

The Enlightenment Comes to Delaware: A Primary Source Scavenger Hunt

Timing: This lesson is designed for an 80-minute block schedule. It can be shortened by decreasing the number of Enlightenment ideals needed to identify.

Civics Standard 1: 9-12a: Students will analyze the ways in which the structure and purposes of different governments around the world reflect differing ideologies, cultures, values, and histories.

Context for Lesson: This lesson has students hone their skills reading primary sources while applying their knowledge of Enlightenment ideals. Students will read sections of the Delaware Committee of Correspondence notes and race each other to identify and explain Enlightenment ideals in the transcript. They will then reflect on how the Enlightenment shaped Delawareans' understanding of the government.

Enlightenment/Revolution Vocab to Pre-Teach: This lesson assesses student application of these Enlightenment terms so it would best follow a lesson reviewing those vocabulary words.

Enlightenment Words
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representative Democracy• Individual Liberties• Natural Rights• Social Contract• Separation of Powers• Consent of the Governed• Checks and Balances• Popular Sovereignty• Tyranny• Self-Government

Procedure:

Prep: Cut the set of documents up and tape them up on the walls in your classroom or hallway. Spreading the documents out will reduce noise and distractions and make the students feel more like they are doing a "scavenger hunt." You want them there to be enough space that multiple pairs can be at the same document at a time.

Warm Up: Review the Enlightenment words students will be asked to apply by completing a vocabulary activity of your choice.

Setting the Context: Review the following content with students so they have background on the documents' context. You can have them read or provide an overview yourself. Below are two summaries from the Mount Vernon Center's Digital Encyclopedia for your reference.

Committees of Correspondence Summary from the Mount Vernon Center

Committees of correspondence were longstanding institutions that became a key communications system during the early years of the American Revolution (1772-1776). Towns, counties, and colonies from Nova Scotia to Georgia had their own committees of correspondence. Men on these committees wrote to each other to express ideas, to confirm

mutual assistance, and to debate and coordinate resistance to British imperial policy. The network created by committees of correspondence organized and mobilized hundreds of communities across the British North American colonies....

In this decade there were three consecutive systems of committees of correspondence: the Boston-Massachusetts system, the inter-colonial system, and the post-Coercive Acts system. Each system was organized and worked in slightly different ways. Even within systems there was great variety between committees in function and form...

The third committee system was established in the spring of 1774, in response to the Coercive Acts. Parliament had passed a series of acts punishing Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party and, upon hearing the news, the Boston Committee of Correspondence quickly spread the word and asked for help resisting the acts. Several inter-colonial committees of correspondence simultaneously called for a general congress of the North American colonies to address and combat the Coercive Acts.

Coercive Acts Summer from the Mount Vernon Center (the Port Bill is the only act specifically referenced in the documents.)

The Coercive Acts of 1774, known as the Intolerable Acts in the American colonies, were a series of four laws passed by the British Parliament to punish the colony of Massachusetts Bay for the Boston Tea Party. The four acts were the Boston Port Act, the Massachusetts Government Act, the Administration of Justice Act, and the Quartering Act. The Quebec Act of 1774 is sometimes included as one of the Coercive Acts, although it was not related to the Boston Tea Party. These oppressive acts sparked strong colonial resistance, including the meeting of the First Continental Congress, which George Washington attended in September and October 1774.

The Boston Port Act was the first of the Coercive Acts. Parliament passed the bill on March 31, 1774, and King George III gave it royal assent on May 20th. The act authorized the Royal Navy to blockade Boston Harbor because "the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there."¹ The blockade commenced on June 1, 1774, effectively closing Boston's port to commercial traffic. Additionally, it forbade any exports to foreign ports or provinces. The only imports allowed were provisions for the British Army and necessary goods, such as fuel and wheat. The Act mandated that the port remain shuttered until Bostonians made restitution to the East India Company (the owners of the destroyed tea), the king had determined that the colony was able to obey British laws, and that British goods once again could be traded in the harbor safely. However, if the Bostonians refused to pay the East India Company or the king remained unsatisfied, the harbor would be blockaded indefinitely.

