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Furman University Riley Institute Teachers of Government

**Lesson Plan:**

The Impact of the Enlightened Thinkers of Europe, as well as Magna Carta & English Bill of Rights, on the Founding Fathers of the United States

**Objective:**

The objective of this lesson was to get the students to make the connection between the ideals of the Enlightened thinkers of Western Europe (Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Beccaria, etc…) and the ideals of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

The lesson was also designed for students to compare the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights to the American Constitution and its Bill of Rights to illustrate how the English documents influenced the American documents; which led to more liberties for the people and less power for the government.

**State Standards & Indicators**:

* SC 7-2: The Student will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of limited government and unlimited government as they functioned in Europe in the seventeenth & eighteenth centuries.
* SC 7-2.3: Analyze the Enlightenment ideas of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu and Voltaire that challenged absolutism and influenced the development of limited government.
* SC 7-2.4: Explain the effects of the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution on the power of the monarchy in England and on limited government.

**Resources**

* Edited Copies of the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and the American Bill of Rights.
* Posters of Enlightened Thinkers.
* Enlightened Thinkers Basic Ideas about Government sheet.
* Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, the Constitution, & American Bill of Rights Comparison sheet.

**Procedures**

The Teacher will utilize the “Gallery Walk” strategy to reinforce the content relating to the Enlightened Thinkers of Western Europe in the 1600’s & 1700’s, as well as the content relating to the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, the Constitution & the Bill of Rights.

* The Teacher sets up stations throughout the classroom. The station will either have an Enlightened Thinker poster or a document that limited the power of the government.
* The Teacher will then provide each student with a packet that will allow the student to write down important information about the Enlightened Thinkers and their ideas regarding government, as well as to complete a chart that compares the rights given to the people in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights to the rights of the people and limitations of government in the American Constitution and Bill of Rights.
* The students will then be instructed to move about the room collecting information on the role of the Enlightened Thinkers, and the importance of the Magna Carta & English Bill of Rights.
* After about 15 minutes, the teacher will end the Gallery Walk, and begin to inquire with the students about the information they collected. The overall objective with this activity is to grow the students understanding of the concept of Absolutism, Absolutism’s archaic ideals, the growth of Constitutional forms of government, and the impact of Enlightened ideals on the formation of the American system of government.

Assessment

The students will be assessed in a few ways. One way will be through their participation in the Gallery Walk. Another way will be through the answers to the questions that are posed to them by the teacher throughout the Gallery Walk and after the Gallery Walk. Another way is through a more traditional method, and that is the testing process. A copy of the test will be attached.









