

Lesson Plan:

The Dangers of Factionalism: *Federalist No. 10*

Grade: 8th, high school

Subject: Social Studies, U.S. Government & Civics

Time required: one 1-hour class period

Author: Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU

OVERVIEW

Beginning in October 1787, *The Federalist*, later known as the *Federalist Papers*, was published in two New York newspapers. This series of articles written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, who published using the pseudonym “Publius,” sought to address many of the criticisms of the new U.S. constitution and ease the way for ratification. A total of eighty-five articles were written in less than two years, with seventy-seven published serially. The volume and eloquent arguments contained with each made it nearly impossible for the opposition to refute or debate any of the *Federalist’s* claims. In total, the *Federalist* provides a unique insight into the reasoning behind how our Constitution is structured, and is, according to the Library of Congress, “considered the most important work on statecraft and political theory ever written by Americans.”

UNDERSTANDING GOAL

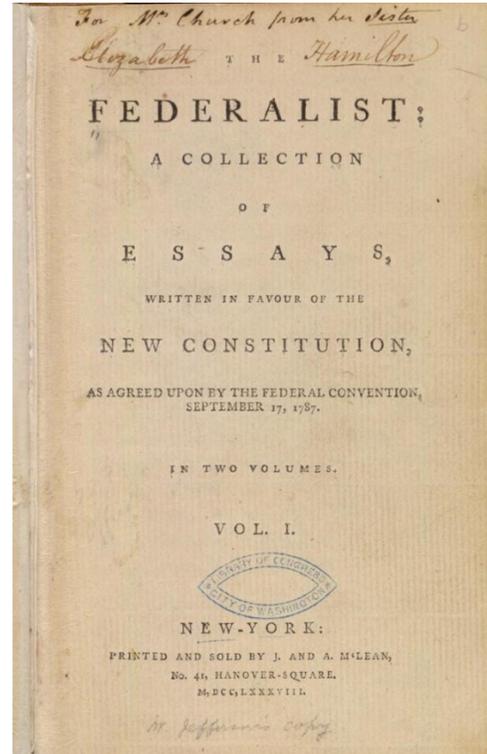
Students will understand arguments about the roles and dangers of factions in a democracy from the point of view of James Madison, one of the authors of *The Federalist*.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze one of the Founding Documents of the United States government.
- Students will perform a close reading of excerpts from a complex primary source text.
- Students will practice historical comprehension and support answers with evidence from the text.

INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION

What are the roles and dangers of factions in a democracy, from the point of view of *Federalist No. 10*?



[\[John Jay, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton\], *The Federalist: A Collection of Essays, Written in Favour of the New Constitution, vol. 1, New York: J and A M'Lean, 1788. Rare Books and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress \(16\)*](#)

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

8th Grade Social Studies

8.32 Explain the ratification process and describe the conflict between Federalists and AntiFederalists over ratification, including the need for a Bill of Rights and concern for state’s rights, citing evidence from the Federalist Papers No. 10 and 51 and other primary source texts. (H, P)

Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Read: The Federalist Paper # 10

High School U.S. Government & Civics

GC.6 Describe the systems of enumerated and shared powers, the role of organized interests (Federalist Number 10), checks and balances (Federalist Number 51), the importance of an independent judiciary (Federalist Number 78), implied powers, rule of law, federalism, popular sovereignty, and civilian control of the military. (P)

Standards continued on p. 2

CURRICULUM STANDARDS *continued*

Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Read: excerpts from The Federalist Papers – 1, 9, 10, 39, 51, 78

English Language Arts (8th Grade)

Reading: Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details 1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure 6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

English Language Arts (11th & 12th Grades)

Reading: Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details 1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

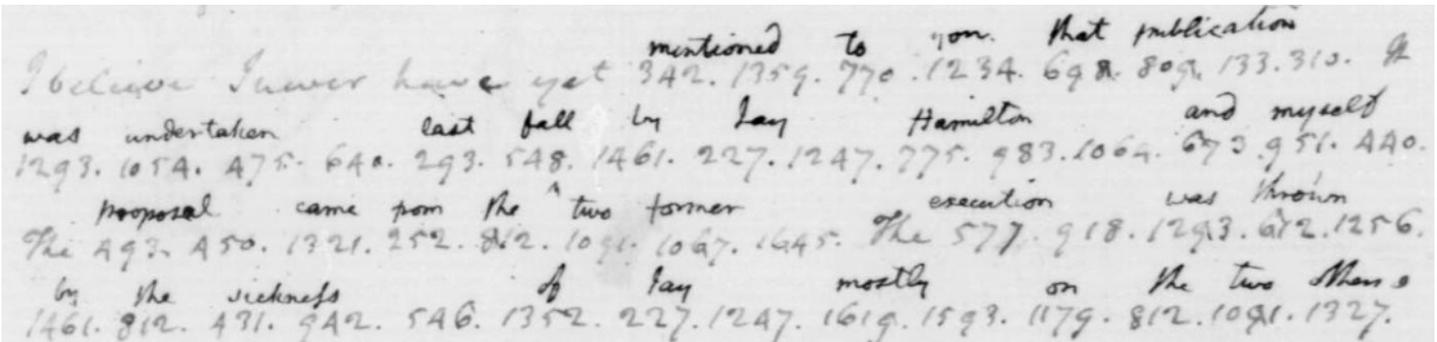
Craft and Structure 6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [Federalist No. 10 by James Madison](#) (transcription from Congress.gov)
- [Publius \(pseudonym for James Madison\). The Federalist. No. X in the New York Daily Advertiser. Page 2. \(November 22, 1787\). Serial and Government Publications Division, Library of Congress \(6.7b\)](#)

