



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Revolutions and Objects: How Objects Shape History

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Introduction

Modern World History is a required course in New Haven Public Schools, designated for ninth graders. The second unit after introducing learners to historical thinking skills is revolutions. The required revolutions that teachers must include in their lesson plans are the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. Teachers have the freedom to teach any other revolution, such as the Haitian, Russian, and various Latin American Revolutions. Given the particularly diverse nature of New Haven classrooms, it is essential to include revolutions led by people of color, often the most oppressed in their societies. Designing a unit based on this principle will ensure that the content is diverse, and that students are able to learn about strong, inspiring examples of people of color in the past.

In addition to striving for diversity in the content material, teachers should also design lessons that engage all types of learners: auditory, tactile or hands-on, verbal, visual, etc. The traditional type of history lesson is a teacher-centered lecture with passive students who write notes from the board and memorize dates, key events, and leaders. Although understanding the key information of a time period or event is important, this type of activity is not engaging or accessible to many of our learners. For that reason, this unit will incorporate the study of objects in history, in order to learn the impacts of historical creations on our world today. The study of historical artifacts may engage more “hands-on” learners, and even move our historical focus past the powerful male, and often white, leaders. Students will first be trained on the methods of studying artifacts according to art historian Jules Prown during the first lessons of the curriculum, and demonstrate their understanding of the significance of the objects of revolutions in their final project.¹ This curriculum unit seeks to provide guidance for Modern World History teachers who wish to have their students practice the study of historical artifacts for the second unit of the NHPS curriculum.

Content Objectives

1. Students will be able to define the concept of revolution and demonstrate their understanding of the significance of objects for revolutions.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate their content knowledge of various global revolutions throughout the unit through visual, written, and/or auditory means.
3. Students will be able to explain how revolutions impact global peoples and cultures.
4. Students will develop skills regarding object analysis and corroborate their findings using evidence.
5. Students will be able to present their conclusions using various media.

Material Culture: Methodological Practices

In his essay, Jules Prown offers a threefold method for students of historical artifacts. This unit will utilize the three-step approach described by Prown to analyze objects and their impact on revolutions. The first step is called description, and involves both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the artifact in question. Prown suggests first focusing on the larger descriptions, almost like taking a full view through a camera, and then zooming in gradually to examine smaller details. Deduction, the second step, involves the observer engaging in a sensory and imaginative experience to understand how the artifact might have been used. Finally, the third step is called speculation, which consists of using external research and background information on similar objects to speculate what the object is as well as its purpose. The following are questions that students can answer as they go through each step of the process.²

1. Description
 - a. **Materials:** What is it made of? (e.g., wood, metal, plastic, ceramic)
 - b. **Size/Shape:** How big is it? What is its form? (e.g., 10 inches long, rectangular, round)
 - c. **Color/Texture:** What color is it and how many colors are there? How does it look or feel? (e.g., faded blue, smooth, rough)
 - d. **Parts/Condition:** Is it new, old, damaged, or rusty?
 - e. **Markings:** Any words, signatures, initials, numbers, or designs?
2. Deduction
 - a. **Sensory Engagement:**
 - i. **If possible (and safe!):** Touch, lift, handle it. How does it feel?
 - ii. **If not:** Imagine using it. What would you see, hear, smell, feel if you were there or using it?
 - b. **Intellectual Engagement:**
 - i. What does it *do*? What is the function of its different parts?
 - ii. What physical adjustments would someone need to make to use it?
 - iii. (For pictures): What time of day is it? What is in the background? What has been edited?
 - c. **Emotional Response:**
 - i. How does it make you *feel*? (curious, sad, joyful, etc.)
3. Speculation
 - a. **Hypotheses & Theories:**
 - i. What are your best guesses about its original purpose? Provide evidence for your thinking.

- ii. Who would use it and when? What would be their role/occupation?
- iii. What cultural values or norms does it show?

b. Research Plan:

- i. What *else* do you need to know to confirm your ideas? What further questions do you have?
- ii. What do you already know about objects that are similar to this one?
- iii. What kinds of external evidence would help? (e.g., old letters, other artworks, expert opinions, historical records, scientific analysis)
- iv. Where would you look for this info? (e.g., library, online, museum, archives)
- v. What do you know about this object's history? Where was it before you encountered it?
How did it get there?

