

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 25 - Teacher Guide



**From Struggle to Statesmanship:
The Remarkable Journey
of Alexander Hamilton**

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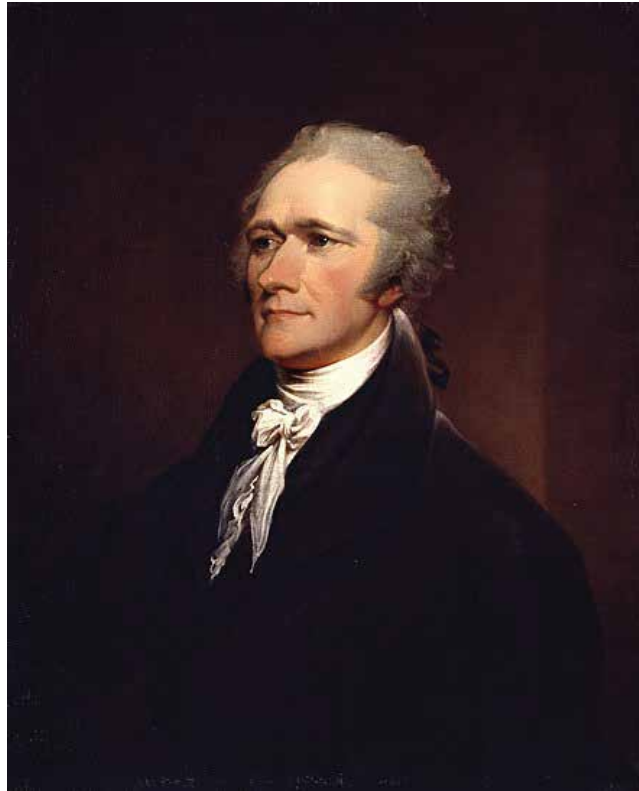
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Key Themes

- Resilience and Perseverance
- Social Mobility and Opportunity
- Ambition and Leadership
- Impact of Education
- Legacy and Controversy

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify Alexander Hamilton as a key Founding Father who played a significant role in shaping the United States.
- Explain that Alexander Hamilton authored the Federalist Papers, which were crucial in explaining and supporting the need for a strong set of rules, or Constitution, for the nation.
- Define Alexander Hamilton's pivotal role in establishing the U.S. Treasury and recognize how it serves to manage the country's financial health.
- Examine the challenges Alexander Hamilton encountered and discuss how he successfully navigated these difficulties.
- Recognize the skills and values that Hamilton exhibited, such as leadership, perseverance, and strong communication skills, and discuss how these were important in his successes.



Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Key Terms

- 01 **aide-de-camp:** a leader's top personal assistant, acting as their right-hand person. They are trusted with important tasks and ensuring messages are delivered quickly and accurately.
- 02 **clerk:** a bookkeeper who keeps track of payments, shipping details, and records important messages for ship captains and their crews.
- 03 **Department of the Treasury:** the agency responsible for promoting economic growth and ensuring the financial security of the United States.
- 04 **duel:** a fight between two people.
- 05 **economy:** the way a certain place (often a country) makes things, offers services, and divides things between people, usually using money.
- 06 **Federalist Papers:** a series of 85 essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay to explain why the new Constitution would be good for the United States.
- 07 **perseverance:** the ability to keep doing something in spite of obstacles.
- 08 **politics:** the work or study of government.
- 09 **The Articles of Confederation:** the first constitution of the United States that explained how the government should work. It set up a confederation (group of states) in 1781.

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

Have you ever faced a challenge that seemed too difficult, or felt that things just were not fair? Think about a day when nothing seemed to go right—perhaps you were tasked with chores while your friends were out having fun, or you encountered a school project that was particularly challenging. For Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers, overcoming obstacles was a daily reality during his childhood. His early life was filled with hardships, and almost every aspect of his day-to-day existence was a struggle. Despite these difficulties, Hamilton's unwavering determination and perseverance not only carried him through tough times but also led him to play a pivotal role in the founding of our nation. **Perseverance** is the ability to keep doing something in spite of obstacles.

