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Introduction

Goals

The main goal of this book is to help students develop skills outlined in the Common Core Standards by clarifying what the standards are asking for and by giving teachers specific activities they can use to address the standards.

Organization

The book is mostly organized by the categories into which Common Core places its standards. The first three chapters are “Key Ideas and Details,” “Craft and Structure,” and “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.” Because “Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity” is addressed every time students read, it does not have its own chapter. Also, because it is common for many writing categories to overlap on a paper, the fourth chapter covers all the writing standards and is divided into the three main paper types: argumentative, informative, and narrative.

Activities open with an introductory page that includes every standard covered by the activities, directions, estimated lesson length, and additional teaching ideas. At the back of the book are selected answers for the reading activities.

Tracking Common Core Standards

On the next page, there is a chart that can help you track which Common Core Standards you have addressed and with which activities.

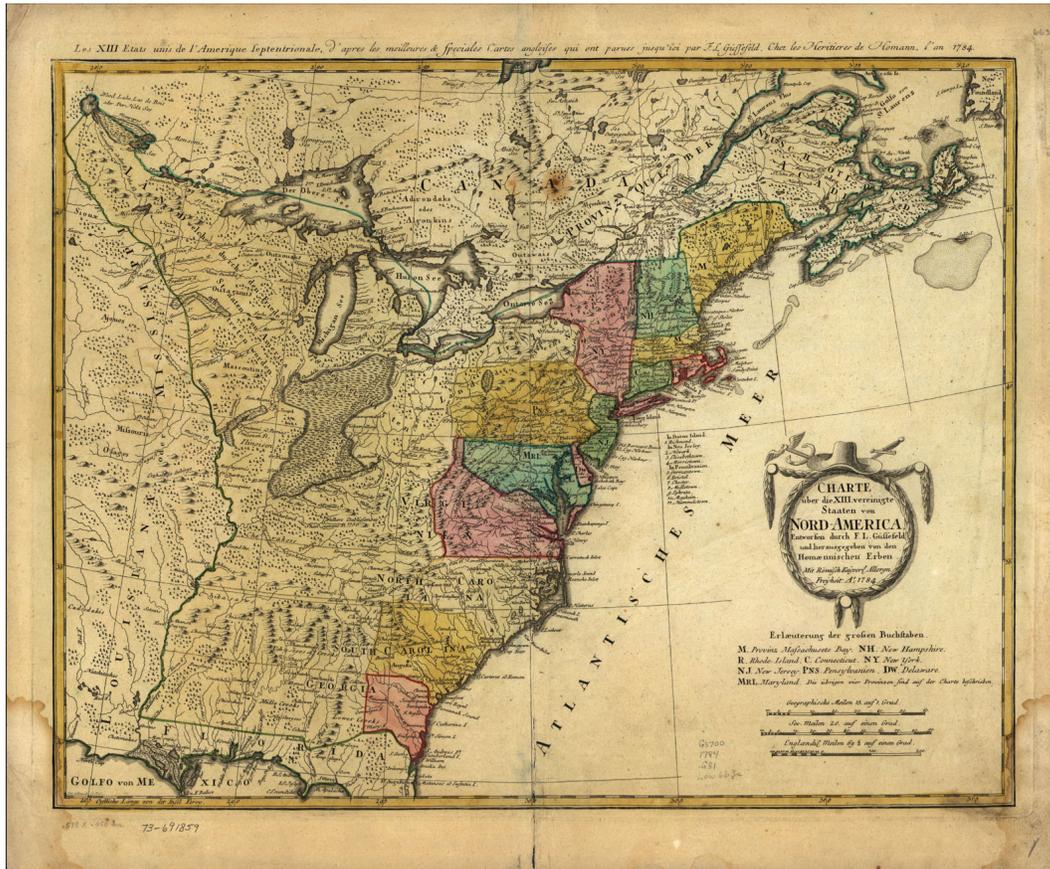
Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is not required for social studies teachers, which is why there is no CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.3. However, this form of writing was included in this book because numerous social studies teachers also teach language arts, for the many educators who find creative writing a valuable way to explore history, and because other required writing standards can be covered with narrative writing.

Common Core Standards

If a teacher covers the six reading activities and three papers outlined in this book, he or she will have addressed every 6–8 History/Social Studies Common Core Standard at least once. Although it is not expected that teachers cover every standard in each unit of study, this gives teachers a great way to see examples of every standard and have numerous assignments to choose from.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION



The Thirteen States

Nine of thirteen states had to approve national laws. This rarely happened so states mostly just had their own laws.

All thirteen states had to agree to amend (change) the articles.

The federal government could not pass tax laws. Instead, the government had to ask states for money.

The United States had a president, but he had very little power.

There were state courts but no national court.

The federal government could declare war but could not draft citizens to fight in a war. There was a small national army.

Each state sent one representative to Congress. That representative was appointed by state legislature.

THE CONSTITUTION'S FIRST DRAFT

Joe Schmoe

3rd Period

11/5/14

I cannot get over how weak and terrible the Articles of Confederation were. It is hard to believe that these came from the same country that came up with the articulate Declaration of Independence and our internationally esteemed Constitution. I find it astounding that some of history's greatest thinkers would ratify a document that had no means to support itself, was undemocratic, and had no leader.

