



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2011 Volume III: The Idea of America

The Declaration of Independence: Still Inspiring Americans to Fight for Freedom!

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Rationale

"Who has been to or was born in another country?"

Without fail, 15 hands will go up. A typical response is something like this: "I was born in Alabama" or "We went to Las Vegas."

Regardless of the elementary grade level, young students do not have a concept of country. They identify themselves as a member of their family, classroom, church, or as a member of their neighborhood. They are just starting to be aware that they are a part of a broader social group which is inclusive of but which reaches beyond those groups. Regrettably in some cases, prejudice, racism and intolerance of those who are different from them are beginning to form. In some cases this is a direct result of their parents' beliefs.

Students need to learn that they are part of a larger society. It is important for them to learn about their national identity. They are all residents of America. Decisions made by America's politicians and leaders directly affect their lives. Each of my students will grow into voting American citizens and each will influence the social groups they belong to. They need to become aware that their contributions to society matter. They need to be aware of a variety of Americans who have shaped the country. I want them to recognize that their neighbors, who may or may not believe in what they believe in or look the way they do, are valued people.

In an area where most of my students' family members never attended college, they need to know that in America, they have the opportunity and the right to attend. But they also must understand that their choices and effort will make or break attaining those goals. My students need to be aware that they are Americans. They have freedoms; they have a voice. People who look and think differently from them have the same rights.

Students will recognize that the ideas first voiced in the Declaration of Independence apply to them. Despite any hardship, injustice or prejudice, they too can obtain "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." ¹ Students know that not everyone is treated exactly the same. There are different rules for children and adults or teachers and students but by studying the Declaration, they will recognize the difference between treating someone unjustly based on prejudice and treating them equitably based on circumstance. In studying those

ideas brought forth at the birth of our nation through the Declaration of Independence and in studying the people who have used it to gain equality for marginalized groups, the students will learn that in America, all people ARE created equal. They will learn that although there are many aspects of our lives that make us unique, we all have the promise of the Declaration of Independence to unify us as Americans. This second grade unit which focuses on teaching the principles of the Declaration along with introducing students to Americans who have used those ideas to fight for equality, developed from the Yale National Initiative seminar, "The Idea of America."

What is the Idea of America?

The idea of America is as unique as the people who make up our great nation. One of the beautiful things about American people is that they are ethnically and linguistically diverse. We are the only country where most of the citizens' ancestors have never set foot on its land.

Ideas of what America is and what it should be are as diverse as the people who compose it. It is these differences in thought, culture, and appearance, which when honored and valued make America great. Sometimes differences can divide and separate us. People can experience hatred and intolerance for others due to ignorance of another person's truth. If we take time to think about the things that are the same about Americans, it might help us to prevent the intolerance and one-sided thinking that happens so much in today's society.

What do all Americans have in common?

All Americans benefit from the inalienable rights provided for in the Declaration of Independence: "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" ² . Americans continually strive for freedom, liberty and equality. Those words inspire the hope of endless possibilities for all Americans. The Declaration of Independence is the primary document that built this great nation and with it that hope. It is a vision statement for the country. At its core it provides hope for Americans, especially the disenfranchised who have the ability to rise above persecution (even government persecution) and establish rights for themselves.

America has been blessed with many freedom fighters. They are everyday people who do big things for change. They believe in the rights espoused in the Declaration and use them to inspire Americans. Anyone can be a freedom fighter. The common inspiration is to change a divisive attitude or inequality. The actions of those who fight for freedom should be studied and considered by all Americans. It is through this inspiration of others that everyday citizens have the courage to stand up for what is right and demand equality for all. Fighting for liberty and justice can happen at a local, national or world level. Those who fight for freedom prove that all people should be treated equally. When it isn't happening they inspire others to make change happen. Every American has this right and ability as sons and daughters of the Declaration of Independence.