Activity

1. After reviewing the context break students into partners for their scavenger hunt.
2. Have students race to rotate around the room to read the various documents. As they read, they are to identify the Enlightenment ideal(s) represented in the source and discuss how the source illustrates the idea.
3. Then each partner will record their discussion on the graphic organizer by identifying the document that goes with the Enlightenment ideal and explaining how. Make each partner record the information to increase engagement and provide better study materials later.

4. Rotate until all the Enlightenment ideals have a document matched to them. Documents will be used more than once.
5. The first group to complete the graphic organizer AND that can correctly explain how the ideal is illustrated in the source wins.
6. Review the documents and have a whole group discussion about the different Enlightenment ideals in each document. Review this by having students work in groups (or just with their partners) to decide which idea is best represented in the source and then write that idea on a white board to hold up. Use the attached slides to give students a visual of the source as you review them. Model literacy by highlighting key language in the document.

Exit Ticket: Have the students respond to the prompts below.

1. How did the Enlightenment influence Delawareans' beliefs about government? Use ONE Enlightenment ideal and ONE document to support your response.
2. How do you think the history of British tyranny and the Enlightenment might influence the American system of government after independence?

Documents:

Document A

2^d That the Act of Parliament for shutting up the Port of Boston, is unconstitutional, oppressive to the inhabitants of that Town, dangerous to the Liberties of the British Colonists, and that therefore we consider our **Brethren*** of Boston as suffering in the common cause of America.

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, July 1774
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

* **Brethren:** people belonging to a particular group

Document B

This Assembly taking, into their very serious consideration the present critical situation of American Affairs, of the exclusive Right of the Colonists of imposing Taxes upon themselves...

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, July 1774
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

Document C

...The Parliament of Great Britain have the Power of making Laws to bind the Colonists, without their consent, either by themselves or their representatives: A recent instance whereof is exhibited in the late statute, commonly called the BOSTON PORT BILL. Therefore in Order to collect the Voice and Sentiments of this Assembly the following Articles were proposed, voted and agreed to.

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, July 1774
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

Document D

That it is the inherent Right of British Subjects to be taxed by their own consent, or by Representatives chosen by themselves only, and that every of Act of the British Parliament respecting

the internal Police of North America is Unconstitutional, and an invasion of our just Rights and Privileges.

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, July 1774
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

Document E

That a Congress of Deputies from the several Colonies of North America is the most probable and proper mode of obtaining a **redress*** of American Grievances, securing our Rights and Liberties and reestablishing Peace and harmony between Great Britain and these Colonies, on a constitutional Foundation.

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, July 1774
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

***redress**: remedy or to set right an undesirable or unfair situation.

Document F

That the late Act of Parliament inflicting Pains and Penalties on the Town of Boston by blocking up their Harbour, is a precedent justly alarming to the British Colonies in America, and entirely inconsistent with and **subversive*** of their Rights and Liberties.

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, July 1774
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

* **subversive**: ending or intending to overthrow, destroy, or undermine

Document G

...we look upon it as the **indubitable*** Right of every English subject, to deliver his opinion to the Public, upon every Constitutional Question. When this ceases as be the case, Liberty will be but a name. Freedom an empty Phantom.

Delaware Committee of Correspondence, February 1775
DE Public Archives Box # 470510

* **indubitable**: impossible to doubt; unquestionable.

Graphic Organizer: Identify the document that illustrates the Enlightenment ideal for each box. Then explain how that document illustrates the Enlightenment ideal.

Representative Democracy	Individual Liberties
Document:	Document:
How:	How:

<p>Separation of Powers</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>	<p>Checks and Balances</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>
<p>Consent of the Governed</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>	<p>Social Contract</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>
<p>Popular Sovereignty</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>	<p>Tyranny</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>
<p>Natural Rights</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>	<p>Self-Government</p> <p>Document:</p> <p>How:</p>