



Drafting a More Perfect Union

Lesson Overview

You will analyze an historical document and draw conclusions about what this document was for, who created it, and why. After the document is identified, you will compare its text to that of an earlier draft by to understand the evolution of the final document.

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Examine documents as primary sources;
- Analyze and compare drafts;
- Describe the significance of changes to the document's text.

Lesson Procedure

1. Understanding documents.
 - What is a document?
 - What are examples of common documents?

 2. Document 1
 - Examine the document.
 - Where does your eye go first?
 - How would you describe what you're seeing? What do you notice about the physical condition?
 - Which words or phrases can you read? Has the document been altered in any way?
 - Are there any indications (e.g., names, dates) of ownership or time period?
 - Who do you think wrote this?
 - What do you think this document is about? What words or phrases give clues?
 - What about language, its tone and style? Type of print?
 - Do you think this is a public or private document? What might have been the author's purpose in writing this?
 - Who might have been the intended readers?
 - Do you think this is the complete document or are pages missing?
 - What surprises you about what you're seeing?
 - What do you want to know about this document?

 3. What document is this?
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Material provided without charge by St. Mary's University School of Law, <https://law.stmarytx.edu/>.

Source: The Library of Congress Lesson Overview for the Constitution: Drafting a More Perfect Union
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/more-perfect-union/index.html>

4. What do you know about the Constitution?
5. Did you know that there was an earlier draft of the Constitution?
 - After your teacher passes out copies of this earlier draft, think about the following question.
 - Can you determine changes made to the Constitution during the drafting process? Jot some down, if you can find any.

Group Work

1. Working together, use the Making Comparisons Handout to analyze and compare the Constitution.
 - Identify unfamiliar vocabulary.
 - Analyze and compare the two drafts' wording by marking and making notes directly on the Constitution: Making Comparisons handout.
 - Respond to the following questions on a separate piece of paper:
 - What do you think is the most significant difference(s) in wording between these two drafts of the Constitution?
 - Why do you think this change(s) was made?
 - How does this difference(s) in wording change your understanding of the text's meaning, if at all?

Conclusions

Be prepared to discuss your responses to the above questions with the entire class when called to do so.