Objective

Some freedom fighters are famous and some are not. By studying Martin Luther King Jr.'s: "I Have a Dream" speech, Barack Obama's 2004 Democratic National Convention speech, and the words and actions of Cesar Chavez and Jane Addams, students will learn about specific Americans who took the words from the

Declaration of Independence and used them to gain equality for groups of Americans. But they will also learn about some non-famous Americans who in a more mild way also demanded equality for all.

They will learn about Farah, a young Muslim immigrant who moved to America and wears her duppata. Farah struggles with the fear of looking different from the other students. Additionally, they will learn about a little girl who lives in the housing projects and sees garbage and graffiti around her home. Although others don't seem to care about the surroundings, she makes a decision to clean up the steps leading to her home.

Students will learn about specific Americans who took the words and ideas espoused by the Declaration of Independence and used them to gain equality for themselves or for other groups of Americans. Students will discuss who in school is not treated equally. They will examine their own consciences and make observations to determine who doesn't have freedom and equality and decide what they can do to change that.

Research

What led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence?

During the 1700s, the British Parliament passed several laws that limited the freedoms of many English colonists in America by enforcing excessive taxes on them. Examples include: Sugar Act, Stamp Act (a tax on all paper products) and the Townshend Act (taxes on glass, paint, oil, lead, paper, and tea). The colonists responded to the tax on tea with the Boston Tea Party during which the colonists famously dumped the tea into the harbor protesting both the tax on tea and the establishment of the East India Company's potential monopoly on colonial trade. Both were viewed as threats to colonial freedom. ³

The British response was to enact a series of punitive laws called the Intolerable Acts. The first act closed the port of Boston until the tea was paid for and prohibited all but coastal trade in food and firewood. ⁴ This was followed by other laws, which penalized the colonies. Massachusetts suffered when more power was given to the governor. The governor was appointed by the British and not elected by the colonists. The Intolerable Acts also stopped special town meetings, thus reducing the voice of the colonists within their communities.

Additionally they gave authority to military commanders to seek housing in private homes. ⁵ All of these acts were ways for the British Parliament to increase taxes or raise revenues in the colonies. They also limited the self-governing powers of the colonists because they didn't have any parliamentary representation to stop it.

In 1774, the first Continental Congress was established in Philadelphia. The Congress was established in response to the Intolerable Acts. Their goals were to:

1. Define American grievances and notify the King of them
2. To develop a plan for resistance
2. Begin an economic boycott of Britain ⁶

However, the king did not respond to the grievances. This led to more resistance within the colonies.

Thomas Paine committed another important act of rebellion when he penned the pamphlet, "Common Sense,"

in which he boldly rejected monarchy and instead supported a government by the people without a king. Paine advocated for a republic. Common Sense was written in the everyday language of the people and used a lot of biblical references, which the people could relate to. It was the most widely distributed political publication of its time. ⁷

After the second meeting of the Continental Congress and the King ignoring a second letter, the colonists felt that they needed independence. Rebellion was the only choice the colonists felt they had left because of the King ignoring their grievances.

On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced a resolution which was seconded by John Adams of Massachusetts: "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved of all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." ⁸ Carl Becker, professor of history at Cornell University, refers to this as "The Resolution of Independence." He believes that Lee's work was the first Declaration of Independence. ⁹

Lee's resolution resulted in Congress forming a committee composed of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut to draft an official Declaration of Independence. ¹⁰

The Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson submitted the first draft of the Declaration on June 28, 1776. Four days later the delegates officially voted for independence. Finally, on July 4, after two days of debating the wording, it was finally adopted. ¹¹

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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,-That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government. ¹²

The Declaration is a document in which the thirteen colonies detail specific grievances against Great Britain and explain their justifications for doing so. Becker contends, "the primary purpose of the Declaration was not to declare independence, but to proclaim to the world the reasons for declaring independence. It was intended as a formal justification of an act already accomplished." ¹³ He continues by adding that it gave the colonist moral and legal reason to rebel against the king. For the delegates to adopt the Declaration, they were committing a form of treason against the King. They could not foresee the future, and any disobedience to the King could be punished by death. Becker states that the framers, "weren't writing history, but making it." ¹⁴ This bravery is respected and remembered every Fourth of July.

