

8th Grade Lesson Plan for 1787 Federal Convention: The Plan for America

BACKGROUND

Learning Objectives and Hook	By the end of the lesson, students should be able to explain how Hamilton's speech aided in the adoption of the Virginia Plan as a basic blueprint for the convention. Hook: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FZcYfMdjoA
Essential Question(s)	How does the VA plan relate to powers we have today?
Brief Introduction In a paragraph or two, briefly introduce the topic and core issues.	<p>On a motion from John Dickinson (DE), the Committee of the Whole agreed that the Articles of Confederation should be so amended "as to render the Government of the United States adequate to the exigencies, the preservation and the prosperity of the union."</p> <p>Alexander Hamilton (NY) then rose, and began a speech which lasted the rest of the day. He didn't like either plan, "... being fully convinced that no amendment to the confederation, leaving the states in possession of their sovereignty could possibly answer the purpose." He proceeded, at length, to compare the Virginia and New Jersey plans against what he viewed as the essentials of a sound government and then proposed a plan of his own - a bicameral legislature with power to pass all laws; a House elected by the people for three years; a senate elected by electors from electoral districts to serve for life; a Governor to be chosen by the people voting in electoral districts to serve during good behavior; and state governors to be appointed by the Federal Government.</p> <p>Hamilton's speech on June 18th which resulted in adoption of VA plan as basic blueprint for convention was an infamous, scandalous speech where he posed the president for life controversy, the idea to give the</p>

	<p>governor of every state absolute veto (yikes) and contemplated what if congress had control instead?</p> <p>Looking at the crazy things Alex Hamilton suggests and some of these things seem kinda wild (president for life) but technically the constitution allows this and Hamilton argues in the federalist papers that if you got someone who wins over the people they could be effective in a life appointment.</p> <p>The context is important as Madison had presented the VA plan 2 weeks before. VA plan proposed an entirely powerful federal government.</p> <p>People thought it was too national and therefore on the opposite, the NJ plan presented a weak executive and a congress where states were represented equally, no direct representation of the people, and courts were weak.</p> <p>Hamilton gave a wild long 6 hour speech. His argument was that neither the VA or NJ plan was adequate; he thought they were thinking too small.</p> <p>Hamilton talks about the things that would happen in an effective form of republican government to avoid the possibility that it will fail and a dictatorship will occur.</p> <p>Then no more debate happens over NJ and they adopt VA after!</p> <p>NJ plan then appears to be so far left and Hamilton's Plan so far right that VA falls in the middle, and gets adopted.</p> <p>https://quillproject.net/m2/session/6302#675583 (s6302)</p> <p>(Description: Session 6302: Monday, 18 June 1787, at 11:00 New Jersey Plan debated. Hamilton Plan introduced.)</p> <p>Using the Quill link answer the intro questions on your worksheet.</p>
Standards	<p>U.S. I Standard 4.1:</p> <p>Students will explain how the ideas, events, and compromises which led to the development and ratification of the Constitution are reflected in the document itself.</p>

INSTRUCTION & PRACTICE

Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Powerpoint● Quill Login● Student computer access
Terms & Concepts to Understand	<p>New Jersey Plan - The New Jersey Plan proposed a unicameral (single chamber) legislature with equal representation, and would have revised the Articles of Confederation to keep more power in the hands of the states instead of a centralized government. The New Jersey Plan was written and presented to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 on June 16th by William Paterson</p> <p>Virginia Plan - Drafted by James Madison, and presented by Edmund Randolph to the Constitutional Convention on May 29, 1787, the Virginia Plan proposed a strong central government composed of three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial.</p> <p>Resolved (abbreviated): Resd.</p> <p>https://quillproject.net/m2/session/6301 (s6301)</p> <p>(Description: Session 6301: Saturday, 16 June 1787, at 11:00. New Jersey Plan debated.)</p> <p>Answer the term questions on your worksheet.</p>
Scaffolding	<p>Walk through the two plans and Hamilton's speech as a class then divide into groups for the next part.</p>

