

The Inclusive Story of Our Nation

CONTENT ADVISORY

Some of the texts and videos in this inquiry portray the realities of slavery and racism. Therefore, images and written descriptions include violence, partial nudity, racist stereotypes, and sexual violence. Teachers should review all materials before providing them to students.

Compelling Question

What is the inclusive story of the founding of our nation?

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|--|--|--|---|
| State Standard(s) | Kentucky/ 8H.CH.2, 8H. CH.2, 8H.CE.1 Ohio/Eighth Grade/ Content Statements 4,5,7,12 Ohio/High School/ American History/Founding Documents/ Content Statements 4,5,6,7 | | |
| C3 Framework Indicator(s) | D2.His.16.6-8; D3.3.6-8; D4.3.6-8 D2.His.16.9-12; D3.3.9-12; D4.3.9-12 | | |
| Learning Goals | <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 919 971 1312"> Students will understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How the social constructs of race and racism were used to justify slavery. ■ That the founding principles of the United States were revolutionary but did not apply to everyone. ■ That history can be romanticized or distorted to promote a story. </td> <td data-bbox="971 919 1550 1312"> Students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Examine the exclusion of African Americans, women and American Indians in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. ■ Explore the intentions behind romanticizing and distorting history. ■ Create a claim and support it with evidence. </td> </tr> </table> | Students will understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How the social constructs of race and racism were used to justify slavery. ■ That the founding principles of the United States were revolutionary but did not apply to everyone. ■ That history can be romanticized or distorted to promote a story. | Students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Examine the exclusion of African Americans, women and American Indians in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. ■ Explore the intentions behind romanticizing and distorting history. ■ Create a claim and support it with evidence. |
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Supporting Question

How was slavery justified?

Featured Sources

- **Video:** “The Origin of Race in the USA”
nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race

Supporting Question

What about the civil liberties of white women, free African Americans, and American Indians?

Featured Sources

- **Text:** “Women and Children in Colonial America”
nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/women-and-children-colonial-america



Featured Sources (cont.)

- **Text:** Historical Foundations of Race (Appendix A)
- **Video:** “Slavery - Crash Course US History #13”
nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race
- **Primary Sources:** On Slaveholders’ Sexual Abuse of Slaves: Selections from 19th 7 20th century Slave Narratives (Appendix C)
- **Video:** “Why did colonists in the British North American colonies support the institution of slavery?”
choices.edu/video/why-did-colonists-in-the-british-north-american-colonies-support-the-institution-of-slavery

Formative Performance Task

- List 3 to 4 justifications used to support slavery. Cite your sources.

Featured Sources (cont.)

- **Text:** “Women & the American Story”
wams.nyhistory.org/early-encounters/english-colonies
- **Video:** Women’s Roles in Colonial America”
facebook.com/conococheagueinstitute/videos/womens-roles-in-colonial-america/901297460378166
- **Video:** “How did colonial women express revolutionary ideas?”
choices.edu/video/colonial-women-express-revolutionary-ideas
- **Primary Source:** “Remember the Ladies” and interpretation
www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/adams-remember-ladies/
- **Text:** “Free African Americans in the Colonial Era”
www.ushistory.org/us/6e.asp
- **Text:** “Vermont 1777: Early Steps Against Slavery”
nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/vermont-1777-early-steps-against-slavery
- **Video:** “What was life like for free Black people in the British North American colonies?”
choices.edu/video/what-was-life-like-for-free-blacks-in-the-british-north-american-colonies
- **Text and Primary Sources:** Phyllis Wheatley bio and poetry (Appendix D)
- **Text:** “The Native American Government That Inspired the U.S. Constitution”
history.com/news/iroquois-confederacy-influence-us-constitution
- **Animated map:** “Native American lands”
vox.com/2015/5/27/8618261/america-maps-truths
- **Primary Source:** Cornplanter’s speech and analysis (Appendix E)
- **Primary Source:** “European Americans and Native Americans View Each Other, 1700-1775” (Appendix F)

Formative Performance Task

Analyze sources and respond to prompts:

- What about the civil liberties of white women, free African Americans, and American Indians?
- Were they guaranteed civil liberties?
- Compared to white men, how were their civil liberties limited? How were they treated by colonial society?
- What did you find interesting? Are there contradictions between texts?

Summative Performance Task

ARGUMENT: In this inquiry, the Summative Performance Task and Taking Informed Action are combined.

To answer the compelling question, *What is the inclusive story of our Founding Principles?*, students will create a more inclusive counter narrative to the “stock story” of the creation of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution, as presented in the video shown while staging the compelling question of this inquiry (youtube.com/watch?v=bZ3Wjqp-4Fk).

EXTENSION: Students should transform their written narratives into a visual or textual format that is accessible for elementary students.

Taking Informed Action

UNDERSTAND: What is the inclusive story of our Founding Principles?

Students will compile materials, such as books and videos, that are used to teach elementary students about the story of the creation of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution.

