

## **A Vignette on Lesson 1**

The bell rings and my students are filing into the classroom. As they enter, they grab the warm-up laying on the front table. On their way to their seats, most stop in front of the class, to read what has been written on the whiteboard. The whiteboard is flooded with numbers and bullet points, addressing the learning objectives, agenda, and reminders. Immediately after students are settled in their chairs, they begin working on the warm-up. As the bell rings to signify class has begun, I greet all my students, “Hello everyone, I hope you all are having a wonderful day!” The students respond, greeting me with a, “Hello, Ms. Ingram!” I give students instructions on their warm-up activity, then spend a few minutes walking around, slowly stopping by students desks to see their responses. After a few more minutes, students begin setting their pencils down and their heads pop up, eyes wandering around the room as they wait for the remainder of their peers to be finished up. Once I examine all students have completed the warm-up, I ignite a conversation.

Ms Ingram: “For your warm-up, you all were to analyze the political cartoon and answer the following questions. I have placed the image on the board, along with the questions. Let’s dive in and see where this analysis leads us. Who would like to volunteer to answer one of the five questions?”

Just then, almost half of the students raise their hands high into the air. Some are even frantically waving their hands back and forth.

Ms. Ingram: “I love seeing so many hands go up! Okay, Carl, Norah, Kate, Everett, and Kai. You five will be answering the following questions.”

Just then I write the students' names on the whiteboard next to the number they will answer.

Ms. Ingram: “Carl, please read the question first then give us your answer.”

Carl: “What is the cartoon’s caption or title? And the answer is Rough Sailings Ahead.”

Ms. Ingram: "That is correct. Norah, you're up next?"

Norah: "What words or objects do you see in the cartoon? Well, the Articles of Confederation sticks out first. Then, the other words are no national court system, no power to enforce laws, no power to enforce treaties, no power to raise an army, and no power to collect taxes."

Ms. Ingram: "That is correct Norah, nice work. Let's turn to question number 3 now, Kate?"

Kate: "What event or idea is the cartoon referring to? I believe this is referring to the Articles of Confederation."

Ms. Ingram: "Yes Kate, that is correct! So, we know it is referring to the Articles of Confederation. However, when we look at the title and the words combined, what is this telling us about the Articles of Confederation?"

Kate: "It sounds like the Articles was not the best form of government for the United States. The words all start with no, which shows that the Articles of Confederation did not provide these things to the people. Also, the title says "Rough Sailings Ahead," so that means that this can't be good for the future of America."

Ms. Ingram: "Spot on Kate! Yes this is really telling us that the Articles of Confederation may not have been the best form of government for the United States after the Revolution, however, we were at a point where we weren't sure we wanted a strong national government. The states were scared to give that power to the government and instead wanted the states to hold more power. Now, let's continue with the questions."

Everett and Kai will finish up answering the last two questions.

Ms. Ingram: "We learned from analyzing this cartoon that the Articles of Confederation was not the best form of government for America for many different reasons. Today, you all are going to

put on your historical thinking caps and be historians to learn about the events that led to the creation of the Constitution.”

I give students directions on how the station’s activity will play out. I break them up into groups and assign each to a different station to start at. There is a timer on the board that is set for 8 minutes. Prior to starting it, I remind them of the classroom rules when working with peers. I specifically address the importance of being open, supportive, accountable, and trustworthy. As the lesson begins, each group is engaging in the material provided. I can see multiple hands shuffling through the folders left at each station. I slowly move through the classroom, weaving around desks, making sure I don’t disturb the experiences they are having. I allow groups to immerse themselves into the sources before I prompt and facilitate discussions. It’s clear to me (even just 4 minutes into the station’s activity) that learning is occurring. For example, one group is taking turns reading aloud to each other, another is feverishly writing their answers down, and others are discussing the meaning of their readings. It’s my time to step in and facilitate now.

Ms. Ingram: Danielle, I am hearing your group questioning the significance of Shays’ Rebellion. Let me ask you this, why did Shays’ Rebellion occur?

Danielle: Well, because it people were having trouble, after the war, paying their bills.

Ms. Ingram: Correct! So, what happened next?

Kyle: A group of protestors marched to the courts to keep debtors from being tried, then they marched to the arsenal, where weapons are stored, but they failed at taking it over.

Ms. Ingram: Yes, spot on! We know what occurred during Shays’ Rebellion, so how does this connect to the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?

Kyle: Well, the states had more power than the federal government.

Danielle: Yeah! Shays' Rebellion was a reminder that we needed a stronger central government, which was one of the reasons we formed the Constitution!

Ms. Ingram: That is correct, great work!