<p>Content Knowledge</p> <p>Varies based on discipline, course, unit, lesson, standards, and mandates</p>	<p>1. Hamilton suggests that his plan is still within the proper sphere of both republicanism and federalism, rather than being a reformulation of monarchy and nationalism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does his plan support his claim? - Do the states have any role under his plan? - Has he elevated the presidency to a position of greater importance than the governors of the states? <p>2. Compare and contrast Hamilton’s position on the separation of powers with that found in any of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Virginia Plan - The New Jersey Plan <p>Check for understanding activities as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fill in worksheet
<p>Skills & Dispositions</p> <p>Skills and/or dispositions are a vital part of civics education, particularly when they are connected to the content knowledge. Teaching about the colonial Committees of Correspondence, for example, might be an apt time to teach and practice the skill of collaborating with others to bring about change. (see also list *)</p>	<p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are these plans (Hamilton, NJ, VA) important today? - Can you find a challenge to any of these plans during the convention? - Can you think of a time when these plans could be challenged? - What evidence do you have that backs up your interpretation? <p>Working with those around you, answer these questions on your worksheet and be ready to share your answers with the class.</p>

<p>Primary Sources & Case Studies</p> <p><i>Teaching History, Learning Citizenship: Tools for Civic Engagement</i> (2019) by Jeffery D. Nokes is a particularly useful resource for learning to teach with primary sources.</p>	<p>The primary sources are found through Quill.</p> <p>Madison's Notes (Max Farrand, 1911) , Pages 291-293, Vol. 1.</p> <p>Lansing's Notes (Joseph Strayer, 1939) , Page 68.</p>
<p>Graphic Organizer</p> <p>Graphic organizers are one way to encourage student analysis of primary source texts. The organizer may include questions for analyzing the texts as well as more global interpretive questions which students defend through their study of the primary source. See examples in Nokes (2019).</p>	<p>Fill in the Venn Diagram Comparing the Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan and Hamilton's Plan. Include 3-4 facts in each part.</p> <p>*See at end of lesson</p>

CLOSURE

<p>Debriefing</p>	<p>Encourage students to share and evaluate interpretations based on evidence in the core documents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which form of government would you have voted for?
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<p>Reinforcing Core Facts?</p> <p>Clarify any absolute facts</p>	<p>When lessons are based on authentic questions, there will be differences of opinion. The teacher has a responsibility to ensure that students understand how and why there are various legitimate and defensible positions. At the same time, any absolute facts should be reinforced by the teacher at lesson's end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- VA plan gets adopted. What are the key features of it?
<p>Reinforce Skills & Dispositions</p>	<p>Also review any civic skills and dispositions learned and practiced during the lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- TBD if needed for a longer lesson. The students can be divided into sides and prepare arguments for the position and have a formal debate.

Hamilton's Speech Worksheet:

Intro Questions:

1. On what day and in what committee did Hamilton give his speech?
2. Write down one critique Hamilton gives?

Terms Questions:

3. In your own words describe the New Jersey Plan:
4. In your own words describe the Virginia Plan:

Content Knowledge Questions:

5. Hamilton suggests that his plan is still within the proper sphere of both republicanism and federalism, rather than being a reformulation of monarchy and nationalism.
 - a. Does his plan support his claim?
 - b. Do the states have any role under his plan?
 - c. Has he elevated the presidency to a position of greater importance than the governors of the states?
6. Compare and contrast Hamilton's position on the separation of powers with that found in any of the following documents:
 - a. The Virginia Plan
 - b. The New Jersey Plan

Skills and Disposition Questions:

7. Why are these plans (Hamilton, NJ, VA) important today?
8. Can you find a challenge to any of these plans during the convention?
9. Can you think of a time when these plans could be challenged?
10. What evidence do you have that backs up your interpretation?

Debriefing Question:

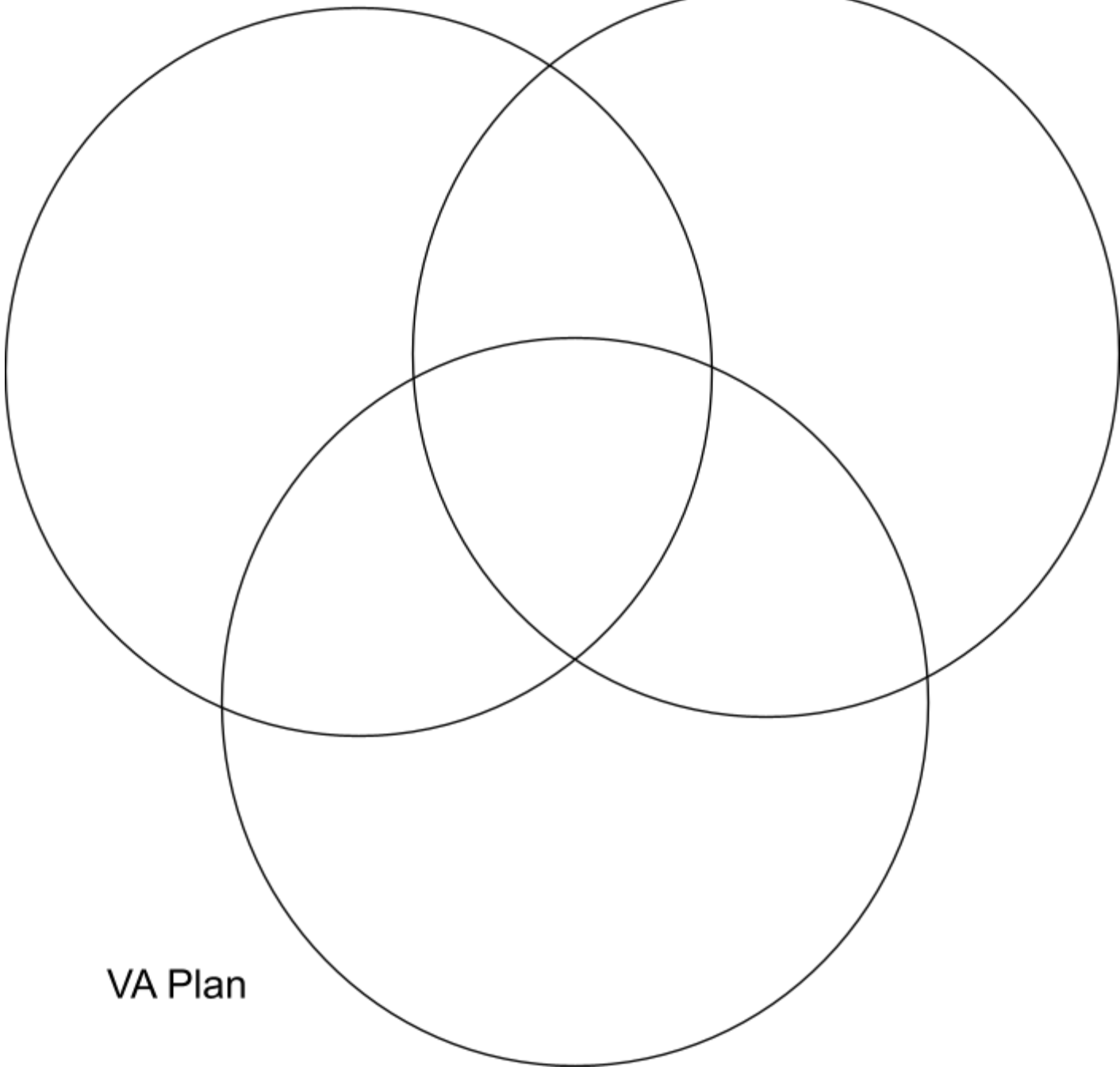
11. Which form of government would you have voted for?

Reinforcing Facts Question:

12. VA plan gets adopted. What are the key features of it?

Hamilton's Speech

NJ Plan



VA Plan