ASK Students

Who was Alexander Hamilton? What do you know about him?

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton is one of our Founding Fathers. He wrote a lot of important papers called the Federalist Papers and even started the very first political party in our country, called the Federalist Party. The **Federalist Papers** are a series of 85 essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay to explain why the new Constitution would be good for the United States.

ASK Students

What did the Federalist Papers suggest would be good for the United States?

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton also helped set up the U.S. Department of Treasury. The **Department of the Treasury** is the agency responsible for promoting economic growth and ensuring the financial security of the United States.

ASK Students

What is the U.S. Department of the Treasury?

TELL Students

The Department of the Treasury is the money manager for the government. They do a lot of important jobs, like collecting taxes, paying bills, and making sure money is used wisely. They also keep track of how much money the government has and how much it owes. Plus, they make sure everyone follows the rules when it comes to money and taxes.

ASK Students

How do you think Alexander Hamilton used his skills to establish the U.S. Department of the Treasury?

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton was really good with money, organization, and leading people. He used these skills to start the U.S. Department of the Treasury. He knew a lot about the economy and made rules for how the Treasury Department should work. The **economy** is the way a certain place (often a country) makes things, offers services, and divides things between people, usually using money. Hamilton also talked to people and convinced them that the Treasury Department was important. Thanks to his hard work and ideas, the Treasury Department was created.

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Introduction

ASK Students

Why were good communication skills so important for Alexander Hamilton?

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton is important because he served our country in many ways. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about Alexander Hamilton.

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 25: Alexander Hamilton



Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Lesson

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton grew up on the Caribbean island of Nevis, part of the West Indies. While living on a tropical island might sound pleasant, Nevis in the 1750s was far from a vacation destination. The weather was hot and unpredictable. Most people spent their days working hard outdoors, farming sugar cane to sell in Great Britain and the colonies.

ASK Students

What was life like in Nevis for Alexander Hamilton?

TELL Students

Adding to Hamilton's challenges, he did not have his parents around to guide him. This left Hamilton and his older brother to be raised by a cousin who tragically died a few years later. With no money, no parents, and no clear path forward, Hamilton and his brother faced difficult challenges in rebuilding their lives.

ASK Students

What are some of the challenges faced by Alexander Hamilton?

TELL Students

Fortunately, Alexander Hamilton knew how to read and write. He also worked very hard and started his first job at the age of 11 as a clerk. A **clerk** is a bookkeeper who keeps track of payments, shipping details, and records important messages for ship captains and their crews. This meant Hamilton got plenty of practice reading, writing, and doing math. This education turned out to be the key to him getting away from the Caribbean and starting a new life in America.

ASK Students

What did Hamilton learn from his position as a clerk?

TELL Students

In his spare time, Alexander Hamilton enjoyed writing poems and articles for his local newspaper in St.

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Lesson

Croix. Many of his pieces were published, sparking his lifelong passion for writing. In 1772, a hurricane hit St. Croix and caused a lot of damage. Hamilton wanted to tell his father about it, so he wrote him a letter. His father lived on another island called St. Kitts. Unfortunately, the letter got lost and never made it to his father. But someone who found the letter liked it so much that he sent it to his friend, who was the editor of a famous newspaper, the *Royal Danish American Gazette*. The editor thought Alexander's letter was really good, so he decided to publish it in his newspaper.

ASK Students

What happened to the letter that Hamilton wrote to his father?

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton wrote a detailed description of the hurricane that struck St. Croix, and his writing was so good that it was published in a local newspaper. The people in St. Croix were very impressed with his skills. They saw a lot of promise in him and decided to help him get a better education. They collected money to send Hamilton to the North American British colonies for school. This allowed Hamilton to leave the hardships of the Caribbean behind and start a new life. It also set him on the path to becoming one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

ASK Students

How did the community of St. Croix support Alexander Hamilton? What does their support reveal about both Hamilton's potential and the character of the people in St. Croix?