ASSESS: Students will appraise the materials for their inclusiveness; Whose stories are told and not told? If our goal was to promote the greatness of the U.S., what stories would we tell, and what would we leave out?

ACT: The audience for this narrative could be elementary students and could take the form of a video, a book, or a play. Perform the narrative for an audience or post it online.

Inquiry Description

As students engage in the inquiry, they determine: What is the inclusive story of the founding of our nation? This compelling question requires students to grapple with the revolutionary and discriminatory aspects of our country’s foundation, and the reality that history can be romanticized or distorted to promote a story. During this inquiry, students also examine the social construct of *race* and *racism* and their influence on the acceptance of slavery and discrimination against free African Americans during the colonial era. Finally, students are empowered to generate change by impacting how young people are introduced to the story of our nation’s founding documents.

Students will engage in social justice work by challenging normative thought regarding our nation’s founding documents. Students will consider the voices of those who were overlooked and disregarded as the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution were written and consider the lasting impact of this action.

This inquiry embodies the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center principles of **courage** and **perseverance**. When challenging a “stock story” and broadening people’s understanding, they will learn that it takes courage to critique tightly held beliefs and perseverance to make a lasting impact on those beliefs.

We encourage teachers and students to visit our museum and further explore how slavery evolved during the colonial and Revolutionary War eras. Students will learn that our founding principles – “Laws of Nature”... “truths”... “all men are created equal”... “unalienable rights”... “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” – and others like it were entrenched in the Underground Railroad and Abolitionist Movement long before the Declaration of Independence. Freedom Seekers, Conductors and Abolitionists stood on the foundation and principles of freedom to fight against the institution of slavery. Students will learn about the diversity of this country and how diverse groups can work together towards a common goal.

Required Prior Knowledge

This inquiry was designed to be an extension of the Founding Principles Inquiry. The “stock story” concept and several learning goals carry over from that inquiry.

This inquiry requires students to have existing knowledge about the causes of the Revolutionary War, the Enlightenment, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. In addition, students will be tasked with identifying “stock story” elements and to question how and why history can be romanticized or idealized. If students have not engaged in such tasks, they need exploration and discussion of these concepts. Lee Anne Bell’s (2010) *Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching* is a great teacher reference. A summary of this work can be found at lead.nwp.org/knowledgebase/lee-anne-bell-counters-the-stock-stories-of-race-and-racism.

To prepare students for the critical thinking required throughout this inquiry, you might facilitate the Lunchroom Fight 1 & 2 lessons from the Stanford History Education Group: Reading Like a Historian resources at sheg.stanford.edu/history-lessons?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A7#main-content#main-content#main-content#main-content. During these lessons, students will hone the ability to reconcile conflicting claims, consider multiple perspectives and evaluate the reliability of sources. Through sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating different eyewitness accounts, these lessons introduce historical thinking skills.

Staging The Compelling Question

As a class, discuss the “stock story” of the foundations of the U.S. Have students determine the principles and values this story typically promotes and the narratives and people that are typically included. Explore the concept of romanticizing and distorting history. Why does it happen? Can it be done to promote a version of a story? Is it a positive or negative thing? Connections can be made to the Lunchroom lessons mentioned previously.

Present the “stock story” of the U.S. as a champion of unalienable rights and civil liberties where all men were created equal. Explain that students will be critiquing this concept in the context of the Revolutionary War Era. Discuss why it is important to critically examine this concept, and our roles as citizens in a democracy. You may have students review the founding principles found in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution to answer this question.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question – How was slavery justified? - has students examining the origins of race and racism alongside the evolution of slavery in the U.S. By examining this question:

- **Students will understand** how the social constructs of race and racism were used to justify slavery.
- **Students will understand** that the founding principles of the United States were revolutionary but did not apply to everyone.
- **Students will understand** that history can be romanticized or distorted to promote a story.
- **Students will be able** to examine the exclusion of African Americans, women, and American Indians in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution.
- **Students will be able** to explore the intentions behind romanticizing and distorting history.

Students engage in this inquiry through teacher led discussion and examination of an informational text, videos, and primary sources. Begin by asking students to quick write or brainstorm about the following quote from Ta-Nehisi Coates: Race is the child of racism, not the father (see Appendix B). Teachers could ask students what they know, or think they know, about *race* and *racism* using a KWL chart. Take this opportunity to address misconceptions.

As students explore the concepts presented in the texts, discuss how people used race and racism to justify slavery. Students could record their findings on the graphic organizer (Appendix B) depicting race and racism as an umbrella concept under which falls the justifications for slavery and the evolution of slavery in the U.S. The primary informational text has been modified into three sections with the intent of interspersing video and class



discussion between written texts.

