unprecedented event in Egypt. While it is impossible to guess the number of protestors on the streets that day, it is safe to say that they exceeded one million. Every Mosque was a launching site for a demonstration. The Islamists were out in full force. The slogans that day were quite different than the previous ones. Islamic slogans and activists were clearly visible. The security forces were faced with wave after wave of protestors that came from every street. In 4 hours, the security forces were collapsing.” (Tadros 2011)

To ponder the idea with my students about the meaning of freedom, what freedom feels like, what freedom looks like, allows us to think about standard of living. I show pictures to my students of people living around the world and they know and understand who is living a better life by the things they own, the home they live in, the look on the faces of the people, and the landscape of the picture. They just don't know “why” some people have a better standard of living than others who live just a block away or in another country.

In this lesson, I want my student to know how economic freedom and political freedom affect standard of living of individuals. I will provide my students with a checklist of political and economic indicators that some people share and others live without. Using graphic organizers, we will define and identify examples of political and economic freedoms.

Secondly, I want my students to understand that economic and political freedoms affect how “free”, “partly free” or “not free” citizens of a country are and if these freedoms are secured or unsecured. There are indicators like property rights, labor freedom, freedom from corruption, religious freedoms, freedom to vote, and freedom of expression that my students will use to analyze the standard of living of citizens in a country. “In the 1980s, scholars began to measure and rate economies based on their degree of economic freedom. Organizations such as Freedom House, the Heritage Foundation, and the Fraser Institute, as well as individual scholars, published “economic freedom indexes” attempting to quantify economic freedom. They came up with an ambitious, and necessarily blunt, measure.” (Lawson 2008) Using these websites, I will ask my students to use their checklist to rank the degree of freedom for the United States and one Middle Eastern or North African country in transition. These websites will allow them to use graphic organizers to compare specific economic and political freedoms in two different countries and how they affect the standard of living of their citizens.

Lastly, I want my student to compare the United States to a Middle Eastern or North African country in transition to analyze how political freedoms can affect economic freedoms. The United States is a country they are familiar with and can see, hear, and feel these freedoms in action. Using the information from the Freedom Indexes they can

compare the specific indicators of freedom we have in the United States with a country in transition.

Lesson Three - Constitution

I will introduce the third lesson by asking my students to brainstorm the definition and characteristics of Constitution. I will ask my students to read the excerpt from Philadelphia and the Middle East. As they read, I want them to think about and identify how these events are similar and different and the characteristics that they each share

Philadelphia, September 17, 1787

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” (Constitution Center n.d.)

Middle East, October 2011

“The uprisings across many Arab countries in 2011 are above all inspiring struggles by citizens to pursue a vision of what their countries can become. An entire generation of young people, who form the majority of the population in the Arab world, have taken to the streets to end dictatorship and the monopoly of power by regimes that have enjoyed at best a highly doubtful kind of pseudo-legitimacy.

This historic wave is both negative and positive: against forms of oppression and corruption that imposed endless privations and denied meaningful opportunities, but also for the construction of new nations that reflect the views and aspirations of their own people.

This combination of impulses can also be understood as the desire for new “social contracts”. In fact, one of the main sources of anger triggering the uprisings may be found in existing constitutional constructs that fail to provide even for a minimal level of genuine democratic rule and principles.

The existing constitutional texts of many Arab countries contain universally recognized rights and freedoms. But they lack effective mechanisms to implement such rights, which would ensure basic freedom in people’s daily lives.

It is natural, therefore, to see that one of the earliest and most vigorous debates to follow change in the region - whether overthrow of the old order (as in Tunisia and Egypt) or government-led reform (as in Morocco and Jordan) has been about the constitutional process and the drafting of a new and democratic constitution. So far, the various countries are pursuing different paths.” (Ayoub 2011)

In this lesson, I want my student to know how property rights affect and individual’s freedom. It’s important that my students compare their previous analytical data with real life situations of people living in various countries. The literature I will use is a children’s series called “Major Muslim Nations”. These books look at twenty-nine Muslim countries within each book. The books contain personal stories of children living there, they examine the economic and political issues facing the country, and they provide up-to-date information about the country’s geography, history, and relationship with other countries. My students will investigate the culture of the people living in Muslim nations. While they are reading their books, I will use graphic organizers that will guide my students to examine the way culture is affected by economic freedoms.

Secondly, I want my students to understand that property rights secure economic freedom and that countries can makes different choices to affect the overall standard of living of their citizens. My students will compare the economic indicators of their Muslim Country and evaluate how a country might secure more freedoms and how that freedom may affect the culture of the people.