What first stands out about the Articles is that if the federal government wanted money from the states, it had to ask and then states could choose whether or not to give. Unsurprisingly, very few states contributed money and the federal government was underfunded. For example, although Congress asked for \$2 million dollars in 1783, they received less than \$500,000 total for the years 1781 to 1783. No one likes to pay taxes, but without some type of funding, countries cannot function. You would think our framers could have seen that coming and allowed the central government some actual power to raise money.

Additionally, for the world's first democracy, Congress was set up in an extremely undemocratic manner. Every state was given one representative regardless of population. Today that would mean Wyoming would have the exact same power in Congress as California. In other words, the average voter from Wyoming would have more than 65 times as much power as one from California. Even worse, these representatives weren't elected, but were selected by the state legislature. A government "of the people, by the people, for the people"? Oh yeah, we weren't there yet.

Lastly, this country didn't really have a president under the Articles, or at least one that had any real power. I know we had just finished getting rid of the king, but that didn't mean we shouldn't have a leader. Any group over the size of ten without someone in charge falls apart. An entire country certainly needed one.

Some have argued that the Articles of Confederation made sense for that time. People were more loyal to their states than the United States; any more authority given to a national government would have been rejected. To me this explains why this atrocity happened, but it still does not mean the document is any less weak. Additionally, forward thinkers should have been able to see the clear and obvious limitations.

Our teachers often ask us to write rough drafts. And that's the most positive assessment I can have for the Articles of Confederation. It was a rough draft for what became our impressive Constitution. But that does not make them any less horrible—or me any less surprised that men like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson didn't see just how rough they were.

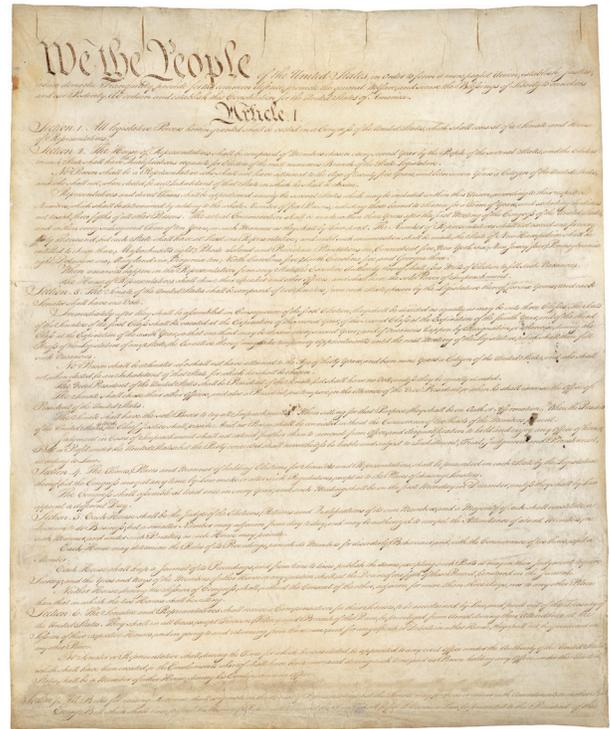
AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Overall

- Write a letter to a congressperson about a change you think should be made to the Constitution.
- 1–2 pages

Ideas

- Drop voting age to sixteen. (The Twenty-Sixth Amendment changed voting age to eighteen.)
- Make cigarettes be illegal for all ages. (The Eighteenth Amendment illegalized alcohol. The Twenty-First Amendment made it legal again.)
- Elect presidents by popular vote. (The Twelfth Amendment details the current way we elect presidents.)
- Revoke the president's power to pardon. (Article II, Section 2 gives a president the power to pardon.)
- Eliminate the Senate so that there would be only one house, based on population. (Article I, Section 3 discusses how Senators are selected.)



The Constitution

Requirements

- Introductory paragraph where you introduce yourself and clarify exactly how you want the Constitution to be changed
- At least two supported arguments for why this would be a good idea
- Disputed counterargument
- Conclusion paragraph where you restate argument and thank them for taking the time to read your letter
- One copy sent to a congressperson

Rubric

| | Exceeding | Proficient | Developing | Beginning |
|-------------|--|---|--|---|
| Argument | Uses persuasive word choice, logical reasoning, and strong support to write a strong argument. Also, successfully disputes a counterclaim. | Integrates all requirements to write a solid argument. Brings up counterclaim, but may struggle to successfully dispute it. | At times argument is solid, but needs to improve persuasive word choice, reasoning, and/or counterclaim. | Argument is weak due to issues with persuasive word choice, reasoning, and/or counterclaim. |
| Conventions | No convention errors. <i>or</i> Uses high-level conventions with few to no errors. | Convention errors in one area. <i>or</i> A single error in a few areas. | Convention errors in two or more areas. | Too short to assess conventions. <i>or</i> Convention issues make paper difficult to understand |

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION OUTLINE ^{1/2}

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Introduction (Introduce yourself and state main argument)</p> | |
| <p>Transition/Topic Sentence</p> | |
| <p>Argument #1 (Your reasoning supported by a fact, statistic, anecdote, and/or quote)</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Transition/Topic Sentence</p> | |
| <p>Argument #2 (Your reasoning supported by a fact, statistic, anecdote, and/or quote)</p> | |
| <p>Transition/Topic Sentence</p> | |
| <p>Dispute a Counterargument (Share a counterargument and your reasoning for why it is either incorrect or why it does not refute your main argument)</p> | |
| <p>Conclusion (Summarize main argument and thank congressperson for taking time to read it)</p> | |

