

The New Nation

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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How to Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called “enduring understandings.” The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

1. Start with the “essential questions” listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won’t know which one.
2. Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.
3. Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide’s topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. You don’t need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it’s broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the “enduring understandings.” Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.
4. Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
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The New Nation: Backwards Planning Activities

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

Enduring understandings:

- Some fundamental differences existed in the philosophies about how the new nation should be structured and governed, leading to numerous political debates and to the establishment of the party system
- A good deal of political discussion and effort in the early years of the nation went into defining the office and role of the presidency, as well as the functions of Congress and the Supreme Court
- Relations between the U.S. and foreign countries, particularly Britain and France, played an important role in shaping events and major decisions in the nation's earliest decades
- Not all regions developed in the same way or shared the same interests; these differences led to considerable tensions and arguments between different parts of the country
- Even in these early years, westward expansion created pressures on Native Americans and aggravated tensions between Native Americans on one hand and white settlers and the U.S. government on the other
- The issue of slavery became more and more contentious and led to increasing sectional disagreement as the years passed
- Most of the documentation available from this time period comes from the Founding Fathers and other prominent white men; women, African Americans, Native Americans, and other groups experienced the new nation differently from these men, but few written documents directly describe their concerns and experiences

Essential questions:

- What major arguments and discussions occurred with regard to the roles the federal government should play?
- How did the earliest presidents view their roles, and what actions did they take to help establish the office of the presidency?
- How did the new nation's relations with foreign countries affect its earliest years?
- In what ways did sectional differences influence the development of the new nation and its government?
- How were different groups of people affected by the events that occurred and the decisions the government made during the early years of the nation?

Learning Experiences and Instruction

Students will need to know...	Students will need to be able to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The general philosophies and actions of the first six presidents of the U.S. and other prominent political figures 2. The political debates and challenges that the nation's leaders faced, including the debates that led to the first political parties 3. How relations with Great Britain and France helped shape events and political decisions 4. The status of African Americans, Native Americans, and women in the new nation 5. The process of westward expansion and the introduction of new territories and states in the nation's earliest years 6. How the nation's leaders dealt with the growing debate over slavery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze and debate political arguments that arose in the nation's early years, particularly between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans 2. Calculate communication speed in the new nation, and consider what this meant for people who lived during this period 3. Interpret information about what life was like during this time period, and describe their observations from the perspective of someone who lived back then 4. Analyze information about the War of 1812, and draw their own conclusions about the war

Overview:

<p>Teaching and learning activities that will equip students to demonstrate targeted understandings:</p>

- Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
- Class discussion of subject matter questions in the New Nation presentation
- Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
- Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit
- Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects
- Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
- Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
- Students create and present their unit projects
- Posttest made of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, with one or more essential questions as essay questions

Project #1: A Debate between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans

Overview:

The Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans held very different views about how the new nation should be structured and governed. This lesson asks each student to assume the role of either a Federalist or a Democratic-Republican. They divide into subgroups under each party to investigate the views that members of their party held on specific topics. Students then engage in a structured debate of the issues. This lesson is intended for more advanced students who are able to effectively research and understand these parties' philosophies.

Before beginning this lesson, make a few copies of the “Debate Topics” page below this lesson, and cut the sections into strips that students are to draw out of a bag or hat. Make sure you have enough strips so that, out of a group the size of half your class, each student can draw a topic and that topics will be divided as evenly as possible among members of a group this size.

Also before the lesson, make extra copies of the “idea web” in Section 2 of the Student Handout. During the lesson, you will give each student two idea webs—one for their own party when they are working in their small groups, and one for the other party immediately before the debate.

Objectives:

As a result of completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify significant philosophical differences between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans
- Articulate these philosophies in written and oral statements
- Develop their own opinions about whether they might have supported the Federalists or the Democratic-Republicans

Time required:

Three to four class periods

Methodology:

Use the PowerPoint presentation to review the main differences between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans in the early years of the nation. List the fundamental differences between these two parties on the board.

Divide the class into two groups, with one representing Federalists and the other representing Democratic-Republicans. Place the pieces of paper into a bag or hat, and have each “Federalist”