Lastly, I want my students to evaluate a country’s economic indicators and individual’s freedom. They will use the various graphic organizers they have created to identify specific indicators that make a country overall “free”. I will give the students an outline copy of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. We will identify elements and characteristics of the Constitution that allow for economic and political freedoms. As a whole group we will create a graphic organizer that shows these elements. My students will create a constitution for their transitional nation. The constitution will include elements that would be necessary for a country to secure economic freedoms and political freedoms but also secure individual freedoms.

Objectives

I have created this unit to address the Delaware State Standards at the seventh grade level. By the end of the unit, my students should be able to understand that civil rights secure political freedom while property rights secure economic freedom and that both are essential protections for United States citizens.

“The political, religious, and economic freedoms provided to American citizens are accompanied by the responsibility of active civic participation at the individual, community, state, and national levels. Effective citizens need to understand the dedication and commitment necessary to safeguard those rights for themselves and future generations, as well as the potential consequences of inaction. They should also be able to distinguish between rights and privileges.

The purpose of citizenship education is to contribute to the health of our democracy and to empower students “to translate their beliefs into actions and their ideas into policies.” The primary goal of the Delaware Civics Standards is student understanding of the purpose and means of authority and freedom and the relationship between them.” (Standards 2009)

Essential Questions

1. In what ways are citizens protected from the government? From each other?
2. What are political and economic freedoms?
3. How might political and economic freedoms lead to conflict between citizens or citizens and the government?
4. How might economic freedoms and political freedoms affect standard of living?
5. To what extent do property rights define an individual’s freedom?
6. When might someone’s property rights conflict with the freedom of others?

Strategies

Blooms Taxonomy

The hierarchy of questioning through Blooms taxonomy is important for many reasons in my classroom. The use of sequential questioning, allows all my varied learners to find success when learning new knowledge and concepts. I am able to create questions that bridge knowledge from remembering, to understanding, to applying, to analyzing, to evaluating, and eventually to my students creating. It provides the students with opportunities to think more critically and become active and engaged learners. Studies have shown that the use of these questioning techniques increases the knowledge that students retain.

Cooperative Groupings

Cooperative groups will be used throughout the lessons in this unit. Students will work in pairs and small groups to research events and answer questions. Cooperative grouping allows my students to work with their peers and gain an understanding of other people's perspective. Research has shown that cooperative learning opportunities promote student learning and academic achievement, increase test scores, help develop social skills, increase self-esteem, and help students understand and relate to other people's culture.

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary opportunities and activities are necessary to provide opportunities for reading comprehension for my students. Throughout the unit, I will provide graphic organizers that reinforce vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. The students will create a vocabulary dictionary that lists new vocabulary that will be teacher and student generated. Each word will describe the words definition, provide a real life example of the word, and illustrate what the word looks like. This dictionary will be used by the students throughout the unit to support their reading when they are researching historical events and current events and provide guidance in lesson activities.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are tools that provide students with guidance that help to focus and support their learning. Students will be asked throughout this unit to use teacher generated graphic organizers that are specific to lesson activities. They will also be given the opportunity to create their own graphic organizers when they are researching a Middle Eastern country in transition. Graphic organizers are shown to help all level of learners gain and organize new knowledge.

Graphic organizers also support various learning style . “Many students are visual learners, thus, a visual approach to brainstorming or organizing information is essential. Graphic organizers appear to be a valued approach to utilize in teaching and learning. Students are required to think in multiple directions when using graphic organizers which makes learning an active and meaningful process. Organizers help students generate mental images to go along with information and create graphic representations for information. Graphic organizers are called a variety of names, including knowledge maps, story maps, concept maps, mind maps, cognitive organizers, advance organizers, or concept diagrams.” (2012)

Classroom Activities

Lesson One – Revolution

What are political and economic freedoms? In what ways are citizens protected from the government? From each other?

Anticipatory Set: Ask the students to brainstorm why the man in Tunisia might have voluntarily burned himself to death and why the soldiers fired upon civilians in Boston. On the overhead, I have two columns that are titled economic freedom and political freedom. As the students share their responses, ask them if they think their response characterizes an economic or political issue and place their response in the correct column.

Direct Instruction: The students will use a graphic organizer and computer websites to research events that led to the American Revolution and the Arab Awakenings. Have them identify if each event was caused by the lack or absence of political freedoms or economic freedoms. I will provide the students with a graphic organizer that lists economic and political indicators. Ask the students to share their research with one student and then with their group.

