

Founding Brothers:
Preface: "The Generation"

This reading is from a political history of the American Revolution, it explains the issues facing Americans as they were struggling for independence. This reading is very detailed and the author's voice is somewhat complex.

Focus on the topic sentences and try to understand the author's point/purpose in each paragraph. When you get confused: (you will get confused sometime)

Keep reading

Re-read the topic sentence

Re-read the paragraph

Annotate/summarize the ideas

Then move on.

Look for the concepts in the reading.

Identify the paragraph where you find the concept reflected

Use the graphic organizer and notebook to collect information about these concepts

Concepts/Themes: (SAQ test after processing)

1. Theme **Uncertainty**
2. Theme Republican Values in the Revolution
3. Theme of Hindsight vs Contemporary views:
4. Theme of **Paradox of the American Revolution** (contradiction)
5. Theme of **Compromise**
6. Theme of Assets/Liabilities

Extra Fun:

- a. How did the British use the term American?
- b. In the End how did we survive?

1. Theme Uncertainty

Was the success of the revolution inevitable?

It's complicated

Luck/miracle

Values of the Revolution influenced the world example **representative democracy**

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2. Theme Republican Values in the Revolution

1st time colonial rebellion is successful/Still surviving today

3. Theme of Hindsight vs Contemporary views:

Hindsight View = from the modern world

Contemporary View = from the 1700s

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4. Theme of Paradox of the American Revolution (contradiction)

Thomas Jefferson (Individual liberty)

Alexander Hamilton (Stronger Government to save the Revolution)

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5. **Theme of Compromise** Why did the American republic not break down immediately?

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6. **Theme of Assets** (helped success of Independence)

Liabilities (things that might prevent Independence) (10-11)

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Extra Fun:

c. How did the British use the term American?

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d. In the End how did we survive?

This reading is from a political history of the American Revolution, it explains the issues facing Americans as they were struggling for independence. This book is very detailed and the author's voice is somewhat complex. (this is a political history, "... The central events and achievements of the Revolutionary era and early republic were political." (13)

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1. **Theme Uncertainty**

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2. **Theme Republican Values in the Revolution**

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Still surviving today

3. **Hindsight vs Contemporary** views:

Hindsight is problematic (Looking back today) because it's seems like the Rev was inevitable.

It was not inevitable

To understand you must understand the era as they saw it.

The revolution was doubtful and unity was a problem

Farsighted can't see things when you are up close= the Revolutionary leaders
In the era, few were able to understand the potential of America.

Nearsighted can't see things in the distance... today we have difficulty seeing the
Revolution clearly.

We forget how many conflicts were present.

4. **Paradox of the American Revolution (contradiction)**

Which group represented the true meaning of the American Revolution?

This question deals with a judgement.

Which political orientation **Thomas Jefferson (Democratic Republican Party)** (Whigs) or
Alexander Hamilton (Federalist Party, Constitutionalists, strong national government)
hold true to the revolution principles.

5. **Theme of Compromise Why did the American republic not break down immediately?**

Constitution strengthened the government

The leaders compromised, the leaders were strategic and dedicated to solving problems

First **decade** of the Constitution/precedents (11)

6. **Assets** (helped success of Independence) vs **Liabilities** (things that might prevent
Independence) (10-11)

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Lesson Idea:

Teams of 3

Film the discussion

Discussion questions are in the worksheet?

Students can use notes.

1 day class to read

Weekend to read

Find rubric for discussion questions

Founding Brothers: "The Generation" by Joseph Ellis (2000)

Outline:

The Founders Were Special:

"Comprised the greatest generation of political talent in American history." (13)

Small number of leaders, collaborated and collided.

"They created the American republic then held it together through out the volatile and vulnerable early years by sustaining their presence until national habits and customs took root. In terms of our earlier distinctions, they got us from the short run to the long run." (13)

Personalities, with gifts and eccentricities

They knew each other personally, they had rivalries.

Friendships, cooperated, gossiped, compromised, they trusted each other, they decided on a culture of laws.

They removed slavery as the most divisive issue. "Which was incompatible with the principles of the revolution..." (17)

Some believed the Revolution was inevitable. Was it?

Manifest destiny, God preordained American Independence

Thomas Paine, Common Sense reference, argued the American separation from GB was inevitable.

Jefferson called it 'self-evident'

John Adams believed God or Providence made America special.

Adams knew what they were doing was special, (saved his letters)

Revolutionary generation believed they were doing something great.

The mention providence and American destiny regularly.

American Revolution was a great success that impacted the world. (Why)

American Rev has won the world and spread democratic ideas

Representative government

Capitalists "market economy" = the American way.

The "political institutions and traditions... have stood the test of time." Example, concept of **popular Sovereignty**.

Also it was the first time an imperial power loses to a colonial country.

Americans led with **Representative Democracy Government**

No republic had been successful for long and not with this large of geography

It was a Miracle

Some say the revolution was inevitable but most who were there believe it a miracle.

