

Why Do I Need an Education?

OU Teach-In Series 2017

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	4- class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	200 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

Why is education mandatory? Can a democracy survive without an educated population?

Summary

Students will explore the relationship between public education and democracy. They will investigate how an educated population contributes to the democratic process. This lesson includes excerpts and video clips from a lecture by Johann Neem at the OU Teach-In Series 2017.

Snapshot

Engage

Students choose a magnetic statement that best reflects their viewpoint about school attendance.

Explore

Students read an informational text about schooling in colonial America. They create a word cloud based on the reading.

Explain

Students watch a video clip about the relationship between an educated population and a democracy. Students read and complete a graphic organizer about the intention of and motivation for educating citizens through primary source documents from Jefferson, Franklin, and Samuel Adams.

Extend

Several options exist for extending this lesson. They include participating in a debate on the viability of a free public education, examining what an "educated" citizen should know, and investigating whether a lack of social studies education has eroded civic responsibilities.

Evaluate

Various opportunities for assessments are included in the lesson. Students can be evaluated on their analysis of the primary source documents and completion of the graphic organizer, creating debate notes, or writing an essay.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.3.9: Analyze the rights and liberties guaranteed to all citizens in the Bill of Rights and how they are protected at the state level through the doctrine of incorporation using the 14th Amendment.

Attachments

- Debate Notes - Spanish.docx
- Debate Notes - Spanish.pdf
- Debate Notes.docx
- Debate Notes.pdf
- Education in the Colonies - Spanish.docx
- Education in the Colonies - Spanish.pdf
- Education in the Colonies.docx
- Education in the Colonies.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Why Do I Need an Education.pptx
- Magnetic Statements - Spanish.docx
- Magnetic Statements - Spanish.pdf
- Magnetic Statements.docx
- Magnetic Statements.pdf
- Primary Source - Letter from Samuel Adams - Spanish.docx
- Primary Source - Letter from Samuel Adams - Spanish.pdf
- Primary Source - Letter from Samuel Adams.docx
- Primary Source - Letter from Samuel Adams.pdf
- Primary Source - Letter from Thomas Jefferson - Spanish.docx
- Primary Source - Letter from Thomas Jefferson - Spanish.pdf
- Primary Source - Letter from Thomas Jefferson.docx
- Primary Source - Letter from Thomas Jefferson.pdf
- Primary Source - Pamphlet from Benjamin Franklin - Spanish.docx
- Primary Source - Pamphlet from Benjamin Franklin - Spanish.pdf
- Primary Source - Pamphlet from Benjamin Franklin.docx
- Primary Source - Pamphlet from Benjamin Franklin.pdf
- Primary Source Document Organizer - Spanish.docx
- Primary Source Document Organizer - Spanish.pdf
- Primary Source Document Organizer.docx
- Primary Source Document Organizer.pdf

Materials

- Magnetic Statements Posters (attached)
- Education in the Colonies (attached)
- Student devices with internet access
- Primary source document organizer
- Class sets of primary source documents (Samuel Adams, Jefferson, Franklin)
- Debate Notes Organizer (attached)
- Lesson Slides (attached)

Engage

Begin by showing students the essential questions for this lesson on **slide 3** of the attached **Lesson Slides**. Why is education mandatory? Can a democracy survive without an educated population? Ask for any general class comments or questions about the topic of the lesson.

Why do I go to school? Prior to beginning class, set up the Magnetic Statements activity by placing the Magnetic Statements posters provided in the attachments on walls around the classroom. Display **slide 4** that lists the seven statements about compulsory education. Ask students to think about each statement and choose ONE that best reflects their reason for attending school. You might need to explain statement five that the word *activity* means anything like choir, student council, athletics, or band. The magnetic statements are:

- It's important to me to get my high school diploma.
- It will help me get into a good college.
- My friends all go to school here.
- It's the law, so I have to go to school.
- I participate and enjoy my favorite *(activity)* here.
- The teachers are nice, and I like learning new stuff.
- It will help me get a job if I stay in school.

Once students have had a chance to think about the response they want, have them move next to the poster that has the statement they believe most reflects their own reasoning for school attendance. Allow five minutes for students who chose the same response to discuss their choice with one another. Choose a spokesperson in each group to share with the class why they chose the response that they did.

After all groups have shared their answers, tell students that today they will find out what some of the purposes of school were during the colonial period and why education was important to the Founding Fathers.