Background

A curriculum unit on revolutions should begin with an exploration of the concept in order to ensure a shared understanding among all students. Among historians and political scientists there exists many definitions of the term. Goldstone, in his short introduction of revolutions defined a revolution as a “forcible overthrow of a government through mass mobilization [...] in the name of social justice, to create new political institutions.”³ If this definition of a revolution is to be taken as correct, then does this exclude more abstract revolutions like the Enlightenment and even some components of the Scientific Revolution? At various points of the unit, “Do Now” questions will prompt students to reexamine their understanding of the definition of revolution. A helpful addition to the definition of a revolution could be the destruction of traditional ideas in favor of a new political or social order.

In an effort to refrain from listing revolutions one-by-one and to encourage students to draw connections between revolutions, this unit will consist of three pairings of revolutions. It will start with the intellectual revolutions known as the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution. These two revolutions are a natural pair considering that they both involved the diffusion of ideas that questioned religious and political dogma in favor of reason. The next pairing will consist of the French and Haitian Revolutions, because of the influence of Enlightenment ideals on both revolutions. Additionally, through this pairing, students will learn more about the French Revolution's causal impact on the Haitian, and the objects that demonstrate how the Haitians adopted French revolutionary symbols. The last pair will consist of the Industrial and Russian Revolutions. This pairing will help highlight the impact of the Industrial Revolution beyond the manufacturing of influential inventions, cities, and factories. The lessons concerning the Russian Revolution will demonstrate how Bolsheviks seized industries and utilized visual culture for propaganda purposes. Lastly, the unit will end with a student-centered project on Latin American revolutions, where students will be prompted to investigate the revolutionary objects of a Latin American country of their choice.

The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment

The Scientific Revolution began in the 17th century, and was a time period in which reason was applied to achieve a greater understanding of nature.⁴ The invention of the printing press expanded the opportunity for scientists to spread their ideas and inventions. Essentially, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Europe experienced a proliferation of inventions and scientific theories. Copernicus argued against Ptolemy's geocentric theory of the universe, and commenced a radical transformation in the way that people viewed our universe with the introduction of a heliocentric worldview. Galileo, another famous astronomer, later confirmed Copernicus's theory using science. Sir Francis Bacon also believed in demonstrating an understanding of nature through disciplined scientific methods, and invented the scientific method. Inventions like the air pump, water pump, and the first versions of the microscope were invented during this time.⁵ Marquise du Châtelet was one of many women during this time interested in the sciences, and published her own books such as the *Fundamentals of Physics*.⁶ Educators can begin to challenge students on their object-based analytical skills by describing the inventions or books and eventually forming educated predictions regarding their purpose, role, and users.

Students of the Scientific Revolution later became known as the *Philosophes* of the Enlightenment, a movement of ideals that influenced modern government, human rights, and understandings of reason.⁷ Many of these philosophers, like John Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Hobbes, and Rousseau, published texts that would widely circulate. Diderot published his famous *Encyclopédie*, which influenced the books that later generations used for research before the invention of the Internet. Women philosophers like Mary Wollstonecraft argued that women should also be educated, and that they deserved equal rights. Many of these texts would question traditional institutions and beliefs, like the Church, monarchies, and medieval worldviews, and argue for the establishment and protection of democracies and individual rights. It is important to note that other parts of the globe experienced their own Enlightenments.

Lessons for the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment

1. Scientific Revolution
 - a. **Do Now/Writing Prompt:** If you could invent anything, what would it be? Describe it and its function in at least five sentences.
 - b. Introduce background information on the Scientific Revolution through readings, videos, etc.
2. Exit Ticket: What are three things you learned about the Scientific Revolution?

Activities: Scientific Revolution

1. Practice the material culture methodological practices on the inventions of the Scientific Revolution
 - a. Describe, deduce, and speculate what the inventions could have been used for.
2. Have students compare Ptolemy's and Copernicus's models of the universe
3. Incorporate a gallery walk of the different philosophers and their inventions
 - a. Biographies of the various philosophers will be printed and displayed throughout the classroom for students to walk around and take notes or answer questions.
4. DIY Printing Press: Students can use styrofoam, markers, a sponge, and water to create a sketch and stamp their drawings on construction paper.
 - a. Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liQ11AuHtHM>.⁸

Object Analysis of an Invention



Figure 1: This image is a sketch of Boyle's Air Pump.

