



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2005 Volume III: War and Civil Liberties

Thomas Hobbes and John Locke: Using Enlightenment Philosophy to Teach Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

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This unit makes use of the works of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke as a means of approaching the concepts of civil rights and civil liberties. The students read and critique the works of these men through the philosophers' own quotes. This gives the students the opportunity to work with the actual language of these philosophers, without having to read long passages of their work.

The unit touches upon the English Civil War as well as the background of both men to illustrate the kind of dichotomy that can exist between two points of view forged in similar circumstances. This dichotomy allows for the comparison of the two men in terms of their experiences and their work, thus opening new levels of understanding to the students.

The unit is designed to be taught to 9th grade World Civilizations students, but could be applicable in many History or English classes. This unit deals in part with the origins of our modern civil rights and liberties in America, and therefore could be applicable as well in a government class.

(Developed for World Civilizations, grade 9; recommended for Social Studies and History, High School grades)

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