TELL Students

Please read the passage below to learn more about Alexander Hamilton. [Please print and distribute fifth grade student text.]

Hamilton applied to the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University), but unfortunately, he was not accepted. However, he did receive an acceptance to King's College (now Columbia University) and began his studies there in late 1772.

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Lesson

This was a very important time because the American colonies were thinking about becoming independent from Great Britain, and the Revolutionary War was about to start. Even though Hamilton had just left behind his tough life in the Caribbean, he did not sit back and relax. Instead, he wanted to help the colonies win their freedom. Even before he finished college, Hamilton started writing papers and pamphlets to support the colonies' fight against British rule.

ASK Students

How did Alexander Hamilton support the colonies' fight against British rule?

TELL Students

When the Revolutionary War began, Hamilton also did not hesitate to join the fight. He became a part of the Continental Army and led soldiers in important battles like Princeton, Trenton, and Yorktown. His bravery and leadership skills made him stand out, and soon General George Washington asked Hamilton to be his right-hand man. As Washington's aide-de-camp, Hamilton worked hard and earned a reputation as a dedicated patriot with a strong sense of right and wrong. An **aide-de-camp** serves as a leader's top personal assistant, acting as their right-hand person. They are trusted with important tasks and ensuring messages are delivered quickly and accurately.

ASK Students

What is an aide-de-camp?

TELL Students

After bravely serving and contributing to the victory in the Revolutionary War, Hamilton continued his dedication to our country. Upon leaving the military, he resumed his education and embarked on a journey to comprehend and write laws. Alongside his fellow founding fathers, John Jay and William Paterson, who later became U.S. Supreme Court Justices, Hamilton gained valuable knowledge and insights.

ASK Students

What do you think Hamilton did to teach himself about law? Why would this be important to him?

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Lesson

TELL Students

Hamilton stayed involved in politics and worked with James Madison to organize the Constitutional Convention in 1787. **Politics** is the work or study of government.

ASK Students

What do you think Hamilton did to teach himself about law? Why would this be important to him?

TELL Students

Hamilton was worried that the government set up under the Articles of Confederation was not strong enough to keep America safe and united. The **Articles of Confederation**, the first constitution of the United States, was a document that explained how the government was to work. It set up a confederation (group of states) in 1781. He thought that if the states argued with each other, it could weaken the country, especially when other countries wanted America's land and resources. So, Hamilton helped plan the Annapolis Convention in 1786, where leaders decided to meet again in Philadelphia to write a new Constitution.

ASK Students

What were the Articles of Confederation?

TELL Students

Please review the following summary about Alexander Hamilton.

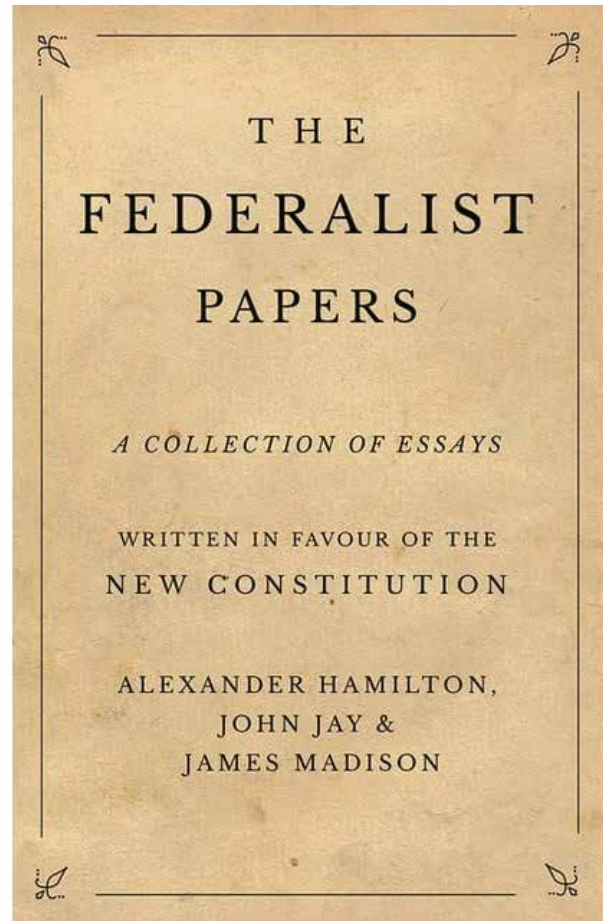
Even though Hamilton was one of the younger members, he played a big role in writing the Federalist Papers with James Madison and John Jay. These papers explained why the new Constitution was important, and they helped convince people to support it. Hamilton's hard work and ideas helped shape the future of the United States of America.