Source: Public Domain⁹

1. Framing the Group Activity: Teacher will divide the class into groups of four and each group will attempt to describe, deduce, and speculate on the object in question.
2. Description:
 - a. Materials: The invention seems to consist of metal, glass, wires, nails, etc.
 - b. Size/Shape: The contraption is at least a foot tall with various levels and components.
 - c. Color/Texture: The materials that make up the invention are hard, sturdy, transparent (at the top).
 - d. Parts/Condition: The bottom half is the support structure made out of metal. In the middle of the bottom half there is a handle that appears to be made out of steel. In the center of the object there is a cylinder-like object that is attached to a hollow glass sphere.
 - e. Markings: On the edges of the sketch, there are various parts of the invention that are magnified and labeled by number. There is similar shading and lighting for both the materials that comprise the center and top half of the object, which suggests that they are the same material. The shortened "fig." for "figure" indicates that the inventor speaks English.
3. Deduction: Although students of the object cannot physically handle it, scholars can imagine how to handle the object and ask questions. First, all of the levels of the object would need to be accessible in order to have access to all three handles. Is the sphere, considering its hollow nature, meant to contain a substance? If it is truly meant to be a container, why did the inventor choose the shape of a sphere and not a rectangular prism? Why is it enclosed? Is it meant to contain a liquid, gas, or solids? One must also take into account the only entry point for a substance to enter the sphere, which is located on the very top of the sphere, making it unlikely that a large solid material would be stored in this round container. Although the large sphere is the container that is most likely to catch an observer's attention, one may also question the function of the smaller container that it is attached to indirectly. Their attachment indicates the possibility of the transfer of a substance between the two, which would further point to the object's function of storing either a liquid or gas.
4. Speculation:
 - a. Best Guess: This is likely an early invention that is meant to transfer either delicate liquids or gases.
 - b. Approximate Date: 1600s-Pre-1800s
 - c. Invention Location: A lab or storage room

- d. Users: Likely middle or upper-class male scientists who spoke English
- e. More research on the history of the sketch and its creator will help confirm findings.

Activities: The Enlightenment

1. Do Now/Writing Prompt: If you could make your own government, what would it be?
2. Introduce background information on the Enlightenment and various influential philosophers
3. Students can construct biographies of the various philosophers on poster board
4. Reading can be provided with questions for students to familiarize themselves with the philosophers and their arguments. Videos can also be provided as a substitute (See resources like Edpuzzle)
5. Object analysis of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*
 - a. Using a page from the encyclopedia, students can analyze the page's content and speculate on the kind of book that it belongs to.
6. The end of the Enlightenment period will conclude with a debate, where students will be prompted to argue that their philosopher had the most impact on our lives today (students should be allotted a class period or two to prepare)
 - a. Discussion protocol: Fishbowl, socratic seminar, small groups, etc.

The French and Haitian Revolutions

The French Revolution is another required revolution for Modern World History, and began in May 1789 at the Estates General meeting. King Louis XVI was nearing bankruptcy, which was exacerbated by France's financial support for the American colonists for their own revolution. The King called on the three estates, or representatives for the three main social classes in pre-revolutionary France, to vote on a solution. The first estate consisted of the clergy, who were the most privileged in terms of wealth and land. The second estate was the nobility, who owned a disproportionate amount of land and rented land to members of the third estate, who were common folk ranging from poor peasants to rich business owners without royal title. The third estate was the most heavily taxed. The Estates General, alongside rising food prices, socio-economic inequality, etc., was one of the major causes of the revolution. Despite consisting of the majority of the population, the third estate only had one vote along with the other two privileged classes, who resisted paying more in taxes.

In order to have a basic understanding of the early days of the French Revolution, students should have exposure to a few of the significant events in the revolution's first stages, such as the creation of the National Assembly, the Storming of the Bastille, and the Women's March on Versailles. When the Estates General could not come to an agreement, the Third Estate representatives signed the Tennis Court Oath on June 20, and declared themselves "the true representatives of the people," formally creating the National Assembly.¹⁰ Soon after the Estates General, the revolution became more violent. The storming of the Bastille was significant in that it was one of the first violent revolutionary acts. On July 14, a mob stormed the Bastille, a prison notorious for its harsh conditions, and liberated the prisoners, seized the weapons, and killed guards, as well as the governor himself. The role of women in the French Revolution was also notable, including the famous Women's March on Versailles.

The Revolutionary Tribunal was established to persecute anyone suspected of being counterrevolutionary, and

eventually sentenced the guilty to the infamous guillotine. The inclusion of the guillotine in the unit serves as a hook to engage students. This part of the unit will be titled “Contradictions of the French Revolution.” In addition to the study of objects, the unit will include a comparison of the Law of Suspects with the earlier Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, which emphasized freedom and equality as universal rights of men. This fundamental document contrasted greatly with the Reign of Terror, as well as the reality that on the island of Saint Domingue, hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans were working in horrific conditions under the label of a French colony.

