

Appendix D: Curriculum using Comic-Making

COMIC-making to Explore Foundational Political Documents

An earlier version of this activity appears on the PAYCE project website

(www.paycestories.org) in the Educator's Toolkit

After completing this activity, students should be able to

- Break difficult political text into manageable components [Analysis: taking apart]
- Translate a portion of a foundational political document into visual imagery
[Application: Making use of knowledge]
- Consider the meaning and purpose of foundational political documents [Synthesis: Putting together]

Faculty preparation

The faculty should prepare by considering the document closely before hand. Students will work together to separate a foundational document into manageable components, but the faculty should think about how best to guide them. Some elements of a document will lend themselves more to comic-making than others. When considering the US Declaration of Independence, for example, the list of grievances against King George are especially apt. For the US Constitution, the Preamble, as it is more conceptual, may be more difficult to translate than the Articles and Amendments. The difficulty of translation can influence how much of the text each student is given, so that the assignment is equitable. As a faculty member, think to yourself how you might translate a

portion of text into a comic. Be prepared to help students who have difficulty thinking this problem through.

Activity

- Divide the class into pairs. Each pair will be responsible for a portion of the document.
- Work as a class to break the foundational document into components so that each pair has a roughly equivalent task.
- Each student pair should then make an outline of their portion of the document. What are the most important ideas and concepts that you want to communicate? Consider how much space you might need to tell the “story”. What are the most important things to include? What can be left off?
- Think visually. Can you show the concepts with a combination of pictures, symbols, and words? You don’t need to make it elaborate—stick figures are very effective.
- Sketch some ideas. Use a combination of words and images to tell your story. Look at them and discuss with your partner. Are the symbols you use universal? You might test it on another student group—can they look at your sketch and understand the main idea?
- Make a draft with a pencil. Evaluate with your partner. Are your ideas coming through? Is the layout cramped in any place? Could you make changes in spacing to fit it better? Make any final edits.

- Rework your draft into a final copy. Use pencil to draw it, and then copy over with a fine tip pen. Once the ink dries, use an eraser to remove pencil marks.
- Share the final copy with the class. Combined, they make a comic of the document. Review it to better understand the political concepts and ideas presented in the document.

Critical thinking questions

1. Who is the audience for the document? Why was it written?
2. What is the core message of the document? Does the document make a request? Define a governmental system? Argue in favor of a policy or program? How do the components of the document contribute to or define the core message?
3. What does this document reveal about political power in your system?
4. How does the document define rights and responsibilities?

Cross cultural application

Have students working cross culturally create comics of similar foundational documents.

Use the resulting comics to compare a foundational document from your system to that of another country. Consider how the systems might differ. Consider how the rights and responsibilities are different for citizens of different places.