



Honoring the Spirit of America

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“Liberty or Death”

Subject Area:

Social Studies and Language Arts

Subject Area/Grade Level Taught:

Georgia History (8th grade)

US History (11th grade)

American Government/Civics (12th grade)

Quality Plus Teaching Strategies Used:

Questioning

Summarizing

Literacy

Collaboration

Compare & Contrast

Concept/ Topic to Teach:

Liberty or Death: It is your Vote

Georgia Standards Addressed:

SS8H4, SSCG1, SSUSH3

For teachers outside the state of Georgia, check your local or state curriculum to see what requirements this lesson plan satisfies.

General Goal(s):

Introduce students to the viewpoints during the Revolutionary Period.

Specific Objectives:

1. Explain what Patrick Henry’s argument was in “The Speech to the Virginia Convention.”
2. Determine if Patrick Henry’s argument was well thought out, and convincing.
3. Explain the viewpoint of Patrick Henry’s opponents.

Required Materials:

Copy of the speech: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/patrick.htm>

Background Information: <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/henry.htm>

Paper & Pen

Step-By-Step Procedures:

1. Teacher reads and/or distributes background information on what is happening a couple of years before the Revolutionary War begins. Focus on the pros and cons of going to war and why people don't necessarily want to go to war.
2. Students will take notes on the opinions of both sides
3. After the background information is read and discussed, separate the class into three groups. The first group is for the revolution, second group against revolution, and the group of unbiased convention members.
4. Have students from the pro war group read the speech with fervor. (Make sure all students take notes).
5. After the speech has been read, the group against the war is to try to persuade the convention members against the war in the form of a rebuttal. This debate can continue for as many rounds as you would like.
6. Take votes from convention members to determine the winner of the debate.
7. If possible to make students switch groups at one point in time to make them argue for the opposite view point.
8. Allow each student to reflect in writing what their viewpoint would have been alive during that time and which side they would have chosen.

Adaptations for Students with Special Needs:

Provide students with note takers or speech readers.

Extensions for Gifted Students:

Students can research and explore other persuasive speeches given during the American Revolutionary War. Students can compare other speeches to Patrick Henry's speech to see which one is more convincing.

Possible Connections to Other Subjects:

Language Arts

Additional Comments: