

Not United

Lesson #1 of the 1783-1812 Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What difficulties did Americans face in the 1780s because of their government under the Articles of Confederation?

OVERVIEW

As the Revolutionary War drew to a close and concluded with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the new nation—the United States—faced an array of new challenges. The principles of the revolution and desire for representative government ran strong, bringing mistrust of efforts for greater unification at the expense of power. However, the lack of unity, a floundering economy and strained foreign relations revealed many of the bedrock difficulties in the new country. The Articles of Confederation, determined state governments, stalling interstate commerce, financial difficulties at home and abroad and disgruntled veterans of the late war were all factors, shaking the bonds of the not-yet-united United States.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - Name and explain some of the challenges the United States faced immediately after the Revolutionary War ended (1783-1787)
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Examine a secondary and primary source from these tumultuous years and analyze findings.
3. Evaluation
 - Evaluate and discuss what solutions American could consider or try to overcoming the difficulties and challenges in these post-war years.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduce an Essential Question and lays foundational knowledge about the years in the United States immediately following the Revolutionary War.
2. Distribute the [primary and secondary sources worksheet](#).
3. Let students choose a primary source/document to study from this list (included on their worksheets). The primary sources are all available on the [Lesson Plan Page](#), under the category "Primary Sources." This can be done in groups or individually.
4. Students will read their selected primary source and fill out or discuss the questions in Part 1 of the worksheet.

5. After students have identified the challenge or problem mentioned in their selected primary source, have the students read the corresponding secondary source. The secondary sources are all available on the [Lesson Plan Page](#), under the category “Articles”.
6. Students will fill out the questions in Part 2 of their worksheet, relating to the secondary source.
7. Part 3 of the worksheet will help the students draw conclusions about the challenges in the United States after the Revolutionary War and before the Constitution was drafted.

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the “Common Core and NCSS Standards for Social Studies” to view the details.

RESOURCES

[Visit the Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You’ll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Primary and Secondary Sources Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Articles of Confederation

As a class, in groups, or individually, read the [Articles of Confederation](#). Encourage the students to note three things that are still used in the United States government today and then identify three things that are different/changed by the later U.S. Constitution.

As a group, discuss the challenges that the United States faced because they did not want a king or a strong government, but ended up without enough government power for cooperation and facing foreign policy dangers. Ask the students if they think the Articles could be revised or if they would recommend starting a new governing document.

Option 2: Revolutionary War Veterans

As a group or individually, read this article about [Revolutionary War veterans](#). Then, using the [Library of Congress website](#), search for images of Revolutionary War veterans; some veterans lived into the mid-19th Century and were photographed.

Discuss and note the many different events these surviving veterans witnessed. Invite the students to write reflections or a letter to these veterans, considering the independence of the country, the challenges in the early years of the nation, events that have happened since and how we remember Revolutionary War veterans now.