

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 25 - Teacher Guide



From Struggle to Statesmanship: The Remarkable Journey of Alexander Hamilton

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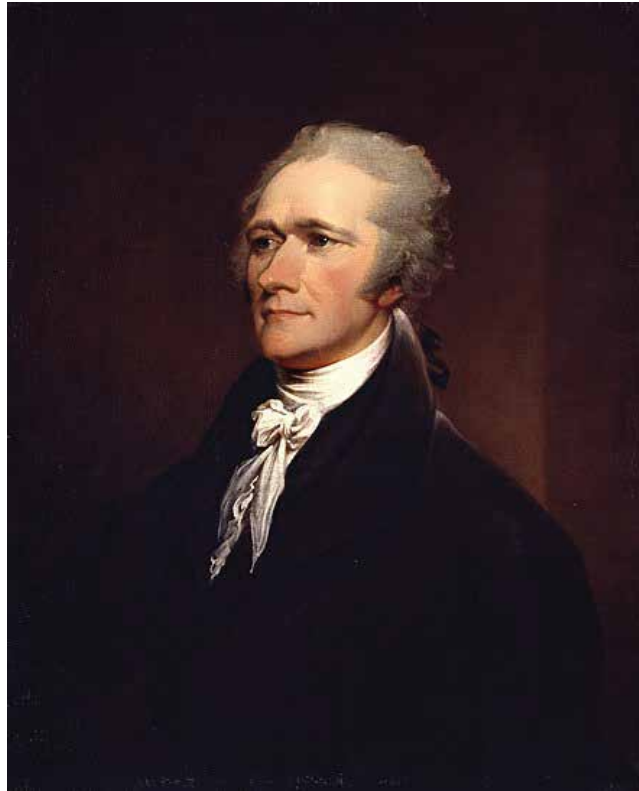
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Key Themes

- 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.



Alexander Hamilton - Second 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 **economy:** the way a certain place (often a country) makes things, offers services, and divides things between people, usually using money.
- 05 **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.
- 06 **Founding Fathers:** The special people who helped America become a country and made important decisions during the American Revolution.
- 07 **politics:** the work or study of government.
- 08 **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 - Second Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

Before the activity, tell students they are going to interview a special guest. Encourage them to come up with questions they would like to ask the guest during the interview. Tell students they will interview one of our Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton. Remind students that the special people who helped America become a country and made important decisions during the American Revolution are called the **Founding Fathers**. Gather students in a designated area where "Alexander Hamilton" (played by a teacher or volunteer) is waiting to meet them. Set the scene by explaining that students have traveled back in time to meet one of America's Founding Fathers. Invite students to take turns asking "Alexander Hamilton" questions about his life, challenges, and accomplishments. Encourage them to ask open-ended questions that require more than just a yes or no answer. As "Alexander Hamilton" responds to the students' questions, encourage interactive dialogue and follow-up questions to delve deeper into specific topics of interest.

ASK Students

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

TELL Students

That is right! Alexander Hamilton is one of our Founding Fathers. He wrote a lot of important papers called the Federalist Papers and even started the first unofficial 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 - Second Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

Alexander Hamilton also helped set up the U.S. Department of the 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.



U.S. Department of the Treasury

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 - Second 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 - Second 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 - Second 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

Hamilton seized the opportunity to attend college in the United States and enrolled at King's College, which is now known as Columbia University, in late 1772. 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.

Alexander Hamilton - Second Grade

Lesson

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

Even after the war ended, Hamilton continued to serve his country. He went back to studying and taught himself about law. 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

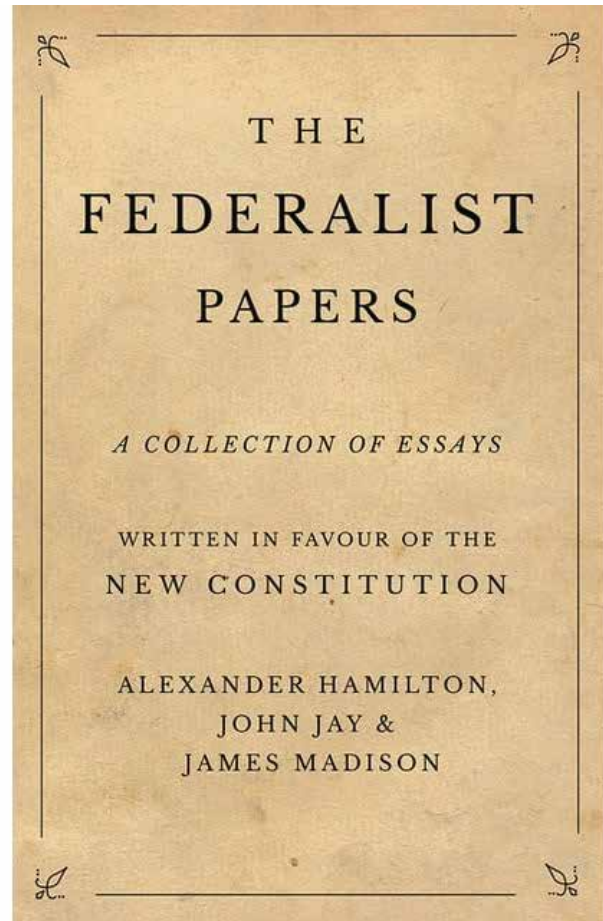
What do you think Hamilton did to teach himself about law? Why would this be important to him?