The Haitian Revolution, on the other hand, began with flames. The island of Saint Domingue was what is known as a slave society, a society in which slave labor consists of the basis of its economic and political system. There were five-hundred thousand enslaved Africans on the island, in comparison to the small white minority of enslavers and common people, who endured harsh working and living conditions. It is estimated that up to a third of new arrivals died within their first year on the island, and the average enslaved person could be expected to live up to a maximum of seven to ten years.¹¹ When the authorities discovered that the enslaved Africans had organized to burn the plantations and kill all of the white colonists, they immediately dismissed the idea.¹² Shortly after, enslaved Africans organized uprisings, destroyed plantations and equipment, killed white colonists, and fought in conjunction with freed people of color, who previously petitioned for their rights as French citizens under the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, but were denied by the white colonists in Saint Domingue. These racial conflicts were fueled by the island’s racial caste system, which included enslaved Africans at the bottom of society, followed by freed people of color, poor whites, and rich planters respectively. Leaders like Toussaint L’Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines led military efforts not only against the French, but also the British and Spanish.

The Haitian Revolution was the revolution of revolutions. It included the complete transformation of life on Saint Domingue and an upheaval of the racial hierarchy imposed by Europeans and white Americans who benefited from slave labor. The successful revolution, led by enslaved Africans, disproved the white supremacist ideology that enslavers constructed to justify their exploitation. Since then, there has been an effort within the history discipline to minimize the revolution or erase it completely from history. History teachers should be aware of this conscious effort to erase powerful histories of people of color, especially within the context of the present-day United States, and commit to teaching the revolution as long as it takes to teach the revolution of their enslavers and with as much due diligence. Additionally, history teachers, especially modern world history teachers, should review the horrifying truths about the institution of slavery, as well as its significance and impact on global cultures. Concepts like the Triangular Trade should be reviewed, as well as the Middle Passage, chattel slavery, the genocide of indigenous people after Columbus, etc.

A Word on Slavery and Objects

Before immersing scholars in an introduction and analysis of the Haitian Revolution and its objects, educators should emphasize resistance when teaching about the history of people of color. Formerly enslaved writers like Frederick Douglass have mentioned the myth of the happy slave in their writings, which suggests that people of color were passive receivers of their oppression.¹³ This myth continues today and is present when students ask the question: “Why didn’t they fight back?” This question highlights the importance of emphasizing that resistance to slavery existed since the beginning of slavery. New Haven educators can mention resistance on slave ships, preferably before taking a field trip to the New Haven Museum to visit its exhibits on the Amistad revolt. At the museum, students can participate in their own studies of historical artifacts of interest to them relating to slavery. Gender is also an important component to understanding

enslaved resistance. Dr. Rebecca Hall, in her book *Wake! The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts*, states that the more women there were on a slave ship, the more likely there was to be a revolt.¹⁴ This correlation is due to the fact that enslaved women were commonly brought to the slave decks in close proximity to the weapons of their enslavers.¹⁵ As a result, Black women were active participants and organizers of slave revolts, which challenges the myth that Black women were passive followers of male leaders. Conversations about everyday resistance and a gender analysis could spark meaningful discussions, especially in comparison to larger and highly organized acts of resistance such as a revolution.

This unit will include discussions that emphasize the significance of events when enslaved people destroyed objects related to their oppression. Students should have background knowledge on objects related to slavery from in-person or virtual field trips. Using this prior knowledge, students can analyze the impact of the destruction of these objects related to slavery. How might enslaved people have felt when destroying plantation equipment or property? What was the impact of destroying these objects?

Lessons for the French Revolution

Day 1: Causes of the French Revolution

1. Do Now/Writing Prompt: What would make you join a revolution?
2. Discuss pre-revolutionary France and causes of the French Revolution
 - a. Discussion Idea: Compare and contrast the wealth distribution of pre-revolutionary France to that experienced today in the United States
3. Exit Ticket: Write three sentences explaining the causes of the French Revolution.