The Declaration of Independence proclaims that all men have equal rights regardless of birth, wealth, or status. It states that the government is the servant of the people. Whenever a government becomes destructive, it is the right of the people to abolish it and to institute a new one. It asserts that the colonies are free and independent states and therefore can do what independent states want to do. They can declare war or conclude peace.

Robert J. Reinstein, Dean and Professor at Temple University School of Law, says that the Declaration of Independence is rarely referenced in Supreme Court decisions and its influence on constitutional interpretation has been minor. ¹⁵ He acknowledges that the Declaration expresses our nation's greatest ideals. He states that the movements to end slavery and secure civil rights were a result of these American ideals. He references two of America's most inspired speeches (Lincoln's Gettysburg address and Martin Luther King's, I Have a Dream speech at the Lincoln Memorial) as fueled by the Declaration of Independence. He cites *Brown vs. the Board of Education* as a morally correct decision but contends that it wasn't based on constitutional law. That decision was based more on the rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence. He puts forth that the writers of the Constitution did not include the principles of the Declaration because of "mere rhetoric" but because its inclusion would have risked the existence of slavery. However, Reinstein goes on to say that the Declaration of Independence is the foundation for Article 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment, ¹⁶ which states that anyone born in the United States is a citizen. It also states that no state can "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." ¹⁷

The Declaration of Independence laid the foundation for the Constitution. It gave people born free or not, hope that people do have basic human rights provided for by the "Creator" and that government can be changed as long as it is doing the right thing for the people. The Declaration states that,

...mankind is more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. ¹⁸

These words over time have provided hope to everyday Americans that during periods of suffering and injustice things can change. Many Americans take a stand against injustice and some become famous for it. Those people are referred to in the unit as Freedom Fighters.

Hope for All Americans: Freedom Fighters

Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have A Dream"

Martin Luther King Jr. valued education. He grew up attending segregated public schools in Georgia. He graduated from High School at the age fifteen and received his BA from Morehouse College, a traditionally black college in Atlanta. He also received a BD from Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania and became president of his predominately white senior class. He received his doctorate at Boston University. ¹⁹

By 1954, King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He also served on the executive committee for the NAACP. By 1955 he became a leader in the "first great Negro nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States" otherwise known as the Montgomery bus boycott. This lasted 382 days and resulted in the Supreme Court declaring segregation on buses as unconstitutional. King emerged from this as an honorable African American leader who passionately and peacefully fought for equality for all. King fueled the Civil Rights Movement. ²⁰

Before the "I Have a Dream" speech, King wrote numerous articles, gave over twenty-five hundred speeches and led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama. While in Birmingham, an injunction was issued forbidding demonstrations. Dr. King and others were arrested. ²¹ That is when he wrote "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" which became known as a "manifesto" for an African American revolution. ²² The letter inspired him and

others to register African Americans to vote and it paved the way for the March on Washington, where he gave the infamous "I Have a Dream" speech.

This speech used words from the Declaration of Independence to create his timeless oratory. It inspired and continues to inspire people of all ages and ethnicities to understand that all Americans deserve respect, and that they are entitled to liberty.

In the speech, King referred to the Declaration of Independence as a promissory note guaranteeing all men the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He says that this promise was broken for the citizens of color. He compares the note to a bad check with "insufficient funds." ²³ King declared in his speech, that he doesn't believe America is bankrupt. He says instead, that now is the time to cash that check. It is "a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice." He goes on to say that, "Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy." King acknowledges all of the injustices happening at the time, but offers hope: "Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream." ²⁴ He speaks of hope for all Americans that freedom can be theirs:

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last" ²⁵

Martin Luther King's life and commitment for equality inspired many people of all races. Years later, King inspired one young African-American man to realize equality meant that he too, could be President of the United States one day.