MATERIALS

- [“The Federalist Papers” Today in History article](#) (secondary source for students)
- [“The Founding Fathers Unite”](#) video (2 min. 51 sec.)
- [The Federalist](#) from *American Treasures of the Library of Congress* exhibition
- [Federalist No. 10](#) by James Madison, divided into twelve excerpts (handout for students)
- [“Federalist No. 10: Evidence-Based Answers” worksheet](#) (handout for students)



[James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, August 10, 1788. Partly in Cipher.](#) [darker words penned in by Jefferson as he [translated](#) the cipher: “mentioned to you that publication was undertaken last fall by Jay, Hamilton and myself; proposal came from the two former; execution was thrown off by the sickness of Jay mostly on the two others”]

PROCEDURE	
Step 1	Assess prior knowledge: Start off by asking students if they’ve ever heard of <i>The Federalist</i> . Can they name the three Founding Fathers who wrote these papers? Do they know what the term “Federalist” means?
Step 2	Identify terms: Get students to think about what the word “federal” means, and from there, to extrapolate a possible definition of “Federalist.” Next, define the word “faction.” Lastly, what is the difference between a “democracy” and a “republic”?
Step 3	Provide context: Divide the class into twelve groups and have them read this Today in History article that explains <i>The Federalist Papers</i> . Now ask students what <i>The Federalist</i> is and who wrote the essays that make up the work. They should each be able to explain these answers to their groupmates before having a larger class discussion. Next, show this brief video from the Library of Congress and the History Channel called, “The Founding Fathers Unite” (2 min. 51 sec.). The video shows the essays published in book form. Be sure to remind students that the essays were originally published in newspapers and look like this .

Step 4	Get into the text: Ask the students why <i>Federalist No. 10</i> was so important. They may need to refer back to the Today in History article to explain this. Now tell them that they are about to read this particular essay. This handout contains all of <i>Federalist No. 10</i> , divided into twelve parts. Number the groups 1-12 and give each group its corresponding part of the document. (Some parts are longer than others; you may wish to give those parts to groups with students who can take on a greater volume of text more easily.) You should pass out enough copies so that each student has her/his own copy of the group excerpt.
Step 5	Present the focus questions: Write the following questions on the board. Go over each of them. What answers can the students provide based on their contextual reading so far? ⇒ What is the danger of factions? ⇒ Why is a pure democracy not a desirable form of government? ⇒ How can a republic address the issues of factionalism? Tell students that they will be looking for evidence from their <i>Federalist</i> excerpts to answer these questions.
Step 6	Practice close reading: Give students plenty of time to read through the excerpts. On the first read-through, have students underline all words and phrases they don't understand. If their group partners can't help them with the meanings or context clues, then they should look up definitions in their dictionaries or on their devices. Once unfamiliar terms have been made clearer, students should do a second read-through for content. What is the gist of their excerpt? Can they articulate among their groupmates what the main idea of their passage is?
Step 7	Find evidence from the text: Pass out copies of the “Federalist No. 10: Evidence-Based Answers” worksheet . (Each student should get one.) Students should understand that their particular excerpt may not answer all three of the focus questions. In fact, some of the excerpts may only answer one of the questions. Students will have to practice reading comprehension to decide which of the questions their excerpt answers. The teacher ought to circulate and remind groups of this point during this step. Once students have a grasp of which question(s) their excerpts answer, they can then start to fill in the boxes on the worksheet. The middle column can be answered using contextual knowledge from the beginning of class, in addition to information from the text. The third column, however, must be filled in with exact quotes from the text that provide direct evidence for their answers.
Step 8	Once students have filled in their worksheets, call on the whole class to answer the three questions and ask volunteers to provide text evidence. How well does <i>Federalist No. 10</i> argue these points? Does anything it says about factions ring true in today's America?
Step 8	Put the text into their own words: If time permits, have students do a “translation” exercise. Have each group select 1-2 sentences from their excerpts that they feel are very difficult to understand. Then, ask them to translate the sentences into their own words. They can do this on the backs of their worksheets or on a separate piece of paper.

EVALUATION

Class participation (including in-class discussions and group work) 20%

Federalist No. 10: Evidence-Based Answers worksheet 80%

EXTENSION

Students can learn more about who “Publius” is from these resources about John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton:

John Jay

⇒ [“John Jay” \(Today in History\)](#)

⇒ [Jay’s Treaty Web Guide](#)

[James Madison](#)

⇒ [James Madison: Father of the Constitution](#) [scroll down]

⇒ [Timeline, biography, etc.](#)

[Alexander Hamilton](#)

⇒ [“A Tragic Duel” \(Today in History\)](#)

⇒ [Timeline](#)