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READING 1

Science and the Revolutionary Spirit

Introduction

Students read a selection from the introduction to *Freedom: A History of US*. This reading focuses on the impact of the Enlightenment on colonial thought and philosophy, leading to the Revolutionary War.

Procedure and Notes

Have students read the selection as many times as needed to effectively answer the questions. All questions should be answered through reading the selection.

CCSS Reading Standards

Key Ideas and Details

- Standard 1
- Standard 3

Craft and Structure

- Standard 4
- Standard 5
- Standard 6

Strategies Used

evidence: something that proves a particular belief or idea

perspective: viewpoint from which a conclusion is considered or presented

“read with a pencil”: close-reading strategy that asks students to mark key points and annotate text

vocabulary: activity in which the student determines the definitions of terms based on their context in the reading

“wrecking the text”: close-reading strategy in which the student rewrites a passage in his or her own words

Answers

Activity: Action Verbs, Synonyms

Action verbs are words that denote some sort of action. Highlight in yellow the action words in the selection. Then, write a synonym, or a word with the same meaning, that can be used to replace the highlighted word.

[Isaac] Newton (who was an old man when young Ben Franklin first **arrived in** London) had taken the vast universe, which **seemed** beyond human comprehension, and **demystified** it. He **found** that the earth and skies are **governed** by verifiable laws and **regulated** by nature's checks and balances. If the universe **submits** to reason and law, men and women certainly should be able to do so, **said** the eighteenth-century thinkers. Reason and law? It takes free minds to make the most of them. That got poet John Milton (who hated kings) **thinking** about free speech, and some philosophers (especially John Locke, who agreed with Milton) **thinking** about political freedom. From them and others came the Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason. And that's when we [America] were lucky enough to be born.

Possible Responses

arrived in: came to

seemed: appeared

demystified: solved

governed: ruled

regulated: organized

submits: gives in

said: stated

thinking: considering; analyzing

Questions

1. "Read with a Pencil"

Read the selection. As you read, jot down questions and key points below that you believe are important to your understanding of the reading.

Answers vary depending on how students approach the reading. Possible questions may include: How did these thinkers extend principles of logic and reason to political thought? What might America have been like if it was "born" at another time? Students may identify key points as Enlightenment thinkers demystified astronomy and nature; political freedom had its roots in the "Age of Reason"; and John Locke, John Milton, and Isaac Newton were key persons in the Enlightenment.

2. Perspective, Point of View, Cite Evidence

Read through the selection. Based on what you see in the reading, what is the point of view of the author? In other words, explain how the author describes the effect of the Enlightenment on the American Revolution and struggle for independence. What evidence can you show from the reading to back up your view?

It is evident from the reading that the author believes the Enlightenment had a major impact on the American Revolution and the struggle for independence. In this excerpt, the author notes the Enlightenment view that “nature’s checks and balances,” or the logic that governs the universe and nature, can also govern political thought and government as well. The reading also cites Milton and Locke, important Enlightenment thinkers, who “hated kings” and began to consider political freedom. The author’s point of “. . . that’s when we were lucky enough to be born” would point to Milton and Locke’s influence in the development of the political theory that would be used to shape the American Revolution.

3. “Wrecking the Text”

Reread the selection. Then, rewrite the reading, summarizing the main points in your own words.

Answers will vary based on how students analyze the reading and consider the main points. Student answers should include an understanding that the Enlightenment greatly influenced the shaping of America and that Enlightenment thinkers held that logic and reason governed nature and that science could also be used to govern people.

ASSAULT ON FORT WAGNER



The 54th Massachusetts, a regiment of black soldiers under the command of a patrician Bostonian, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, headed the assault [on Fort Wagner]. . . . Shaw and 272 of his 650 men were killed. Union casualties (dead, wounded and missing) totaled 1,515. Confederate casualties were 174. . . .

After Fort Wagner, no one asked if black men could fight. “Prejudice is down,” wrote a man who was there. “It is not too much to say,” ran an article in the *New York Tribune*, “that if this Massachusetts 54th had faltered when its trial came, 200,000 troops for whom it was a pioneer would never have been put into the field. . . . But it did not falter. It made Fort Wagner such a name for the colored race as Bunker Hill has been for ninety years to the white Yankees.”



Sources: Part 6, “A War to End Slavery: Fighters Against the Odds,” paragraphs 2 and 3.

Activity: Syntax, Craft, and Structure

1. Highlight in yellow the sentence that, in your view, best summarizes the reading.
2. Identify what you believe is the main theme the author develops.
3. What key words in the reading demonstrate this theme? Highlight those words in a different color.

Questions

1. Cite Evidence, Point of View

What point of view does the author put forth about the role of black soldiers in the Civil War?
What evidence is given that supports this point of view?

2. Integrating Visuals and Text, Compare and Contrast, Word Picture, Draw Inferences

Look at the engraving of the assault on Fort Wagner. (Noted artists Currier and Ives made the engraving.) Compare the engraving with the excerpt and the word picture the selection makes. In what ways does the engraving support the statements made in the excerpt? In what ways does it not? What inferences can be made from both sources?