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 sheer volume of essays 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, according to the Library of Congress, is “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?


Curriculum Standards
8th Grade Social Studies
8.24 Describe the conflict between Federalists and Anti-Federalists over the ratification of the Constitution, including the protection of individual rights through the Bill of Rights and concern for states’ rights.

High School U.S. Government & Civics
GC.04 Discuss the Constitutional Convention of 1787, including the Great Compromise and the ensuing debate over ratification between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists.

Social Studies Practices
SSP.02 Critically examine a primary or secondary source in order to: Assess the strengths and limitations of arguments.

Standards continued on p. 2
**Curriculum Standards continued**

**English Language Arts (8th Grade)**
8.RI.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw logical inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing relevant textual evidence.

8.RI.CS.5 Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph or section in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

8.RI.CS.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)**
11-12.RI.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing and synthesizing relevant textual evidence from multiple sources.

11-12.RI.CS.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her own exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

11-12.RI.CS.6 Determine an author’s point of view and/or purpose in a text, analyzing how style and content contribute to its effectiveness.

**Primary Sources**
- *Federalist No. 10* by James Madison (transcription from Congress.gov)

**Materials**
- “The Federalist Papers” Today in History article (secondary source for students)
- “The Founding Fathers Unite” video (2 min. 51 sec.)
- *Federalist No. 10* by James Madison, divided into twelve excerpts (handout for students)
- “Federalist No. 10: Evidence-Based Answers” worksheet (handout for students)

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**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Assess prior knowledge: Start off by asking students if they’ve ever heard of The Federalist. Can they name the three Founding Fathers who wrote these papers? Do they know what the term “Federalist” means?</th>
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<td>Step 2</td>
<td>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”?</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Provide context: Divide the class into twelve groups and have them read this Today in History article that explains The Federalist Papers. Now ask students what The Federalist 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.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Step 4
Get into the text: Ask the students why *Federalist No. 10* 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 *Federalist No. 10*, 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 their 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 *Federalist* 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 *Federalist No. 10* 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](https://www.todayinhistory.com/John-Jay)” (Today in History)
  - [Jay’s Treaty Web Guide](https://www.history.com/topics/usa/jay-s-treaty)
- **James Madison**
  - [James Madison: Father of the Constitution](https://www.history.com/topics/usa/james-madison) [scroll down]
  - [Timeline, biography, etc.](https://www.history.com/topics/usa/james-madison/timeline)
- **Alexander Hamilton**
  - “A Tragic Duel” (Today in History)
  - [Timeline](https://www.history.com/topics/usa/alexander-hamilton/timeline)