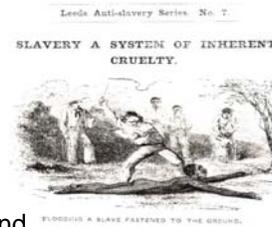


African American Voices Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan: David Walker's Appeal
Subject: Language Arts, Civics, U.S. History
Grade level: 7, 8
NGSSS-SS: **SS.7.C.3.6-** Evaluate Constitutional rights and their impact on individuals and society.



SS.8.A.1.6- Compare interpretations of key events and issues throughout American History.

**Description/
Abstract of Lesson:** The students will compare and contrast David Walker's rebellious words and actions against slavery and racial discrimination with those who rebelled in a similar way against the British prior to the War of Independence. The students will create their own pamphlets calling for the end of a social ill that takes place in their city, state or country.

Objective(s): Students will

- Understand author's purpose and perspective.
- Compare and contrast writings on similar issues from different time eras.
- Develop social awareness through research and writing.

Materials:

- Handouts of David Walker's essay *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the United States*
- Computers with Microsoft Word and Internet
- Construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.

Duration: 2-3 class periods

**Lesson Lead In/
Opening:**

1. Read excerpts from Thomas Jefferson's *On Slavery: Proposed Revision of Constitution of Virginia (From Notes on Virginia)*
2. Have the students discuss what they understood and felt about Jefferson's words.

Possible lead in discussion questions:

- What mixed messages about Blacks and slavery did you find in Jefferson's words?
- How could have some of the things that he said about Black people been used to justify their enslavement?
- What main concerns did he have with doing away with slavery and sending Blacks of to live on their own?
- What main concerns did he have with keeping the institution of slavery?

Activity 1:

1. Introduce David Walker to the students as being just one of several African American writers who challenged Thomas Jefferson's position on Blacks being "inferior" to whites.

2. Read David Walker's biography from:
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2930.html>

3. Read as a class David Walker's essay *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the United States* using reciprocal teaching methods. The essay is available at:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2931t.html>

4. While or after reading the essay, ask the students questions:

- How would Walker's words and actions be considered a threat to Southern slave owners?
- How did Walker challenge Jefferson's views?
- What was the overall attitude that Walker had while writing this essay? How could you tell?

5. Divide the class into groups. Have each group read excerpts from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, a pamphlet that became highly popular throughout the colonies and inspired the movement towards independence from Great Britain. An on-line copy can be found on:

<http://www.ushistory.org/paine/commonsense/singlehtml.htm>

Have the students complete a chart outlining the similarities and differences between Walker's views and Paine's views.

Example:

Author	Views of what freedom is and who is denying freedom	Views on what should be done if you do not have freedom	Who is his audience?	What is the tone of language like? Give examples.
Thomas Paine				
David Walker				

6. Have the groups share their answers with the rest of the class and discuss.

Activity 2:

1. Have the students (either individually or as a class) choose an issue that they believe is not being addressed properly either on a neighborhood, city, state or national level.

2. Have students write brief essays discussing why the issue chosen should be addressed differently or more fairly.

3. Type final drafts on Microsoft Word in pamphlet form (or have the

students write the essays and cut and paste them on folded construction paper in pamphlet form). Have the students decorate their pamphlets and make them "eye catching."

Assessment:

- Evaluate charts based on historical and literary accuracy.
- Evaluate essays based on accuracy of information.
- Consider cooperation/participation grades for group work.
- Consider creativity grade for pamphlets

**Additional
Higher Order**

Thinking Questions:

1. Are there major differences between what Walker and Paine are arguing? In what ways?
2. Are there major similarities between what Walker and Paine are arguing? In what ways?
3. Does Paine mention slavery? In what way does he mean slavery?
4. Do you believe it was meant to include Blacks in his struggle? Why do you think that?

**Suggested Books
In Lesson:**

Walker, D. (1995) David Walker's Appeal, Hill and Wang

Paine, T. (1997) Common Sense, Dover Publications

Web Resources:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2930.html>

Quotations from Common Sense:

http://hua.umf.maine.edu/Reading_Revolutions/Paine.html

Excerpts from Thomas Jefferson's
On Slavery: Proposed Revision of Constitution of Virginia
(from Notes on Virginia)

.... It will probably be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the state, and thus save the expense of supplying, by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race. - To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral. The first difference which strikes us is that of colour...

...Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold than the whites. Perhaps too a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious experimentalist has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it. They seem to require less sleep. A black after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present..- When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female: but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed

to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous. It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation...

...Some have been liberally educated, and all have lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated to a considerable degree, and have had before their eyes samples of the best works from abroad. The Indians, with no advantages of this kind, will often carve figures on their pipes not destitute of design and merit. They will crayon out an animal, a plant, or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation. They astonish you with strokes of the most sublime oratory; such as prove their reason and sentiment strong, their imagination glowing and elevated. But never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture. In music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch...

...Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved. Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar oestrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion indeed has produced a Phyllis Wheatley but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism...

...The improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by every one, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life. We know that among the Romans, about the Augustan age especially, the condition of their slaves was much more deplorable than that of the blacks on the continent of America. The two sexes were confined in separate apartments, because to raise a child cost the master more than to buy one... The American slaves cannot enumerate this among the injuries and insults they receive.

...Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest. - But it is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into every one's mind. I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave rising from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.