

Unit Plan: The Virginia Ratification Convention

Assignment 3

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OVERVIEW:

In this four-lesson unit students will critically examine arguments by the Federalist and Anti-Federalist for and against the ratification of the Constitution. The students will examine the historical context in which the convention was held (i.e. the Constitution was already officially ratified). They will examine the point of view of both the Federalist and Anti-Federalist sides of the debate and consider why Patrick Henry, George Mason, Wilson Cary Nicholas and James Madison held the position each one did on ratification of the new Constitution. The class will be divided into four groups each group will examine one of the delegates positions on ratification analyzing the delegates own words at the ratification convention from a student handout as well as utilizing other internet resources. Then in our own reenactment of the Virginia Ratification Convention the students are to debate using their own words expressing the view of their delegate. (Brief significant quotes will be allowed). Other group members will also make posters advocating their position; period snacks and dress will be encouraged.

During the class session following the convention as a class we will discuss the actual result and the factors that lead to it. Then we will read Patrick Henry's call for unity speech and the ratification vote and examine the uniquely American aspects of it. Including how the speech foreshadows George Washington's leaving power willingly after two terms and the historic change of power after the 1800 election.

LEADING QUESTIONS:

*Why was it so important Virginia ratify the Constitution, to the new United States and Virginia when the ratification requirements for enactment had already been met?

*How did this news of prior passage effect the debate?

* What were the major arguments for and against ratification?

*What was the effect on Virginia and the United States of the Constitution's ratification in Virginia?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon completing this unit students will be able to:

- 1) Explain the ratification process mandated by the Constitutional Convention.
- 2) List the states by order of ratification.
- 3) Decipher antiquated language
- 4) Construct their own understanding of primary source material.
- 5) Take into consideration point of view, historical context and audience while analyzing historical artifacts.
- 6) Explain the Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions on ratification.
- 7) Explain why the federalist won the debate in Virginia and Nationally.
- 8) Describe the importance of adopting the Bill of Rights for ratification.

Lesson Plan

Topic Ratification of the Constitution	Class 55 Minutes	Lesson – Time & Place 10:45 – 11:40 Day 1
Class Information Grade 10 United States History I	Key Element/Skill Students will Learn the requirements and order of Constitutional Ratification	
Learning Aims: All students will learn the requirements for Constitutional ratification. Most students will understand the pivotal role Virginia played in uniting the Country around the new Constitution. Some students will be able to list the states by order of ratification.		

<p>The Big Picture / Prior Learning Students will evaluate the relative importance of each state in gaining ratification for the new Constitution and uniting the new United States of America.</p>		
<p>Assessment Student's will be assessed based on their participation and demonstrated preparation based on classroom discussion.</p>		
<p>LESSON DETAILS</p>		
Timing	Teacher Activity	Student Activity & Differentiation
<p>Introduction 10 minutes</p> <p>Main 30 minutes</p>	<p>Reflect on the relative strengths of the thirteen colonies/review the requirements for constitutional ratification.</p> <p>Have students view ratification timeline from textbook and lead a classroom discussion on why the Constitution was ratified in the order that it was.</p>	<p>Students seek clarifications and voice opinions.</p> <p>Students activate and share prior knowledge from reading.</p> <p>Students will offer fact based opinions based on prior learning.</p>
<p>Conclusion 10 minutes</p>	<p>Reaffirm the importance of Virginia, Massachusetts and New York in the ratification process.</p>	<p>Students draw and volunteer their conclusions on which states had to join the new United States.</p>
<p>Homework on board</p> <p>When set in lesson? The Conclusion</p> <p>What and How? Name four important statesmen from Virginia who may have participated in the state ratification convention.</p> <p>When for? Day 2.</p>		
<p>Evaluation</p>		

Lesson Plan

Topic The Ratification Debate in Virginia.	Class 55 Minutes	Lesson – Time & Place 10:45 – 11:40 Day 2
Class Information Grade 10 United States History I	Key Element/Skill Students will construct their own understanding through the use of original sources.	
<p>Learning Aims: All students will be familiar with the position of their delegate on the ratification of the Constitution. Most students will understand the rationale their delegate gives for his position on ratification. Some students will make an informed judgment on how their particular delegate came to believe the way he did.</p>		
<p>The Big Picture / Prior Learning Students will evaluate their debaters position on ratification in lieu of their debaters past involvement with the Revolutionary War and the Constitutional Convention.</p>		
<p>Assessment Student’s will be assessed based on their participation and demonstrated preparation based on an original source worksheet.</p>		
LESSON DETAILS		
Timing	Teacher Activity	Student Activity & Differentiation
<p>Introduction 10 minutes</p> <p>Main 40 minutes</p>	<p>Ask students to name their proposed VA. Ratification delegates, write on the board</p> <p>Pass out the original source handouts, one to each student. Ask students to complete their original source worksheet individually</p>	<p>Students give answers from the prior nights homework.</p> <p>Students read their original source material utilizing a dictionary and asking for help when needed</p>

Conclusion 5 minutes	Ask students to research three characteristics that they find interesting or unusual about their delegate.	Students ask any questions they have about what they have learned about their delegate so far.
Homework on board When set in lesson? Given at the end of class. What and How? Three characteristics written in the student's notebook. When for? Due day 3.		
Evaluation		

Massachusetts History Curriculum Framework US1.8

Lesson Plan

Topic The Ratification Debate In Virginia	Class 55 Minutes	Lesson – Time & Place 10:45 – 11:40 Day 3
Class Information Grade 10 United States History I	Key Element/Skill Analysis and interpretation of the role of the students delegate in ratification.	
Learning Aims: All students will be familiar with the position and rationale of their delegate on ratification Most students will be aware of factors in their delegate's background that caused him to believe the way he did. Some students will be able to identify inconsistencies in their delegate's position.		
The Big Picture / Prior Learning The students will use their combined knowledge about their debater to prepare to present that position suitably.		
Assessment Student's will be assessed based on their participation and demonstrated preparation based on their groups presentation.		
LESSON DETAILS		
Timing	Teacher Activity	Student Activity & Differentiation

<p>Introduction 5 minutes</p> <p>Main 45 minutes</p>	<p>Ask students to form four groups based on which delegate they were assigned. Have them compare the characteristics they found about their delegate within the group</p> <p>Pass out presentation assignment; emphasize the need for each student to play a role. Monitor student progress allow more time if needed.</p>	<p>Students go to their assigned group and share.</p> <p>Students prepare for Day 4 reenactment of the ratification debate in VA. Students decide on what each individual's task will be in the presentation.</p>
<p>Conclusion 5 minutes</p>	<p>Continue to encourage artwork period dress and refreshments.</p>	<p>Students seek any clarifications necessary.</p>
<p>Homework on board</p> <p>When set in lesson? Reinforced at the end of class</p> <p>What and How? Presentations on day 4.</p> <p>When for? Due the next day.</p>		
<p>Evaluation</p>		

Massachusetts History Curriculum Framework US1.8

Lesson Plan

<p>Topic The Ratification Debate In Virginia</p>	<p>Class 55 Minutes</p>	<p>Lesson – Time & Place 10:45 – 11:40 Day 4</p>
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Class Information Grade 10 United States History I		Key Element/Skill Analysis and interpretation of the role of the students delegate in ratification.
Learning Aims: All students will participate in the debate and understand their delegate's position. Most students will be able to articulate both the Federalist and Anti-Federalist position. Some students will be able to identify inconsistencies in the opposition's position and question them accordingly.		
The Big Picture / Prior Learning The students will be able to articulate both the Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions after the debate is finished.		
Assessment Student's will be assessed based on their participation and demonstrated preparation based on their groups presentation.		
LESSON DETAILS		
Timing	Teacher Activity	Student Activity & Differentiation
Introduction 5 minutes	Ask students to sit in their groups and listen and respond to each group's presentation.	Students go to their assigned group and prepare
Main 45 minutes	Each delegate group makes their presentation at the end of each presentation questions are allowed from the other delegate groups.	Students show artwork serve refreshments and begin their presentations.

Conclusion 5 minutes	Congratulate participants assign Patrick Henry reading expressing loyalty towards the new country for tomorrows discussion.	Students seek any clarifications necessary.
Homework on board When set in lesson? Given at the end of the class. What and How? Patrick Henry speech excerpts handout When for? Due the next day.		
Evaluation		

Massachusetts History Curriculum Framework US1.8

Appendix

- 1 George Mason
- 2 Patrick Roy
- 3 Wilson Cary Nicholas
- 4 James Madison
- 5 Grading Parameters