Activity Ideas

4. Gallery walk of the events of the French Revolution
 - a. Printing and posting descriptions of the events around the room for students to walk around and answer questions.
5. Design political posters that the women would have made in preparation for their March on Versailles
6. Reading/Class Analysis of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

Day 2: Revolutionary Events and Symbols

1. Are you familiar with any political symbols or slogans?
 - a. Alternative: Identify a modern-day political symbol and analyze it with the class.
2. Recap the events of the French Revolution.
3. Object analysis of the liberty cap, guillotine, cockade, liberty tree, tri-colored flag, etc. in pairs
 - a. Enrichment activity: Compare the liberty cap with modern day revolutionary clothing/symbols
4. Exit Ticket: Worksheet with notes on the object analysis

Optional Day 3: Reign of Terror

1. Do Now: Read an excerpt from the Law of Suspects
 - a. How does this law compare to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen? Is this law still revolutionary?
2. History Channel: Reign of Terror Documentary
3. Exit Ticket: Documentary Questions Worksheet

Object Analysis: The liberty cap



Figure 2: The image consists of a French liberty cap.

Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Public Domain)¹⁶

1. Description:

- Materials: The object is made with “wool, cotton, [and] linen.”¹⁷
- Size/Shape: The object is relatively small, although an unusual length for what appears to be a hat.
- Colors: The object’s major three colors are red, white, and blue with different shades of blue.
- Parts/Condition: There is a red puff on the top of the object. There is a white hand-stitched line that runs down along two-thirds of the object and stops at a red base. The bottom of the object features decorations with what appears to be white and blue tree leaves, with hints of lighter red, a solid plank made up of individual rods or sticks that are bound together by the white and blue lines, and a blue and white hat.

2. Deduction: Given the material of the object, one can imagine that it is soft to the touch. Upon opening, there seems to be an empty space; however, its function may not include the storage of smaller objects. It is impossible to wear as a personal bag. Upon further examination, the shape of an object somewhat resembles the image of the blue and white hat. Given its unusual length for a hat, it may provoke laughter if worn. One can imagine the top of that drooping similar to the hat in the image due to its length. The decoration on the hat suggests that it is meant to be put on for display.

3. Speculation:

- Best Guess: The object is a hat meant to demonstrate revolutionary spirit.
- Approximate Date: 1790
- Users: Revolutionaries
- Other images, hats, and written sources may need to be studied to determine if this was a hat that was worn by common people or those of higher status.

Object Analysis: The Haitian Flag



Figure 3: This is a flag of the Republic of Haiti.

Source: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture¹⁸

1. Description:

- a. Materials: The object consists of linen.
- b. Size/Shape: The flag measures 36 x 60 inches in height and width respectively. The object has a rectangle shape.¹⁹
- c. Colors/Texture: It is bicolored, and split between blue and red. Linen is a soft material.
- d. Parts/Condition: There is a center white square with a design that includes many images. The white is no longer a bright white, which is indicative of aging. The image consists of a tree in the very center that resembles a palm tree, with various weapons that are presented symmetrically on both sides of the tree. The image includes what appears to be three flags with the same blue and red colors as the object of this study, cannons, as well as guns. The tree is crowned with a red hat that has similarities with the liberty cap. At the base of the tree there is a drum on green grass. The flag has yellow words that say "REPUBLIQUE D'HAYTI."²⁰

2. Deduction: If one were to handle the flag, it would probably be soft to touch. It would most likely move freely, depending on the ventilation in the room, if a student were to hold the object in the air. The elaborate image in the center of the object indicates that the object is meant for display, perhaps as a piece of art. The small holes prompt one to question what their functions would be, and what was intended to go through them? A student could experiment carefully with string and tie the object to a structure that could help to support it in the air. The words that are in yellow seem to be in French, and one could guess that it translates to "The Republic of Haiti". The incorporation of various symbols, such as flags, musical instruments, native trees, and weapons inspires a sense of patriotism, as if Haiti itself is being represented in the object. This feeling may provoke viewers to be respectful towards the object, or else risk the appearance of showing disrespect to the entire island nation.

3. Speculation:

- a. Best Guess: The object resembles a flag due to its colors and its declaration of the Republic of Haiti.
- b. Approximate Date: Early 1900s
- c. Location Used: Its good condition suggests that it was used indoors and rarely outdoors.
- d. Further research could provide clarity as to the choice of colors, language, and the liberty that is associated with the French Revolution.

The various symbols on this flag can help educators develop many conversation topics. In their object

analysis, students will work in groups to formulate questions regarding the flag and its origins. In order to answer their questions, they will ultimately investigate the item's catalogue description and other sources to learn about the choices that were made in making the flag. They must encounter the often-repeated story about when General Dessalines cut the tricolor French flag in half with a sword, and a skilled woman named Catherine Flon sewed the flag back together.²¹ This story implies that it was an intentional choice to remove the white strip of the flag, symbolizing the removal of racist power structures that white colonists once benefitted from. The symbols in the center of the flag undoubtedly reference French iconography, which students should already be familiar with. The Phrygian Cap has also been appropriated by the Haitians in order to represent their own liberty from their French enslavers. From this analysis, classes can learn more about how the concept of liberty can be represented in objects, and how Haitians claimed liberty for themselves when it was denied to them by the French.