Barack Obama

Barack Obama's presidential campaign and election provided hope for many American minorities. It brought back the ideas from the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, and it reignited Martin Luther King Jr.'s inspired words which state that when united, all Americans can overcome inequality. They can find security in the words "justice for all". During the 2004 Democratic Convention, Obama gave the keynote speech. He used those words from the Declaration of Independence to inspire the Democratic Party, and any other Americans listening:

"Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago." He goes on to quote the declaration's honored words about "inalienable rights" and that "all men are created equal." ²⁶ He commented further by saying:

That is the true genius of America, a faith in the simple dreams of its people, the insistence on small miracles; that we can tuck in our children at night and know that they are fed and clothed and safe from harm; that we can say what we think, and write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door. We can have ideas, and start our own businesses without paying a bribe, or being forced to hire somebody's son. We can participate in the political process without fear of retribution, and also that our votes will be counted. ²⁷

Americans will always debate whether or not Obama was a good president, but one thing most people will agree to is that he inspired many Americans, who traditionally had not voted in the past, to vote in 2008. He inspired all Americans that regardless of skin tone, Americans who work hard and who are dedicated can

achieve a Harvard Law degree, a place on the senate floor, and even the Presidency of the United States. Yet, before Obama, there was another man who came from humble beginnings who used his leadership to inspire many people.

Cesar Chavez

Cesar Chavez was born in Arizona to parents who had migrated from Mexico. His primary language was Spanish, and he grew up with the culture and traditions his parents valued from Mexico. He experienced a lot of racism as a child when he was continually punished for speaking Spanish in school and also teased for his Mexican heritage. His family relocated to California during the Depression to work in the fields of California. ²⁸

Cesar Chavez did not have an advanced degree. In fact he dropped out of school in eighth grade. He did not fit the profile of a leader. Yet he led migrant farm workers from oppression and deplorable working conditions into unionized workers deserving of a fair wage. In 1952, Chavez learned how to become an organizer through his work with Community Service Organization, which was established for poor immigrants to make demands on the political system through voter registration, citizenship classes and legislative campaigns. Chavez mainly helped with voter registration. ²⁹

Chavez believed in democracy and the right of the people to make changes in government. The Declaration of Independence says that "governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes...but when a long train of abuses and usurpations...it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government." ³⁰ Chavez experienced a great injustice in America. He inspired a population of new Americans to demand greater equality. "We are tired of words, of betrayals, of indifference...the days are gone when the farm worker said nothing and did nothing to help himself...Now we have new faith. Through our strong will, our movement is changing these conditions...We shall be heard." ³¹

In the style of Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, Chavez used non-violence to make this change. "Non-violence is not inaction. It is not discussion. It is not for the timid or weak... Non-violence is hard work. It is the willingness to sacrifice. It is the patience to win." ³²

Chavez believed that all men are created equal and that it is the unalienable right of all who work and live in America regardless of skin tone to exercise that freedom. The United Farm Workers, led by Chavez were fundamental to this. Under Chavez's leadership, hope for equality from a disfranchised group of Americans inspired by the immortal words of the Declaration of Independence became a reality. But men were not the only ones who stood up for equality and justice. There were women too.

Jane Addams

Jane Addams graduated at the top of her class in 1881 from Rockford Female Seminary. Her dad, an Illinois state legislator, inspired her interest to speak up for people's rights. However, his death and her own health problems prevented her from continuing with graduate school in medicine. As a result, Addams decided to travel to Europe with her college roommate, Ellen Star. While in London, she visited Toynbee Hall, a settlement house in the poor end of town. During that trip she and Ellen decided to open a house similar to the English one in a low-income area of Chicago. In 1889 they named their settlement home "Hull House" (after the builder Charles Hull) and in a short amount of time it became a place for over 2000 people per week to receive free childcare, counseling, help for the sick, and educational classes. ³³

Addams became a major fighter for the injustices she saw in the world. Disturbed by the accumulation of wealth in the upper classes, and poverty in the lower classes, she recognized the inequalities in American society within her own community. ³⁴

Jane Addams was a proud American. She grew up in a home where her father believed in government and, as a legislator, fought to create and amend laws for the good of society. She believed that common people could make change in America. She spoke about her love for Abraham Lincoln in her book "Twenty years at Hull House" and how that related to the pride she felt for her American heritage. ³⁵ Jane Addams took the words from the Declaration, which state that as Americans we have an "...unalienable right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" to heart. Addams was passionate about the role of women. She was a feminist before feminism was popular. ³⁶ Addams, in her pursuit of happiness, passionately believed that women should not only have dreams but have the ability to achieve them. She also felt that war should never exist. ³⁷ Her actions spoke louder than her words.