We recommend the featured sources for this support question be presented in this order:

- **Video: “The Origin of Race in the USA”** (first 9 minutes)
nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race
- **Historical Foundations of Race part 1** (Appendix A)
- **Video: “Slavery - Crash Course US History #13”** (first 7 minutes)
nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race
- **On Slaveholders’ Sexual Abuse of Slaves: Selections from 19th 7 20th Century Slave Narratives (Appendix C)** These first- person accounts emphasize the uniquely brutal conditions of female slaves and should be used to address our desensitization to accounts and images of slavery, an idea stated at the end of the “Slavery - Crash Course US History #13” video clip.
- **Historical Foundations of Race part 2** (Appendix A)
- **Video (2 minutes)** “Why did colonists in the British North American colonies support the institution of slavery?”
choices.edu/video/why-did-colonists-in-the-british-north-american-colonies-support-the-institution-of-slavery/
- **Historical Foundations of Race part 3** (Appendix A)

As a formative assessment, students should list 3 to 4 justifications used to support slavery. Refer students to the graphic organizer (Appendix B) and reinforce race and racism as umbrella concepts that influenced the justifications of slavery. Responses could include:

- Money: The North and South were profiting from a slave-based economy
- Social status: White people desired to remain a top of the social hierarchy
- Slavery as a necessary evil: Slavery was so embedded in the society and economy that it would be impossible to undue it
- Slavery benefited slaves: Non-white people were not as intellectually capable compared to white people and therefore needed white people to care for them.

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question – What about the civil liberties of white women, free African Americans, and American Indians? - has students working in groups as they examine the civil liberties and general treatment of these individuals during the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras. By examining this question:

- **Students will understand** that the founding principles of the United States were revolutionary but did not apply to everyone.
- **Students will understand** that history can be romanticized or distorted to promote a story.
- **Students will be able** to examine the exclusion of African Americans, women, and American Indians in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution.
- **Students will be able** to explore the intentions behind romanticizing and distorting history.

Students engage in this inquiry through the examination of three separate text sets. Each set of texts elaborates upon the conditions of an underrepresented group in colonial America: white women, free African Americans, and American Indians. The sources support the inquiry by presenting different perspectives regarding the forming of a new nation. They challenge students to recognize that not all people living in the colonies shared the same experience. The texts were chosen for their content as well as their variety. We encourage teachers to alter texts as they see fit. Some texts could be recorded and presented as audio texts. We also encourage teachers to use the images provided on the websites as additional visual texts. Texts sets could be presented as packets, online modules, in bins, or as stations around the classroom.

The featured sources for this support question include:



White Women

- **Text:** “Women and Children in Colonial America”
nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/women-and-children-colonial-america
- **Text:** “Women & the American Story”
wams.nyhistory.org/early-encounters/english-colonies
- **Video:** “Women’s Roles in Colonial America”
facebook.com/conococheagueinstitute/videos/womens-roles-in-colonial-america/901297460378166/
- **Video:** “How did colonial women express revolutionary ideas?”
choices.edu/video/colonial-women-express-revolutionary-ideas
- **Primary Source:** “Remember the Ladies” and interpretation
pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/adams-remember-ladies

Free African Americans

- **Text:** “Free African Americans in the Colonial Era”
ushistory.org/us/6e.asp
- **Text:** “Vermont 1777: Early Steps Against Slavery”
nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/vermont-1777-early-steps-against-slavery
- **Video:** “What was life like for free Black people in the British North American colonies?”
choices.edu/video/what-was-life-like-for-free-blacks-in-the-british-north-american-colonies
- **Text and Primary Sources:** Phyllis Wheatley bio and poetry (Appendix D)

American Indians

- **Text:** “The Native American Government That Inspired the U.S. Constitution”
history.com/news/iroquois-confederacy-influence-us-constitution
- Animated map: “Native American lands”
vox.com/2015/5/27/8618261/america-maps-truths
- **Primary Source:** Cornplanter’s speech and analysis (Appendix E)
- **Primary Source:** “European Americans and Native Americans View Each Other, 1700-1775” (Appendix F)

The formative performance task asks students to engage with the featured sources through analysis and discussion. As students engage with the texts, they should discuss the prompts provided in the Text Set Guide (Appendix G):

- What about the civil liberties of white women, free African Americans and American Indians?
- Were they guaranteed civil liberties?
- Compared to white men, how were their civil liberties limited?
- How were they treated by colonial society?
- What did you find interesting? Are there contradictions between the texts?

Summative Performance Task

Students are encouraged to take informed action by impacting how young people are introduced to the story of our nation’s founding documents. To better understand the issue, students compile materials, such as books and videos, that are used to teach elementary students about the story of the creation of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. Then students appraise the materials for their inclusiveness, considering whose stories are told and not told. Finally, students demonstrate agency by creating a more inclusive counter narrative to the “stock story” of the creation of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution as presented in the video shown while staging the compelling question of this inquiry (youtube.com/watch?v=bZ3Wjqp-4Fk). The audience for this narrative should be elementary students and could take the form of a video, a book, or a play. To make a real-world impact, students should perform the narrative for an audience or post it online.

References

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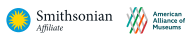
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