Lessons for the Haitian Revolution

Day 1: Slavery in the Americas and Resistance Review

1. Do Now: What do you already know about slavery? Have you discussed this topic in previous classes?
2. Discussion of slavery in the Americas to ensure that all students are familiar with the topic before being taught about the Haitian Revolution.
3. Reading of an excerpt of Rebecca Hall's *Wake! The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts* and a discussion of other forms of slave resistance.
4. Exit Ticket: What are three things that you learned about slavery and resistance?

Day 2: Digital Trip to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture

1. Students will be tasked with finding an object related to slavery located in the museum's digital collections and analyzing it using Prown's method.
2. Exit Ticket: Identification of Object and Notes

Day 3: Object Research and Peer Presentations

1. Students will confirm their findings through outside research and present their conclusions in pairs as practice for the final project.
2. Lecture/Videos will inform students that the enslaved people destroyed plantations, including the slave quarters, enslaver's homes, crops, and equipment.
3. Discussion Questions: What do you think would be the impact on enslaved people in places where they violently resisted and destroyed these objects? How did breaking or removing these objects help enslaved people stand up to their enslavers and show resistance?
4. Exit Ticket: Written conclusions of their findings

Day 4: Introduction to Saint Domingue and the Causes of the Revolution

1. Do Now: Students will have the option to read or watch a video regarding life on Saint Domingue
 - Reading will emphasize the harsh working conditions and the fact that enslaved people outnumbered whites.
 - Question: Based on your previous understanding of revolutions and this new information on life in Saint Domingue, what do you think eventually happened?
2. Lectures on the racial/social hierarchy on the island
3. Primary Source Analysis

- Excerpts on a white planter's perspective prior to the revolution and during the initial rebellions will be analyzed and discussed

4. Exit Ticket: Primary Source Question Worksheet

Day 5: Object Analysis of the Haitian Flag

1. Students will work in pairs to go through Prown's method of analysis in their object study of the Haitian flag.
2. Exit Ticket: Students will submit their conclusions on a Google slides presentation.

The Industrial and Russian Revolutions

The Industrial Revolution was sparked by technological advances and made profound impacts on labor, human populations, and economies. Robert C. Allen describes the Industrial Revolution as a “technological revolution,” “demographic revolution,” “urban revolution,” “agricultural revolution,” as well as a commercial and transportation revolution.²² The inventions that were created in the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe and North America transformed all these areas of human life. Inventions, like the spinning jenny, allowed for the mass production of textiles or fabric, which prompted a boom in cotton industries. The construction of these factories promoted a mass migration to cities, since there was a new source of income in the factories. Although there were many benefits to industrialization, common people also experienced harsh working and living conditions in these new cities.

The Industrial Revolution helps provide the historical context for the conditions that would ultimately spark the Russian Revolution. At the start of the twentieth century, there were two revolutions in Russia. In 1905, Russia became a constitutional monarchy and formed a nationally elected parliament known as the Duma.²³ This regime continued until World War I drained Russia, and Russians began to desperately call for Russia's withdrawal.²⁴ In February 1917, the tsar fell out of power and immediately a Provisional Government was formed. In what is known as the October Revolution later that year the Bolsheviks launched a successful coup of the Provisional Government, and made significant changes that would transform the daily lives of Russians. This revolutionary group focused on achieving the transfer of power to the proletariat, which consisted of industrial workers. Amidst a civil war, the peasants seized land from their former landlords and workers took control of factories. Throughout the years, the Bolsheviks sought to transform Russian culture, and emphasize the workers behind their revolution.

Lessons for the Industrial Revolution

Day 1: Introduction to the Industrial Revolution

1. Do Now: Answer questions on worksheet regarding CT Child Labor Laws
2. Lecture introducing the Industrial Revolution and the creation of factories and cities
 - a. Connection between child labor and the eventual formation of child labor laws
3. Object Analysis with an invention of the Industrial Revolution
 - a. Inventions will include the steam engine, elevator, cotton gin, spinning jenny, water frame, telegraph, etc.