ASK Students

What contributions did Alexander Hamilton make to our country? What contributions will you make to our country?



Young Alexander Hamilton



Federalist Papers



Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Lesson

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton wasn't perfect. He made a lot of mistakes in politics and in his personal life. He had a big fight with Thomas Jefferson, another important person in history. Hamilton also did not get along with Aaron Burr, who was the Vice President. Their disagreement ended in a **duel**, a fight between two people, with guns. Burr won, and Hamilton got hurt badly and passed away.

ASK Students

What were some of the challenges Alexander Hamilton faced in his relationships with other important historical figures, and how did these challenges ultimately affect his life?

TELL Students

Hamilton's story is truly remarkable among all the Founding Fathers. As you've discovered, he was born into challenging circumstances far from the United States of America. However, through perseverance and hard work, he became one of the most significant and influential figures in American history.

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Hamilton's Journey: Discovering Leadership, Perseverance, and Communication

Objective

To explore Alexander Hamilton's life and identify the skills and values that contributed to his success.

Materials Needed

- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Markers
- Pictures of Alexander Hamilton
- Printed handouts with brief descriptions of Hamilton's life events
- Index cards
- Sticky notes
- Pens or pencils

Introduction

- Gather the students and introduce the topic of Alexander Hamilton.
- Show pictures of Hamilton and ask if anyone knows who he was.
- Briefly explain Hamilton's significance in American history and his roles as a Founding Father, Secretary of the Treasury, and more.

Hamilton's Life Timeline

- Display a timeline on the whiteboard or flipchart with key events from Hamilton's life (e.g., birth in the Caribbean, involvement in the Revolutionary War, writing the Federalist Papers, etc.).
- Hand out printed descriptions of these events to each student.
- Ask the students to match each description with the corresponding event on the timeline. Encourage discussion about why each event was important.

Skills and Values Identification

- Divide the class into small groups.

- Give each group a set of index cards and ask them to write down skills and values they think Hamilton exhibited during his life. Examples include leadership, perseverance, strong communication, etc.
- After a few minutes, collect the index cards and create a master list on the whiteboard.
- Discuss each skill and value as a class, providing examples from Hamilton's life to illustrate how he demonstrated them.

Applying Hamilton's Skills

- Hand out sticky notes to each student.
- Ask them to write down one skill or value they admire in Hamilton and how they can apply it in their own lives.
- Encourage creativity and personal reflection.
- Afterward, have students stick their notes on a designated area of the classroom (e.g., a bulletin board) to create a "Wall of Inspiration."

Reflection and Discussion

- Lead a class discussion about the importance of leadership, perseverance, and communication skills in achieving goals.
- Ask students to share examples of times when they demonstrated these skills or faced challenges where they needed them.
- Connect these reflections back to Hamilton's life and discuss how his experiences relate to their own.

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points discussed during the activity.
- Emphasize the relevance of Hamilton's skills and values in today's world.
- Thank the students for their participation and enthusiasm.

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Learning with Alexander

Section 1: Understanding Alexander Hamilton

1. Who was Alexander Hamilton?

Draw a picture of Alexander Hamilton in the box below based on how you imagine him.