Activity: Working in groups of three to four students, ask them to choose an event from the American Revolution and an event from the Arab Awakenings. They will create a poster that shows the similarities and differences of each event and the causes and effects of each event. I will ask the students to use essential vocabulary and illustrations that support their finding. The students will then participate in a gallery walk. I will hang the posters around the room and allow each group to visit each poster. The students will be provided with a graphic organizer that will support and focus on the economic and political indicators.

Assessment: Ask the student to provide examples of economic and political freedoms in our country.

Lesson Two - Evolution

How might political and economic freedoms lead to conflict between citizens or citizens and the government? How might economic freedoms and political freedoms affect standard of living?

Anticipatory Set: Give each student a checklist of political and economic freedoms. Have the student place a checkmark next to the freedoms that they experience in the United States. Working in pairs, ask the students to brainstorm positive and negative benefits of these freedoms. Ask the students to share their responses with their group and then with the class.

Direct Instruction: Show the students the websites of the organizations that have ranked how free, partly free, or not free citizens of a country live. Provide them with a graphic organizer and ask them to identify the economic and political indicators that are used to establish the rankings of economic and political freedoms. Examples of some of the indicators are:

Activity: Using the interactive timeline, ask each student choose a country that is in transition in the Middle East. Provide the students with a graphic organizer they created in the classroom, ask them to place the ranking of each economic and political freedom from the Middle Eastern country they chose. Tell the students to find the economic freedom rankings of the United States. Compare the economic freedom rankings of the Middle Eastern country and the United States. Discuss with the class why there are differences in the rankings.

Assessment: I will ask my students to research and provide examples of pictures from the United States and their Middle Eastern country. Using the pictures, I will ask them to identify economic and political freedoms they see in the pictures and explain how it affects the standard of living of a citizen.

Lesson Three - Constitution

To what extent do property rights define an individual's freedom? When might someone's property rights conflict with the freedom of others?

Anticipatory Set: Show the students pictures of the girls and boys bathrooms in their school. Ask them for adjectives that describe what they see in the pictures. Ask them to compare the bathrooms in their school to their bathrooms at home. Brainstorm the similarities and differences between the bathrooms. Ask the students why there are differences in how common property (school bathrooms) is treated compared to private property (bathrooms in their homes).

Direct Instruction: Introduce the concept of The Tragedy of the Commons. Ask the students to provide examples of this concept that they see in their neighborhood, state, or country. Brainstorm negative and positive results of private ownership.

Activity: Tell the students to research the property rights secured in their Middle Eastern country. Using prior graphic organizers that they have created showing economic and political freedoms and rankings, ask the students to evaluate how property rights affect individual and economic freedom. Compare the property rights established in their Middle Eastern country to the property rights protected in the United States.

Assessment: Ask the students to create a constitution for their Middle Eastern country in transition.

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articles by various writers. The perspectives of the authors provide areas where critical thinking and higher level questioning can be explored.

Appendices

Appendix A

Delaware State ELA Standard One - Students will use written and oral English appropriate for various purposes and audiences.

Delaware State ELA Standard Two - Students will examine, construct, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing.

Delaware State ELA Standard Three - Students will access, organize, and evaluate information gained by listening, reading, and viewing.

Delaware State ELA Standard Four - Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.

Delaware State Social Studies Civics Standard Three - Students will understand the responsibilities, rights, and privileges of United States citizens.

Delaware State Social Studies Geography Standard Three - Students will develop an understanding of the diversity of human culture and the unique nature of places.

Curriculum Unit
Title

Revolution, Evolution, Constitution

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KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.

Students will understand that civil rights secure political freedom while property rights secure economic freedom and that both are essential protections for United States citizens.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT

What is the relationship between economic and political freedom?

CONCEPT A

Revolution

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A

In what ways are citizens protected from the government? From each other?

What are political and economic freedoms?

VOCABULARY A

- Property Rights
- Economic Freedom
- Political Freedom
- Civil Rights
- Democracy
- revolution
- evolution
- Constitution

CONCEPT B

Evolution

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B

How might political and economic freedoms lead to conflict between citizens or citizens and the government?

How might economic freedoms and political freedoms affect standard of living?

VOCABULARY B

CONCEPT C

Constitution

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C

To what extent do property rights define an individual's freedom?

When might someone's property rights conflict with the freedom of others?

VOCABULARY C

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES

- internet