Day 2: Inventions of the Industrial Revolution

1. Do Now: Students will finish their object analysis of an invention and submit their findings on Google Classroom.
2. Students will engage in a digital gallery walk with inventions of the Industrial Revolution.
3. Students will sketch an invention of their own.
4. Exit Ticket: Invention Design

Day 3: Pros and Cons of the Industrial Revolution

1. Do Now: Students will read a primary source excerpt about life in the city in the 1800s
2. In groups, students will read about the benefits and drawbacks of the industrial revolution and categorize them in worksheets
3. Exit Ticket: Do you think the industrial revolution was overall positive or negative?

Lessons for the Russian Revolution

Day 1: Introduction to Russia and the Russian Revolution

1. Do Now: Reading on Russia's complicated history with the US
2. Lecture on Russia's basic facts and history (location on a map, late Russian empire, revolutionary beginnings, etc.)
3. Timeline Activity: Students construct a timeline with the teacher, noting important dates and events
 - a. End of serfdom, Coronation of Tsar Nicholas II/the Khodynka tragedy, Liberal revolution of 1905, WWI, February/October Revolutions/withdrawal from WWI
4. Causes of WWI: MANIA Reading (Militarization, Alliances, Nationalism, and Assassination)
5. Exit Ticket: MANIA Worksheet Questions

Day 2: World War I and Russia

1. Do Now: What is MANIA?
2. Review MANIA causes
3. Lecture on the impact of WWI on the Russian people, important leaders, the rise of different factions (Mensheviks vs. Bolsheviks)
4. Primary Source Analysis using *New York Times* archives²⁵
5. Exit Ticket: Primary Source Analysis Worksheet

Day 3: October Revolution and Soviet Culture

1. What kind of changes would you want in your country if the country were to start anew?
2. Group Activity: Front page news
 - a. In groups, students will learn about the policies implemented by the Bolsheviks and each student will write a report to be included on the front page of a newspaper that they will construct.
3. Class ends with a presentation of their newspapers
4. Exit Ticket: Group Newspapers

Day 4: Soviet Culture

1. Do Now: What role does culture play in revolutions?
2. Discussion on the role of culture and revolution.

3. Object analysis: Students will have the opportunity to analyze posters, plates, sculptures, etc.

Object Analysis: Russian Revolutionary Plate

1. Description:

- a. Materials: The object is made out of porcelain.
- b. Size/Shape: This object is circular and a hard material that resembles a white ceramic material. Its diameter is “24.80 centimeters,” while its depth measures to “2.87 centimetres.”²⁶
- c. Parts/Condition: In the center circle, there is a colorful image with white exterior borders. The circle’s frame has twelve indents. In the middle of the circle, there appears to be red buildings that have windows. Every building appears to have a chimney that releases smoke. On the top of the image of the red buildings there are yellow and black sharp lines with hints of white clouds. To the left of the buildings, there is a tall red figure, presumably a man due to his short hair. The man’s stance suggests that he is moving towards the buildings. He is holding a large hammer that is also red. Underneath him is a clockwork-like gear. On the snowy ground in front of him alongside vegetation is the word “Kapital.” His movement in the image suggests that he is about to trample the letters.
- d. Markings: On the backside of the object are two black inscriptions. One inscription has the year 1901 with the image of a crown on top, and the other inscription has a hammer and sickle symbol with the year 1921.

2. Deduction: The object and its image could be viewed if it is laid flat on the table. Technically, other objects could be placed on the object, but that would cover the elaborate image. Its different parts seem to only enhance the display, such as the color and striking details. In general, the object inspires feelings of awe and curiosity regarding the decisions behind the construction of the object and its image.

3. Speculation:

- a. Best Guess: The object resembles a plate, but is more likely meant to display Soviet propaganda than other functions of a plate such as eating.
- b. Approximate Date: 1901/1921
- c. Further research could clarify if these plates were given out to workers on a mass scale or were kept by upper-class people.
- d. Although it is vaguely identified as “plate,” the catalogue description confirms that the plate’s material is porcelain and was made by workers in the Imperial Porcelain Factory, which the Bolsheviks seized after the October Revolution. One can presume that the plate was originally made without the design in 1901, the earliest date on the plate, and then decorated with the image in 1921, the second date with the Soviet symbol. The plate was painted and then glazed over. The first mark is also confirmed by the museum as the “Imperial Porcelain Factory mark of Nicholas II,” so the plate was originally ordered by the Imperial family.²⁷ The museum’s curator provides a robust description of the plate’s history and the factory’s role in producing propaganda for the Russian Revolution. Through a study of this object, students can learn about Russian history and the changes that impacted Russian industries, workers, and visual culture.