Handout one
George Mason
June 4, 1788
Virginia Ratifying Convention

- 1) “Mr. Chairman”Whether the Constitution be good or bad, the present clause clearly discovers, that it is a National Government, and no longer a confederation. I mean that clause which gives the first hint of the General Government laying direct taxes. The assumption of this power of laying direct taxes, does of itself, entirely change the confederation of the States into one consolidated Government. This power being at discretion, unconfined, and without any kind of controul, must carry every thing before it. The very idea of converting what was formerly confederation, to a consolidated Government, is totally subversive of every principle which has hitherto governed us. This power is calculated to annihilate totally the State Governments. Will the people of this great community submit to be individually taxed by two different and distinct powers? Will they suffer themselves to be doubly harrassed? These two concurrent powers cannot exist long together; the one will destroy the other: The General Government being paramount to, and in every respect more powerful than, the State governments, the latter must give way to the former. “
- 2) “. The mode of levying I taxes is of the utmost consequence, and yet here it is to be determined by those who have neither knowledge of our situation, nor a common interest with us, nor a fellow feeling for us:”The subjects of taxation differ in three-fourths; nay, I might say with truth, in four-fifths of the States”
- 3) # s it to be supposed that one National Government will suit so extensive a country, embracing so many climates, and containing inhabitants so very different in manners, habits, and customs? It is ascertained by history, that there never was a Government, over a very extensive country, without destroying the liberties of the people: History also, supported by the opinions of the best writers, shew us, that monarchy may suit a large territory, and despotic Governments ever so extensive t a country; but that popular Governments can only exist in small territories ”Is there a single example, on the face of the earth, to support t a contrary opinion? Where is there one exception to this general rule? Was there ever an instance of a general National Government extending over so extensive a country, abounding in such a variety of climates, where the people retained their liberty? “

Handout two
Patrick Henry
Ratifying Convention, June 5, 1788

- 1) “Here is a resolution as radical as that which separated us from Great Britain. It is radical in this transition; our rights and privileges are endangered, and the sovereignty of the states will be relinquished: and cannot we plainly see that this is actually the case? The rights of conscience, trial by jury, liberty of the press, all your immunities and franchises, all pretensions to human rights and privileges, are rendered insecure, if not lost, by this change, so loudly talked of by some, and inconsiderately by others. Is this tame relinquishment of rights worthy of freemen? Is it worthy of that manly fortitude that ought to characterize republicans? It is said eight states have adopted this plan. I declare that if twelve states and a half had adopted it, I would, with manly firmness, and in spite of an erring world, reject it. You are not to inquire how your trade may be increased, nor how you are to become a great and powerful {45} people, but how your liberties can be secured; for liberty ought to be the direct end of your government.”
- 2) # here are sufficient guards placed against sedition and licentiousness; for, when power is given to this government to suppress these, or for any other purpose, the language it assumes is clear, express, and unequivocal; but when this Constitution speaks of privileges, there is an ambiguity, sir, a fatal ambiguity — an ambiguity which is very astonishing. In the clause under consideration, there is the strangest language that I can conceive. I mean, when it says that there shall not be more representatives than one for every thirty thousand. Now, sir, how easy is it to evade this privilege! "The number shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand." This may be satisfied by one representative from each state. Let our numbers be ever so great, this immense continent may, by this artful expression, be reduced to have but thirteen representatives. I confess this construction is not natural; but the ambiguity of the expression lays a good ground for a quarrel. Why was it not clearly and unequivocally {47} expressed, that they should be entitled to have one for every thirty thousand? This would have obviated all disputes; and was this difficult to be done? What is the inference? When population increases, and a state shall send representatives in this proportion, Congress may remand them, because the right of having one for every thirty thousand is not clearly expressed. This possibility of reducing the number to one for each state approximates to probability by that other expression — "but each state shall at least have one representative." Now, is it not clear that, from the first expression, the number might be reduced so much that some states should have no representatives at all, were it not for the insertion of this last expression? And as this is the only restriction upon them, we may fairly conclude that they may restrain the number to one from each state. “
- 3) “Hence it appears that three fourths of the states must ultimately agree to any amendments that may be necessary. Let us consider the consequence of this. However uncharitable it may appear, yet I must tell my opinion — that the most

unworthy characters may get into power, and prevent the introduction of amendments. Let us suppose — for the case is supposable, possible, and probable — that you happen to deal those powers to unworthy hands; will they relinquish powers already in their possession, or agree to amendments? Two thirds of the Congress, or of the state legislatures, are necessary even to propose amendments. If one third of these be unworthy men, they may prevent the application for amendments; but what is destructive and mischievous, is, that three fourths of the state legislatures, or of the state conventions, must concur in the amendments when proposed! In such numerous bodies, there must necessarily be some designing, bad men. To suppose that so large a number as three fourths of the states will concur, is to suppose that they will possess genius, intelligence, and integrity, approaching to miraculous?

in creature as in a pig. I am afraid I have tired the patience of this house; but I trust you will pardon me, as I was urged by the importunity of the gentleman in calling for the reasons of laying the groundwork of this plan. It is objected by the honorable gentleman over the way (Mr. ...)

3) I am afraid I have tired the patience of this house; but I trust you will pardon me, as I was urged by the importunity of the gentleman in calling for the reasons of laying the groundwork of this plan. It is objected by the honorable gentleman over the way (Mr.