Addams provided a public house which was also her home. That was Hull House. Over time she accumulated more space to allow people from all over to receive the services they needed to better their life. She fought for freedom and equality for Chicago's poorest people. She believed that education was essential to getting out of poverty so she offered classes. She felt that neighbors should help neighbors so she provided free childcare for neighbors by people who lived in the community. Addams also used volunteers to take care of the sick, and to counsel people. She encouraged wealthy members of society to contribute money and time to the settlement house. The organizations that she started attempted to "equalize the inequality between people and educate them on things they had in common as well as the qualities that made them unique." ³⁸ The result of her work meant that other community groups began to emerge and people who saw themselves as destitute began to see themselves attaining happiness. The Declaration of Independence guarantees that hope for all Americans.

King, Obama, Chavez, and Addams were freedom fighters. They used the words from the Declaration of Independence and turned them into a belief. That belief in the guarantees provided by the words in the Declaration provided them hope as they identified injustices in America. Obama pursued his happiness by starting from humble beginnings and becoming the first African-American President of the United States. That is how he fought for freedom. King, Chavez and Addams used their belief in the Declaration to never give up in their fight to save a marginalized group in society. Americans need to know that those words and the meaning behind them apply to them too. Students need to learn about the Declaration of Independence and realize that it applies just as much today as it did when our nation was first created. This unit, written for second graders, will do that.

Unit Lesson Plan

Learning Outcomes:

- Second graders will locate America on a world map. They will learn that it is made up of 50 states and many different cities.
- Students will correctly answer the question: Which city, state and country do you live in?

- They will understand that the Declaration of Independence, written to begin our American nation, is a document to be proud of. The words in it are important. They will identify, recite and memorize key phrases from it.
- Students will understand that the Declaration is a promise to all Americans that happiness is achievable for all, and that no one person is better than another.
- Students will compare and contrast how and why Martin Luther King Jr., Barack Obama, Cesar Chavez and Jane Adams used the words from The Declaration to gain equality for suffering groups of Americans.
- Students will identify the differences between equity and equality.
- Students will examine their own consciences and make observations to determine who doesn't have freedom and equality, and decide what they can do to change that.
- Students will read personal narratives from children who have had to deal with inequalities or a lack of freedom. They will learn how to respect differences while recognizing that people have many commonalities. One important one is that they all live in America.

Strategies

This unit is culturally responsive. It implements ELD (English Language Development) structures throughout the lessons.

Time: 12 lessons (10-60) minutes per lesson

Introduction:

Pre-Assessment

Students will be given a world map and asked to locate America. They will orally respond to the question, "What do Americans have in common"? Answers will be video-recorded.

Lesson 1- Who am I?

Students will be given a homework assignment. They must speak to their families about family history. They will find out where their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and/or other family members were born. They will color on a map where their family came from.

Lesson 2- Where am I from and who am I?

On the class map students will put pins on the cities/states/countries they came from.

They will read the book, "It's Okay." This book, contains drawings of kids who are diverse in a variety of ways. Sample pages say, "It's okay to wear glasses" or "It's okay to be skinny" or "It's okay to have two dads".

Each student will fill out his or her own "It's okay" page. They will determine what they want to say about their own uniqueness.

The teacher will introduce the word "contrast" and discuss that there are many ways that we are different and

that it's okay to be different.

Lesson 3- Who are Americans?