Latin American Final Project

The New Haven curriculum recommends “Latin American revolutions” as one of the optional revolutions to cover. Latin America encompasses an extensive amount of land, including the continent of South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands. Latin American countries vary in their racial breakdown, culture, histories, and languages or dialects. Subsequently, Latinos, especially those living in the United States, vary widely in their nationalities and lived experiences. Latino immigrants will have widely different lived experiences than their children who either immigrated with them at a young age or were born and raised in the United States as first-generation Americans. For these reasons, this unit will come to an end with a student-centered research project. In this research project, students will be prompted to identify a Latin American country of interest and use their object analysis skills to identify and analyze an object connected to their country’s revolution. This approach empowers students with choice, cultural relevance, and the opportunity to learn more about global cultures. Students will be provided with an example of a case study of some of Colombia’s revolutionary objects, such as the tricolor flag, the Vase of Llorente, and the Gorro Frigio.

By the end of the final project, students will have identified a country of interest, provided a detailed summary of the country’s revolution, identified an object related to the revolution, engaged in Prown’s method of object analysis, confirmed their findings with credible sources, and presented their conclusions through visual media of their choice (poster board, slides, video, etc.).

CT Social Studies Standards

- **MW.His.1.b.** Evaluate how the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution shaped institutions in society (e.g., deism, individual liberty, religious tolerance, reason, scientific method).
- **MW.His.2.a.** Analyze how the diffusion of Enlightenment ideas influenced revolutions (e.g., United States, France, Haiti, Venezuela).
- **MW.Civ.2.a.** Evaluate the extent to which political and social change was advanced by women in the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution (e.g., Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret Cavendish, Maria Winkelman, Maria Merian).
- **MW.His.5.a.** Analyze how industrialization gave rise to new ideals and their related policies (e.g., laissez-faire, communism, feminism, socialism, utilitarianism, utopianism).
- **MW.His.14.a.** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of industrialization (e.g., geographic features, technological innovations, access to capital, exploitative foreign policies and impact on native populations, environmental degradation, population trends, labor standards).
- **MW.Civ.12.a.** Investigate how different groups have struggled to gain freedom, equality, and social justice at the national and international levels (e.g., Nelson Mandela, Ho Chi Minh, Kwame Nkrumah, Indian National Congress).²⁸

Reading Lists for Students

- Enlightenment: Diderot's *Encyclopedia*
- French Revolution:
 - *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*
 - *The Law of Suspects*
- Slave Resistance (Haitian Revolution Background): Rebecca Hall's *Wake! The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts*

Material Resources

- Chromebooks
- Notebooks
- Construction Paper
- Sponge
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Classroom Smart Board

Appendix on Implementing District Academic Standards

New Haven Public Schools has five required unit topics for its Modern World History class. The second unit of the Modern World History curriculum consists of revolutions, and teachers are required to teach the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. Teachers are encouraged to teach at least two optional revolutions, and a list of these optional revolutions include the Haitian, Russian, Latin American, and Chinese Revolutions. All of the required revolutions and three of the optional revolutions are incorporated into this unit, as well as some of their revolutionary objects. Industrialization is another topic that the district requires, which will be covered within the discussion of the Industrial Revolution. Some of the optional revolutions, such as the Haitian and Latin American Revolutions were included to extend the focus of the unit beyond Europe.

High school teachers in New Haven must strive to teach the C3 Framework, or Connecticut's secondary social studies standards. Standards are intended to ensure that every student has access to a fair education. Central to the C3 Framework is the "inquiry arc," which encourages students to "think like a historian" and ask questions related to the discipline.²⁹ Additionally, the C3 framework prompts students to corroborate their arguments and findings with evidence, which is a skill that will be developed through the third step of Prown's method. Finally, students will have the opportunity to communicate their thoughts at the end of the final project, which is another goal of the C3 Framework.³⁰ Multiple state standards are covered within this unit and

are listed. Although the revolutions are separated into three different pairings, students will analyze the impact of each of the revolutions, such as the Enlightenment ideals in the French and Haitian revolutions or the role of industrialization in Russia as a precursor to the revolution. Mary Wollstonecraft is explicitly mentioned in the unit, and students will learn about her writings during a time in which women had limited access to education. The last standard (MW.Civ.12.a.) will be applied during the discussion of the Haitian Revolution, and the struggle of enslaved people for freedom.

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