Teacher Instructions

Goal
Students can explore Thomas Jefferson’s rough draft of the Declaration of Independence to think critically about the story behind the edits.

Background
Every teacher knows how important it is to write a good rough draft, but what about studying a rough draft?

When Thomas Jefferson was asked to write what would become the Declaration of Independence, he was careful to start with a rough draft. After he finished it, he gave it to a group of reviewers, including Benjamin Franklin and future president John Adams, who read it and suggested several changes.

Jefferson’s “original rough draught” [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trt001.html], available on the Library of Congress Web site, lets students see all the scratched-out text and inserted words that Jefferson added as he and his reviewers discussed their edits.

Activities
Teachers can have students:
• Compare this draft to the final version of the Declaration
• Speculate about why different changes were proposed
• Brainstorm ways in which the government of the United States might have been different if some changes hadn’t been made.

You can use the Library’s primary source analysis tool and teacher guides to help students analyze Jefferson’s rough draft in further depth.

For more information on the Declaration of Independence:
Creating the United States
http://myloc.gov/Exhibitions/creatingtheus/DeclarationofIndependence/Pages/default.aspx

For more classroom materials and other teacher resources from the Library of Congress, visit loc.gov/teachers

Primary Source

Thomas Jefferson’s Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trt001.html
A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for certain people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to establish separate and equal stations among the powers of the earth, they have a right to order their possessions in such manner as their wisdom shall direct. The laws of nature and of nature's God are self-evident, that which is equal, that which is inherent, that which is unalterable. 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, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. For to-wield that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are 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, begun at a distinct period of history, have reduced them to a condition of complete dependence, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such an yoke, and to provide new guards for their future safety.
TEACHER’S GUIDE
Analyzing Primary Sources

OBSERVE
Have students identify and note details.
Sample Questions:
What do you notice first? · Find something small but interesting. · What do you notice that you didn’t expect? · What do you notice that you can’t explain? · What do you notice now that you didn’t earlier?

REFLECT
Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.
Where do you think this came from? · Why do you think somebody made this? · What do you think was happening when this was made? · Who do you think was the audience for this item? · What tool was used to create this? · Why do you think this item is important? · If someone made this today, what would be different? · What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION
Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.
What do you wonder about...
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION
Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.
Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:
Beginning
Have students compare two related primary source items.
Intermediate
Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.
Advanced
Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to
http://www.loc.gov/teachers

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf
TEACHER’S GUIDE
ANALYZING MANUSCRIPTS

OBSERVE

Have students identify and note details.

Sample Questions:
Describe what you see. · What do you notice first?
· How much of the text can you read? What does
it say? · What do you see that looks strange or
unfamiliar? · How are the words arranged? · What
do you notice about the page the writing appears
on? · What size is the page? · What do you see on
the page besides writing? · What other details can
you see?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and
test hypotheses about the manuscript.

Why do you think this manuscript was made? · Who
do you think created it? · Who do you think was
intended to read it, if anyone? · What do you think
was happening when it was created? · What tools
and materials were used to create it? · What can
you learn from examining this? · If someone created
something like this today, what would be different?
· What would be the same?

QUESTION

Have students ask questions to lead to
more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up
activity ideas:

Beginning
Have students choose a section of the manuscript and put it in their
own words.

Intermediate
Select a section of a manuscript. Speculate about the purpose of the
manuscript, and what the person, or people, who created it expected
it to accomplish. Do you think it achieved their goals? Explain why
you think so.

Advanced
Examine a section of the manuscript. Think about what you already
know about this period in history. How does the manuscript support
or contradict your current understanding of this period? Can you
see any clues to the point of view of the person who created this
manuscript?

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sources, go to
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