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.



Young Alexander Hamilton



Federalist Papers



Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay

Alexander Hamilton - Second Grade

Lesson

ASK Students

What were the Articles of Confederation?

TELL Students

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?

WATCH

Learn More With Liberty: Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson's Competing Views



Alexander Hamilton - Second Grade

Building the "Constitution" with Alexander Hamilton

Objective

To help second grade students understand the significance of the Federalist Papers and Alexander Hamilton's role in American history through a hands-on and interactive building activity.

Materials Needed

- Large building blocks or cardboard boxes (labeled with key ideas from the Federalist Papers and the Constitution, such as "Freedom of Speech," "Checks and Balances," etc.)
- Miniature figurines representing Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay
- Construction paper and markers to create additional props or decorations
- A simple, illustrated storyboard of the Federalist Papers' purpose and impact
- A poster or large image of the U.S. Constitution

Review

- Start with a brief review about Alexander Hamilton and his friends James Madison and John Jay. Explain that they wrote some very important essays called the Federalist Papers, which helped people understand why the Constitution was a good set of rules for everyone.

Role-Play Setup

- Give each student a small figurine (either Hamilton, Madison, or Jay). Explain that they are going to help build a strong country by adding blocks that represent different ideas from the Federalist Papers.

Building the "Constitution"

- Lay out the large building blocks or cardboard boxes in the center of the room. Each block should have a different principle of the Constitution written on it.
- Invite students one by one to choose a block and add it to the "foundation" of the Constitution. As they pick each block, ask them to say the principle (like "Freedom of Speech") out loud.

- Guide them to stack the blocks in a way that shows how these ideas support and connect with each other, explaining briefly how each idea helps make the country fair and safe.

Discussion and Reflection

- Once the Constitution structure is complete, gather the students and discuss how each part of the Constitution helps protect people and make sure everyone plays by the same rules.
- Ask them how Alexander Hamilton and his essays could help people feel safe and happy about the rules.

Creative Element

- Provide construction paper and markers. Let students create their own mini "Federalist Paper" by drawing or writing about what rule they think is most important in their classroom or family.

Wrap-Up

- Conclude with a discussion on why it's important to have rules and how rules like those in the Constitution make it easier for everyone to get along and be treated fairly.
- Display their mini Federalist Papers around the classroom or in a common area to remind them of what they learned.

This activity not only teaches second graders about Alexander Hamilton and the Federalist Papers but also helps them understand the core principles of the Constitution in a tactile and memorable way, fostering an early appreciation for civic education through play and creativity.



Alexander Hamilton - Second Grade

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Activity

Instructions: Please pay close attention to each statement. If you believe the statement is true, give a 'thumbs up.' If you think the statement is false, show a 'thumbs down.'

1. Alexander Hamilton wrote the Federalist Papers.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False
2. Alexander Hamilton started the Anti-Federalist Party.
 - Thumbs Up: False
 - Thumbs Down: True
3. The Federalist Papers explained why the new Constitution would be good for the United States.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False
4. The U.S. Department of the Treasury is responsible for collecting taxes.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False
5. Alexander Hamilton was good at farming sugar cane in Nevis.
 - Thumbs Up: False
 - Thumbs Down: True
6. Hamilton and his brother had a clear path forward after their parents passed away.
 - Thumbs Up: False
 - Thumbs Down: True

7. Alexander Hamilton started working as a clerk when he was 11 years old.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

8. Hamilton enjoyed writing poems and articles in his spare time.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

9. Hamilton's letter to his father about the hurricane got lost.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

10. The people of St. Croix helped Hamilton get a better education.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

11. Hamilton attended King's College, which is now known as Harvard University.
 - Thumbs Up: False
 - Thumbs Down: True

12. Hamilton supported the British during the Revolutionary War.
 - Thumbs Up: False
 - Thumbs Down: True

13. Hamilton became George Washington's right-hand man during the Revolutionary War.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

14. After the war, Hamilton taught himself about law.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

15. Hamilton helped plan the Constitutional Convention in 1787.
 - Thumbs Up: True
 - Thumbs Down: False

Alexander Hamilton - Second Grade

Answer Key

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. True
11. False
12. False
13. True
14. True
15. True

Alexander Hamilton - Second 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>