2. Life in Nevis:

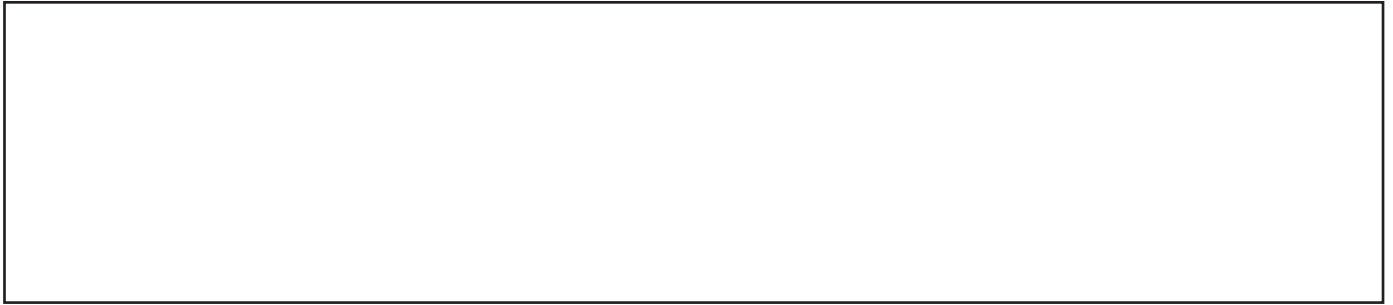
Imagine living on a tropical island like Nevis in the 1750s. Write three sentences about what your daily life might look like there.

3. Challenges:

What are some challenges Alexander Hamilton faced growing up? List at least two.

4. From Clerk to Founder:

Hamilton started working as a clerk at a young age. How do you think his job helped him later in life? Draw a connection in the space below.



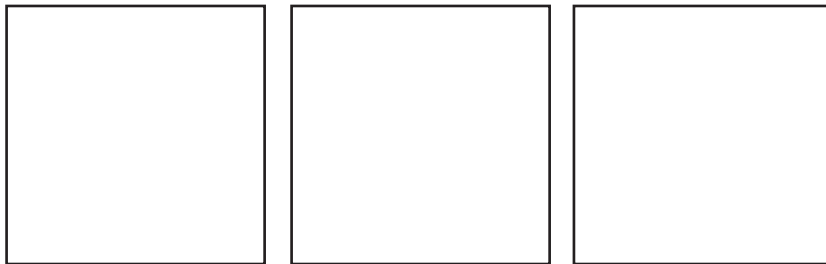
Section 2: Alexander Hamilton's Contributions

5. The Federalist Papers:

What were the Federalist Papers, and why were they important? Discuss with a partner and write your answer below.

6. U.S. Department of Treasury:

What is the role of the U.S. Department of Treasury? Use emojis to describe three of its functions.



7. Skills and Communication:

How did Alexander Hamilton use his skills to set up the Department of the Treasury? Write two ways he used his skills.

8. Support from St. Croix:

How did the community of St. Croix help Alexander Hamilton? Why do you think they helped him?

Section 3: Reflection and Creative Expression

9. Helping the Colonies:

If you were Alexander Hamilton and wanted to help the colonies gain independence, what would you do? Draw a picture or write a short story.

10. Your Contributions:

What contributions can you make to your community or country? Draw or write about one idea.

Remember to discuss your answers with your classmates and share any new ideas you learned about Alexander Hamilton!

Alexander Hamilton - Fifth Grade

Resource List

<https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/alexander-hamilton>

<https://www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/early-america-review/volume-6/alexander-hamilton-childhood>

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/alexander-hamilton>

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-01-02-0042>

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/alumni/content/alexander-hamilton-cc-1778>

<https://www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/about/objects/a166.html>

<https://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2017/03/alexander-hamilton-as-attorney/>

<https://billofrightsinstitute.org/activities/handout-e-excerpts-from-the-annapolis-convention-report>