George Mason) that a republican government is impracticable in an extensive territory, and the extent of the United States is urged as a reason for the rejection of this Constitution...The empire or government of laws, according to that phrase, is that in which the laws are made with the free-will of the people; hence, then, if laws be made by the assent of the people, the government may be deemed free. When laws are made with integrity, and executed with wisdom, the question is, whether a great extent of country will tend to abridge the liberty of the people. If defensive force be necessary in proportion to the extent of country, I conceive that, in a judiciously-constructed government, be the country ever so extensive, its inhabitants will be proportionably numerous, and able to defend it. Extent of country, in my conception, ought to be no bar to the adoption of a good government. No extent on earth seems to be too great, provided the laws be wisely made and executed. The principles of representation and responsibility may pervade a large as well as small territory; and tyranny is as easily introduced into a small as into a large district. If it be answered, that some of the most illustrious and distinguished authors are of a contrary opinion, I reply, that authority has no weight with me till I am convinced; that not the dignity of names, but the force of reasoning, gains my assent.”

Handout four
James Madison
June 14, 1788
Virginia Ratifying Convention

1) It has been amply proved that the general government can lay taxes as conveniently to the people as the state governments, by imitating the state systems of taxation. If the general government have not the power of collecting its own revenues, in the first instance, it will be still dependent on the state governments in some measure; and the exercise of this power, after refusal, will be inevitably productive of injustice and confusion, if partial compliances be made before it is driven to assume it. Thus, sir, without relieving the people in the smallest degree, the alternative proposed will impair the efficacy of the government, and will perpetually endanger the tranquillity of the Union.

2) But the honorable member, in order to influence our decision, has mentioned the opinion of a citizen who is an ornament to this state. When the name of this distinguished character was introduced, I was much surprised. Is it come to this, then, that we are not to follow our own reason? Is it proper to introduce the opinions of respectable men not within these walls? If the opinion of an important character were to weigh on this occasion, could we not adduce a character equally great on our side? Are we, who (in the honorable gentleman's opinion) are not to be governed by an erring world, now to submit to the opinion of a citizen beyond the Atlantic? I believe that, were that gentleman now on this floor, he would be for the adoption of this Constitution. I wish his name had never been mentioned. I wish every thing spoken here, relative to his opinion, may be suppressed, if our debates should be published. I know that the delicacy of his feelings will be wounded, when he will see in print what has and may be said concerning him on this occasion. I am, in some measure, acquainted with his sentiments on this subject: It is not right for me to unfold what he has informed me; but I will venture to assert that the clause now discussed is not objected to Mr. Jefferson. He approves of it,

The honorable member has introduced the subject of religion. Religion is not guarded; there is no bill of rights declaring that religion should be secure. Is a bill of rights a security for religion? Would the bill of rights, in this state, exempt the people from paying for the support of one particular sect, if such sect were exclusively established by law? If there were a majority of one sect, a bill of rights would be a poor protection for liberty. Happily for the states, they enjoy the utmost freedom of religion. This freedom arises from that multiplicity of sects which pervades America, and which is the best and only security for religious liberty in any society; for where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority of any one sect to oppress and persecute the rest, state might concur in one religious project. But the United States abound in such a variety of sects, that it is a strong security against religious persecution; and it is sufficient to authorize a conclusion, that no one sect will ever be able to outnumber or depress the rest.

It is worthy of observation, on this occasion, that the honorable gentleman himself seldom fails to contradict the arguments of gentlemen on that side of the question. For example, he strongly complains that the federal government, from the number of its members, will make an addition to the public expense too formidable to be borne; and yet he, and other gentlemen on the same side, object that the number of representatives is too small, though ten men are more than we are entitled to under the existing system! How can these contradictions be reconciled? If we are to adopt any efficient government at all, how can we discover or establish such a system, if it be thus, attacked? Will it be possible to form a rational conclusion upon contradictory principles? If arguments of a contradictory nature were to be brought against the wisest and most admirable system to the formation of which human intelligence is competent, it never could stand them.

No treaty has been formed, and I will undertake to say that none will be formed, under the old system, which will secure to us the actual enjoyment of the navigation of the Mississippi. Our weakness precludes us from it. We are entitled to it; but it is not under an inefficient government that we shall be able to avail ourselves fully of that right. I most conscientiously believe that it will be far better secured under the new government than the old, as we shall be more able to enforce our right. The people of Kentucky will have an additional safeguard from the change of system. The strength and respectability of the Union will secure them in the enjoyment of that right till that country becomes sufficiently populous. When this happens, they will be able to retain it in spite of every opposition.

Grading Parameters

Each worth 20%

Presentation historically accurate i.e. represents your delegates position

2 4 8 12 16 20

Presentation demonstrates your delegates position in a manner understandable to the class of 2013.

2 4 8 12 16 20

Questions demonstrate an understanding of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Positions

2 4 8 12 16 20

Presentation and/or posters demonstrate an awareness of the historical context in which the Virginia Ratification Convention was held.

2 4 8 12 16 20

Posters present an accurate and imaginative depiction of the thoughts and emotions in Virginia in June of 1788.

2 4 8 12 16 20