

Lesson: **Choosing a Capital**

Content Standards

Delaware State Historical Standard 2

6-8b: Students will examine historical documents, artifacts, and other materials, and analyze them in terms of credibility, as well as the purpose, perspective, or point of view for which they were constructed.

9-12b: Students will examine and analyze primary and secondary sources in order to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.

Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Science 11-12

2. Determine the central idea or conclusions of a text; summarize complex concepts, processes, or information presented in a text by paraphrasing them in simpler but still accurate terms

6. Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text, identifying important issue that remain unresolved.

Advanced Placement Historical Thinking Skills

Making Connections

Claims and Evidence

Developments and Processes

Grade Level: **Middle and High School**

Primary Source:

Petition to congress by the Delaware Assembly to make Delaware or part of Delaware the Capital of the new country. Original and transcription below.

Procedure:

Warmup: Pose the following questions to students either verbally or using electronic platform such as nearpod or peardeck.

Questions: 1. What is the function of a nation's capital?
 2. What is the capital of the U.S.?
 3. How is a capital chosen and what kinds of physical elements would a capital in the 1789s need?

Lesson procedure:

Students will complete worksheet below based on the transcription

Transcription

A Petition of the Freeholders and Electors of the Delaware State to the General Assembly of the same.

Whereas in the eighth section of the first article of the plan of Federal Government agreed upon by the late General Convention it is resolved That Congress shall exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of Government of the United States.

Your Petitioners taking into consideration the central situation, plentiful supplies of every kind of provisions and other great conveniences which would be afforded to the Seat of Congress by its establishment in Delaware, and being likewise sensible of the many advantages which would derived to the citizens of the State in general, and moreover actuated by a federal zeal to discover an early disposition to accommodate the United States in an object of such importance.

We therefore request that your Honorable Houses will immediately adopt the necessary measures by such act or resolution as you in your wisdom my judge expedient by which an offer may be of granting to Congress a district of Delaware State for the purpose aforementioned, either in some particular desirable place, or in any part of the State which Congress may think proper to make choice of.

Robert Reivel

Wm. Humphries

Ja. Gibbons

Wm. Creery

Johnathan Mumford

Watkins Crampton

James Montgomery

James Lea Sr.

John Hoyer

Joseph Shallcross

John Shallcross

James Hollingsworth

James Brobson

Josp A. Bayard

Thomas Graves

J.H. Wattragh

Joseph Warren

Literacy using Historical Documents

This worksheet is designed to assist students with literacy and historical thinking skills.

Directions: Read the below document and highlight any word you do not understand. After you have read and highlighted look up the words you do not understand. Then answer the questions at the bottom. The focus of the questions are on HAPPY (Historical Context, Audience, Purpose, Point of View, & Why)

Questions

1. What was the date of the document?
2. Who wrote the document?
3. *Context is defined as the background information that surrounds and influences events, ideas, or developments in a particular time period.* What is the historical context for the above document? (Historical Context)
4. Who is the document being written to? (Who is the audience)
5. The first two paragraphs are asking The General Assembly to consider what? (Purpose of the Document)
6. Why would Delaware be a good choice according to the Freeholders and Petitioners? (Point of View of the Document) Why would Delaware want to be the seat of government?
7. Why wouldn't Delaware be a good choice for the seat of government?
8. Where do you find Congresses authority to create a seat of government?

Extension Activity:

1. Students will listen to the song *The Room Where it Happens* from the musical Hamilton. Provide the students with a copy of lyrics. After the students have listened to the song and read the lyrics put them in groups of 2 or 3 students.
2. Have students rewrite the lyrics including Delaware's petition above. Ask for volunteers to perform their version.