Elbridge Gerry and Benjamin Harrison quote, after signing the Declaration of Independence.

"I shall have a great advantage over you, Mr. Gerry when we are all hung for what we are now doing. From the size and weight of my body I shall die in a few minutes, but fro the lightness of your body you will dance in the air an hour or two before you are dead." (5)

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The British should have won, "if the British would have prosecuted the war more vigorously." (5)
According to the author, "In the long run was probably inevitable." (5)

It is complicated.

Independence was sudden.

"No one present at the start knew how it would turn out in the end."

Luck, chance some decisions turned out to be decisive.

"... in short an American nation remained a precarious and highly problematic project... A work in progress..." (10)

Problems: Colonies were not united

The colonies did not cooperate before the revolution, they, "had no history of cooperation."

"The term American Revolution propagates a wholly fictional sense of national coherence not present at the moment and only discernable in latent forms..." (6)

Nearsighted and Farsighted:

Ellis is cautioning readers to be careful, we must consider events in context vs how we see things today.

Farsighted- difficult to see things in the past accurately in the present

Nearsighted- difficult to see things in the historical moment...

At the time of the Revolution leaders didn't recognize:

1. Geography was a massive advantage

Washington Quote about the great capacity of the Americans

"The Citizens of America, placed in the most enviable condition, as the sole Lords and Proprietors of a vast Tract of Continent, comprehending all the various soils and climates of the World, and abounding with all the necessities and conveniences of life, are now by the late satisfactory pacification, acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and independence: They are, from this period, to be considered as Actors on a most conspicuous Theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designed by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity."

Political Values of the Revolution Era

Suspicion of any centralized governing power = "Whig" Principles

"Obsessive suspicion of any centralized political power... far away..."

Revolutionary leaders were afraid of power held in distant parts...

They were afraid of being controlled

"The early Republic would dissolve into a cluster of state or regional sovereignties..." (8)

Articles of Confederation reflect "Whig" fears and ideas, loose alignment of largely independent countries. Anti-Control and Anti-Central Government.

"No central authority to coerce... the citizenry was permissible..."

How do we manage a vast area but keep local control and avoid regional conflicts?

Problem: you couldn't govern the new country without CONTROLS

Central Paradox of the American Revolution

Freedom/Liberty= the states control themselves (the "Spirit of 76" Smaller state gov vs

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The Nation/Controls/Stability: we need a stronger union = controls (far away Gov with coercive powers)

The balance between controls vs. independent actions of the states.

The founders were worried that the newly independent states would be divided by geography and that would break the unity.

The Constitution Solves the Paradox of the American Revolution:

1. Federal System offers local control and national organization
2. The Federal government had power to coerce obedience to national law." (9)

Problem with Constitutional Convention,

"1787 a tiny minority of prominent political leaders from several key states conspired to draft and then ratify..." (8)

"The convention was extra-legal"

Secrecy

Rich people did not represent "the people"

Slavery was protected.

No unanimous requirement to change the articles of confederation

Theme of Compromise

Large States vs small states

Federal vs State Jurisdiction

Sovereignty federal vs State = The People

The Term "American"

"Pre-Revolution era, English writers used the term in a negative way... referring to a marginal population unworthy of equal status with full blooded Englishmen... The word was uttered and heard as an insult that designated an inferior or subordinate people... crude and mindless whims of the masses...." (10) **American was an epithet**

Assets to the New Nation: Aided Success

1789 NYC first Capitol

1. "Bountiful Continent"
2. Far Away from Europe
3. Youthful Population/4million people/1/2 under 16 years old
4. Lots of people had property
5. Commitment to republican government
6. George Washington

Liabilities to the New Nation: Hindered Success

1. No one ever established a republic of this size
2. Concentrated powers of government was hated
3. No experience being united
4. Slavery was contrary to American values of "All men are created equal."

The First Decade was significant 1789-1800.

Precedents were established

"... It established palpable fact what the Constitution had only outlined in purposefully ambiguous theory..." (11)

1st decade we evade the slavery issue...

"... during our most vulnerable early years of the republic."

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Two views of the American Revolution

Thomas Jefferson (Individual liberty) Mercy Otis Warren 1. Political break from monarchy and aristocracy 2. Federalists represent the corrupt monarchy and the old way of coercion 3. Core idea of the revolution is individual liberty 4. Government is dangerous	Alexander Hamilton (Stronger Government to save the Revolution) John Marshall 1. Strong central government is needed to insure the revolution is sustained 2. American nationhood needs strong central government. 3. Reduction of individual state and regional power. 4. Sacrifice local control for the larger good 5. Governmental discipline as a device for national development.
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True meaning of the Revolution:

Individual vs Collectivist

Freedom vs Control and order

What makes our founding special is we found a way to discuss differences.

Institutionally and avoid bloodshed

Rotation new versions of old tensions.

The conflict between the two is a fundamental part of America.

"... the debate was not resolved but built into the fabric of our national identity." (16)

"A decade long shouting match." (16)