Students will review the map. They will see that although some families come from all over, they all live in the Bay Area now. They will notice that they go to the same school and many have been to the same grocery stores, malls, and pizza parlors. Students will start seeing the geographical ways they are alike. This will be introduced through share-outs and by the teacher using repetition (ELD strategy) to bring the point that although we are all special and unique "The interesting thing is we are all Americans."

The teacher will read the book, "The Important Thing" which is similar to the "It's Okay" book. This time students will learn how to compare. They will again write something special about themselves, but they will add the same last line to their page.

The line is: "The interesting thing is that we are all Americans"

Historical Content Instruction

America is not just a place with land on a map. It's not just where we live. America has a deeper meaning. Through the next series of lessons, students will develop their ideas of what it means to be an American.

Lessons 4-6 Where did America come from?

The intention is to have the idea of America as unique for the students as they are unique individuals. The teacher will guide the discussion by focusing on the words of The Declaration of Independence and the meaning behind them. It is important to initially introduce students to the actual text and not a kid-friendly version. The actual text should be posted clearly in the room and referenced throughout the unit.

The teacher should use the historical background of the Declaration of Independence to develop a mini-lesson providing context for the document and the birth of the nation.

The class will choral read the words, clapping once where there are words they most likely won't understand. The idea is to give it some rhythm. Speed and word emphasis are important.

We hold these (clap) to be self-(clap), that all (really emphasize the all) (clap) are created (clap), that they are (clap) by their (clap) with certain (clap) Rights, that among these are (clap), (clap) and the (clap) of Happiness.

Repeat this a few times. Make it fun! Allow individual students to show off their own style. The rhythmic idea continues by introducing the vocabulary words through chanting.

"Truths mean...the truth!"

"Ev- i- dent means...it's obvious!" (Give it attitude)

"Equal means...the same!"

This process of introducing the language should take the form of a mini-lesson lasting between 5-10 minutes daily. You can also use the vocabulary as a way to quiet down the class. When I say "created," you say "made."

Lesson 6 What does it mean to be an American?

In this lesson, students will begin to understand that Americans have the right to fairness and when they aren't treated fairly, they can make changes. The teacher will begin to guide the students through chunking the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence into kid-friendly pieces. It's important not to do the whole thing at once or on the same day. The students may create a kid friendly version that looks something like this: "We agree the truth is so obvious that all people are born the same." Lead students through a discussion of what that means to them. They may agree that we are all born from our mothers and begin our lives as babies. That makes us equal at birth. The focus is on what makes Americans the same. However, it is also important to have them recognize that all people are not treated exactly the same and there actually is fairness in that.

The teacher can lead a discussion on times when it is more important to treat people fairly instead of equally. The teacher can ask questions like, "Should second graders have the exact same homework as kindergartners? Should children and adults both be allowed to drive? If a student uses their own money to buy the class cookies, is it okay for that student to have two cookies when everyone else has one?" This can start some good discussion on what it means to be fair and they will notice that not everyone agrees on what is fair.

It's important to tie the discussion back to our American Declaration of Independence and make sure the students know that it was written for them. They need to get familiar with the vocabulary and to begin to understand the meaning behind the words. Continue with translating the original text into the kid-friendly version. It might say, "Either God or something made humans and we have the right to live our lives, be treated fairly and do things that make us safe and happy". They need to know that America was created as a place where those words are true for everyone. Explain that The Declaration goes on to say that if the government does not let some of that happen, that Americans have the right to change laws so that it starts happening. The teacher will tell them that there are many famous Americans who did make changes to ensure people are treated fairly and are working for their happiness.

Lessons 7-10 Who are the freedom fighters?

Martin Luther King Jr., Barak Obama, Jane Addams and Cesar Chavez are just a few of the people who have changed injustices in America. Although they lived during different time periods, they had many things in common: they came from humble beginnings, valued education, they used non-violent means to inspire change in the hearts of others, and most importantly they took the words from the Declaration of Independence to heart, thereby inviting change to occur in the hearts of others. The freedom fighters changed societies into treating disenfranchised groups of Americans better.

