

## COMPARING FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

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### **Description:**

This activity will explore the different democratic ideologies that the Canadian and United States governments are founded on. It will also explore possible reasons for the differing ideologies as well as how those ideologies may have shaped the development of the governmental attitude of these respective countries.

### **Grade Level(s):**

Suitable for grades 11-12

### **Subject(s):**

American History or U.S. Government

### **Duration:**

Three or four 45-minute sessions

### **Goal:**

The goal is to compare the statement in the *Declaration of Independence* that a purpose of the Government of the United States is to protect **“Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”** with the statement in the *British North America Act*, that a purpose of the Government of Canada is to provide, **“Peace, Order, and good Government”**.

### **Objectives:**

The students will:

- Compare the history of how these respective countries gained their independence from Great Britain and how that independence process may have influenced the development of these two phrases
- Explore the possible impact of Canada’s dual culture (French & English) vs. the U.S. single culture on the development of those two phrases.
- Explore possible meanings of the phrases, “Life Liberty and pursuit of Happiness” and Peace, Order, and good Government
- Examine the issue of “Rights”, individual vs. group in each country.
- Explore the possible impact of the respective phrases on such issues as; multiculturalism, relations with indigenous peoples and national health care.

### **Standards:**

This lesson relates to NCSS standards IV and V as well as the following Washington State Social Studies EALR’s:

- Civics-1.1, 1.2
- History-1.2, 2.2

### **Background Information:**

Before this activity, American History students will have examined Chapter 4, "The Road to Independence, 1753-1783" in the student text, *America: Pathways to the Present*  
Government Students will have examined Chapter 2, "Origins of American Government" in the student text, *Magruder's American Government*

All students will have reviewed a summary of the Statute of Westminster, Section 91 of the *British North America Act* and paragraph 16 of the *Proclamation of 1763*.

### **Materials:**

Students will be provided with:

- Handouts of: The Statute of Westminster, British North America Act and the Proclamation of 1763.
- Pages 52-54 of *Canada: Northern Neighbor*
- Website: [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\\_coverage/health/uninsured/international.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/health/uninsured/international.html)

### **Procedures:**

Following the review of the provided materials, students will participate in a general discussion on the similarities and differences of the phrases "**Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness**" and "**Peace, Order and good Government**".

Students will be divided into three groups, each with the specific assignment of comparing the Canadian and American responses to their assigned topic. *Group One*-will examine attitudes towards multiculturalism. *Group Two*-will examine government relations with indigenous peoples. *Group Three*-will examine health care funding and coverage.

Each group will select a spokesperson to present their findings to the rest of the class at the completion of their work. Following the presentations, the teacher will lead the class in a brainstorming session on three questions:

- (1) Is there a connection between these phrases and their associated government in relationship to--the rights individuals vs. the rights of the group?
- (2) In a democratic society, which should have the highest priority, the rights of individuals or the rights of the group?
- (3) What might be the implications of each priority to the society?

### **Assessment:**

Students will complete a peer assessment regarding the participation of other members of their group. Students will be expected to write an opinion essay on the three questions posed in the brain storming session, the students will defend their opinions with logic and examples presented in the group presentations or discussed in the brain storming session.

### **Possible Extension:**

This lesson plan could also be expanded to include:

- Comparisons of the respective governmental attitudes towards environmental sustainability.
- Comparing governmental responses to the Quebec separatist movement and the Confederate States attempt to secede from the Union.