



materials for the arts

Feather Quills – Declaration of Independence

Bridget Sowulski Grade 4 Lesson Plan

Understanding the Declaration of Independence

Teaching Point/Objective:

- ◇ Students will examine the Declaration of Independence.
- ◇ Students will focus on the reasons why the colonies went to war with England and develop an understanding of the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- ◇ Students will examine the purpose of the Declaration of Independence as identified in the document.
- ◇ Students will create their own quill using a large feather.
- ◇ Students will also create their own document declaring a policy to improve their school or Brooklyn neighborhood and persuade their audience to believe in the policy.

Standards:

CCLS:

- ◇ Social Studies Standard 1: History of the United States and New York
 - Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- ◇ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1
Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- ◇ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2
Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- ◇ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3
Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- ◇ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1
Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- ◇ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.A
Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
- ◇ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.B
Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.



materials for the arts

Feather Quills – Declaration of Independence



◇ [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.C](#)

Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance, in order to, in addition*).

◇ [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.D](#)

Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Blueprint: (5th grade Benchmark)

- ◇ Two-dimensional applied design: Create a graphic design that demonstrates:
 - Integration of text and image.
 - Vivid use of color, line and shape.
 - Clarity of message
- ◇ Media Technology: Create a series of related images that demonstrates:
 - Narrative.
 - Integration of various media and materials.
 - Expressive use of art elements; shape, color, line, texture.

Materials:

- ◇ Declaration of Independence Printouts
- ◇ Declaration of Independence Digital image (presented on SmartBoard)
- ◇ Brainpop video: Declaration of Independence
- ◇ Large Feathers
- ◇ Scissors
- ◇ Paperclips
- ◇ Parchment Paper
- ◇ Ink

Motivation: Students will activate prior knowledge by discussing the events that occurred and led up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Students will also watch a Brainpop video to activate their prior knowledge.

Procedure:

Day 1: Discussion analyzing jigsaw group activity reading and interpreting excerpts from document. Emphasis/importance of signatures. Students will work in groups to interpret an excerpt from the document. Groups will share out their interpretation. Students will be given the opportunity to present orally, with drawings or by acting out/role playing. Students will also discuss the signing of the document and examine the tool used to sign, a quill. Students will then prep their quill for day 2 of lesson.



materials for the arts

Feather Quills – Declaration of Independence

Prep quill- Each student will cut the tip of their feather at a slant less than 45 degrees using a scissor. Students will clean out any material left inside the shaft of the feather. Students will then place the feather in a jar/cup of water until Day 2.

Day 2: Applying: Students will brainstorm different ways to make changes/improve their neighborhood. Students will review the elements of persuasive writing. After brainstorming ideas, students will create their own document declaring a policy to improve their school or Brooklyn neighborhood. Students will write a draft of their policy. Students will be sure to persuade the audience presented. Students will peer edit.

Students will take feather out of water. Teacher will heat up sand. Students will place their feather in the hot sand. Quills are ready for use. Teacher prepares small cups/bowls of non-permanent ink.

Students will use their quill to write their policy on parchment paper. Emphasize importance of signature at bottom. (Differentiation: For students who have difficulty writing with quill, allow them to write policy in pen or pencil and sign their name with quill). Students will verbally present their policy. Prompt to declare their statement with enthusiasm and confidence.

Summary: Students will verbally present their policy. Prompt to declare their statement with enthusiasm and confidence.

Extension: (if possible), Students can design a plan to make these changes in their Brooklyn community.

Differentiation:

- ◇ Students are grouped by reading levels and differing learning styles
- ◇ Simplified definitions available to help students develop better understanding of vocabulary and their meanings.

Assessment: (Day 1 and 2) Students are assessed on their participation in small and large group activities. Students are also assessed on content presentation of jigsaw activity as well as verbal participation. Students will also be assessed on knowledge and depth of policy they create to improve their community.