Within these lessons, the teacher will provide historical details about each of the freedom fighters. The teacher can use children's literature or online resources to assist in communicating their individual stories to the students. The teacher will display a large graph with four columns and four rows. Each row within the first column lists the name of the freedom fighter. The second column lists quotes from that freedom fighter referencing the Declaration of Independence. The third highlights important events in that person's life. The fourth column states that the person is American. The goal is to introduce the students to some famous Americans who fought for equality and who changed an unjust American society. They will use critical thinking skills to compare and contrast the actions and accomplishments of these famous people.

Applying History to Student Life

Lesson 11- Can a child like me become a freedom fighter?

This lesson has students reading personal narratives of American children. Some of these are realistic fiction and some are memoirs. They are children of different racial and cultural backgrounds. They include stories of homeless children, children who have unmanageable hair, and those who are separated from a parent. The teacher will read the narratives, and construct a compare and contrast chart of the literary children. For the comparison portion, the teacher will make sure to include in the list that the child is American.

Each student will have his own "America placemat" where each child will glue a picture of the characters from the books as well as the more famous freedom fighters read about. On the mat of America, they will write a sentence that says, "It's okay to be (fill in the blank)" Students will write down something unique about the famous and not famous freedom fighters read about and then they will write "The interesting thing about (character from book's name) is that she/he is American and a child of the Declaration of Independence just like me."

The goal is for the students to see that everyday kids (just like them) can inspire change when injustices occur.

Lesson 12- How else can I think about the Declaration of Independence in my life?

The teacher will once again bring the classes attention to the Declaration of Independence which has been posted on the wall throughout all of the lessons. She will emphasize the phrase, (We all have) "certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Students will conclude the unit with a discussion on their dream for happiness. They will look toward the future and each student will have their own page in a class book where they will explain not only their dream for future happiness but they will also explain their plan to pursue it. They will both write and illustrate a personal goal and explain how they intend to achieve that goal.

Lesson 12- Post assessment

Students will locate America on the map again and orally respond to the question, "What do Americans have in common?"

End Notes

1. "Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776," The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy. Accessed August 4, 2011.
2. Ibid
3. Mary Beth Norton and others, *A History of the United States: A People and A Nation Volume I: To 1877* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994) 151-165.
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Ibid

7. Ibid., 163
8. Ibid., 164
9. Becker, Carl. *The Declaration of Independence: A study in the History of Political Ideas*. (Harcourt, Brace and Company, INC. 1922) 18.
10. Norton, 164
11. Ibid., 164
12. "Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776," *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*. Accessed August 4, 2011.
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http://www.nobelpeace laureates.org/pdf/American_Peacemakers.pdf
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Teacher Resources

Martin Luther King Jr.

www.nobelpeace laureates.org/pdf/American_Peacemakers.pdf This has curriculum for American Nobel Peace Laureates

www.nobelprize.org This has video and facts on all of the nobel peace prize winners.

Barack Obama

www.americanrhetoric.com/ This is an online speech bank of many famous speeches. It also includes videos for some.

Cesar Chavez

www.ufw.org This has many resources for teachers and lesson plans

<http://chavez.cde.ca.gov/modelcurriculum/teachers/index1.aspx> This has model curriculum and resources for K-12 grade teachers

Jane Addams

www.nobelpeace laureates.org/pdf/American_Peacemakers.pdf This has curriculum for American Nobel Peace Laureates

Other Children Who Experienced Injustice

Eve Bunting "One Green Apple" (New York: Clarion Books) 2006.

Helen Recorvits "My Name Is Yoon" (New York: Frances Foster Books) 2003.

Sharon Dennis Wyeth "Something Beautiful" (New York: Dragonfly Books) 1998.

Todd Parr "It's Okay to Be Different" (New York: Little, Brown and Company) 2001.

Yangsook Choi "The Name Jar" (New York: Dragonfly Books) 2001.

California State Standards

2.1 Students differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday.

2.2 Students demonstrate map skills by describing the absolute and relative locations of people, places and environments.

2.5 Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others lives.

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