Explore

Pass out the **Education in the Colonies** handout. Show the questions about the handout on **slide 5**. As students read, they are to keep these questions in mind. Read this handout together as a class and discuss general questions about the text.

1. Prior to the American Revolution, who received the most education? Why?
2. What was the main reason why the Puritans educated children?
3. After the American Revolution, how did schools change?

Assign students to groups of three. Have each group determine and write down one or two words that BEST describe colonial education from the reading. Open EdWordle and type in the words as each student group shares out. Create a word cloud from the words shared. Examine the main ideas represented in the word cloud.

Explain

Move students out of groups temporarily. Transition students by telling them that "today, we will dig deeper into the fundamental reasons why public schools were supported by the founders and how public education was shaped after the American Revolution." Show the first 17:15 minutes of Dr. Johann Neems' lecture, "A Republic, If You Can Keep It: Public Education and American Democracy."

As students watch the video clip, ask them to jot down the main ideas on a sheet of paper. Tell students that they will use these notes in the next part of the lesson. Also have a brief discussion after the video clip to see if students understand the main points. Refer to the Teacher's Note for discussion after the video clip.

Teacher's Note: Johann Neem Lecture Discussion

This lecture on democracy and education by Dr. Johann Neem was part of the 2017 OU Teach-In series. Dr. Neem's lecture is titled "A Republic, If You Can Keep It: Public Education and American Democracy." He explains how the early founders wanted well-educated citizens so that no president, monarch, or dictator could have absolute power over the government. Well-educated citizens would understand the purposes of a democracy and become civic-minded for the good of society. Public education would equalize all children. The rich would be no better educated than the poor. Immigrant children would become "homogenized" into mainstream society--that is, they would understand common principles and civic responsibility and complete a schedule of academics through a systemic public education.

Have students move back to their groups of three. Tell students that many of the Founding Fathers and early patriots had particular ideas of the importance and purpose of education as a new United States. Pass out a Primary Source Document Organizer page to all students. Each student is responsible for completing the document organizer. Pass out a primary source document set to each group. Ask students to read the documents as a group and share ideas about what each document means as it pertains to education. Students are to complete the document organizer by working together and sharing tasks. The primary source documents are:

1. A 1749 pamphlet by Benjamin Franklin
2. A 1779 letter from Samuel Adams to James Warren
3. An 1820 letter from Thomas Jefferson to William Jarvis

Students will also need their notes from the lecture to complete the Summary section of the document organizer. After the groups are finished working, have them present or share their summaries with the class. Their completed document organizers can also be turned in for an assessment.

Extend

There are several choices for extending this lesson further.

Option 1: Show the JayWalking video where Jay Leno asks people questions from the U.S. citizenship test. The video illustrates that many people do not know basic information about how our government works.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=WJlY9C7YWzI

Display the quote by Thomas Jefferson on **slide 6**. Ask students what Jefferson meant by "enlightened" citizens informed by education. What information should citizens know that would help them participate actively in government? Have groups make a list of at least 10 civic questions or statements that they believe are important for informed citizens to understand in order to actively participate in government or in society. If time allows, students can create a public poll from their questions or statements to see how informed current citizens are.

Option 2: Show the JayWalking video described in Option 1.

Have students read the op-ed piece from *The Atlantic* titled "Bring Back Social Studies" or the op-ed from the *Lexington Herald Leader* titled , "Decline in teaching Social Studies contributes to national discord". Ask students to write an essay to support or refute the claim that a lack of social studies education is contributing to our national problems or keeping citizens from understanding their civic responsibilities. Ask students to support their stance with evidence.

Option 3: Debate whether we should keep public education public. Show **slide 7**. Johann Neem in his lecture states that public education should be supported. Pass out the **Debate Notes** handout. Tell students that they will participate in a debate about school choice. Number off students in the class as 1 or 2.

Have students in group 1 read the op-ed article from the Washington Post titled "The Founding Fathers made our schools public. We should keep them that way" by Johann Neem. Have students in group 2 read an opposing article, "The Value of Parental Choice in Education: A Look at the Research".

As students read, ask them to jot down important reasons from the articles why public schools should be kept public or why parents should be given tax funded school choice. If time allows, students should also find additional research to support the stance they were assigned.

Create a debate where students argue the question, Should we keep public education public, Yes or No? Encourage students to jot down notes from the opposing viewpoint on their handout during the debate.

After the debate, allow students time to create a written stance of their own viewpoint with supporting evidence from the debate notes.

Evaluate

The primary source document organizer and any of the Extend activities can be used as assessments of this lesson.

Resources

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