

## Summer 2024 Reading and Language Arts Assignments Students Entering Grade 8 at St. Ignatius Loyola

Students entering grade 8 in September 2024 are responsible for completing three assignments over the summer. Each assignment aligns with a core standard in the English language arts curriculum (speaking and listening, reading informational text, reading literary text, and writing.) These assignments provide an opportunity for students to practice their skills and demonstrate their understanding of works of literature and selected pieces of informational text that align with the curriculum in various subject areas. Please email Mrs. Hatfield [ehatfield@stignatiusvikings.org](mailto:ehatfield@stignatiusvikings.org) with any questions.

### ***Speaking and Listening:***

Students should choose one of the selected poems and commit it to memory. Students may choose either *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost or *Life* by Charlotte Brontë. They should be prepared to recite the poem when they return to school and will be scored using an oral presentation rubric. The recitation will be evaluated on the following: enunciation and pronunciation, memorization, ability to convey meaning, and overall presentation (including eye contact and ability to be heard).

***Reading Informational Text and Writing Across the Curriculum:*** Read the selection *The Founding of American Democracy* from Common Lit and answer the questions that follow. Question #5 must be answered in paragraph form, and follow all grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules. Print the selection, and the questions, and bring the completed packet back to school on the first day. Extra copies will be available in the school office during summer hours, if needed.

### ***Reading Literary Text:***

All incoming 8th grade students will read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. Students should be prepared to discuss the novel when they return to school and will be assessed soon after.

*The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

*Life* by Charlotte Brontë

Life, believe, is not a dream  
So dark as sages say;  
Oft a little morning rain  
Foretells a pleasant day.  
Sometimes there are clouds of gloom,  
But these are transient all;  
If the shower will make the roses bloom,  
O why lament its fall?  
Rapidly, merrily,  
Life's sunny hours flit by,  
Gratefully, cheerily  
Enjoy them as they fly!  
What though Death at times steps in,  
And calls our Best away?  
What though sorrow seems to win,  
O'er hope, a heavy sway?  
Yet Hope again elastic springs,  
Unconquered, though she fell;  
Still buoyant are her golden wings,  
Still strong to bear us well.  
Manfully, fearlessly,  
The day of trial bear,  
For gloriously, victoriously,  
Can courage quell despair!

Name: Class:

## The Founding of American Democracy By Jessica

McBirney

2016

*The American colonies rose up against Great Britain in 1775 with the goal of becoming an independent state. In 1776, they sent the British king the Declaration of Independence, taking the first step toward forming the United States of America. After nearly eight years of fighting in the American Revolutionary War, the British finally retreated, and the Americans established their own government. As you read, take notes on what the founders thought was important to include in America's new government.*

[1] Sometimes, we see media reports about new laws; other times, we hear about the courts making decisions. A few times a year, the president gives an important speech. Do you ever wonder why the government works the way it does?

Today, the United States government is a lot like the one that was created in 1787. The Founding Fathers<sup>1</sup> had many reasons for writing the U.S. Constitution the way they did. Those choices are still a big part of how the American government works today.



["Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States" by Howard Chandler Christy is in the public domain.](#)

## COLONIZATION AND REVOLUTION

Europeans sailed to the Americas in the late 1400s. These continents were new to Europeans, although they had been occupied by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. The Europeans sought to explore and conquer. Spain invaded South and Central America in the 1500s seeking gold. Then, in the 1600s, British colonists created settlements and gained a foothold in North America.

The British quickly became a strong influence in North America, and by 1732, all thirteen colonies fell under British rule. For a while, these colonists enjoyed being part of a powerful

1. The Founding Fathers were key figures in America's independence from Great Britain and establishing early American government.

kingdom. It meant that they would be protected by a strong government. Then, in the middle of the 1700s, that changed. The colonists became increasingly agitated with how much power the king possessed.

[5]

The biggest problem the colonists had was how much money they paid in taxes. They sent the British a lot of money, but they didn't get to be an active part of the government. That meant they could not choose how their taxes were spent. Colonists started using the phrase "taxation without representation" to talk about this problem. It caught on and helped start the American Revolution. In 1776, the colonists wrote the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration informed the king that the colonies did not want to be part of Great Britain anymore. Instead, they would become independent states.

The British tried to stop this by sending an army to end the rebellion. By 1783, the Americans won the American Revolutionary War, and the British soldiers returned to Great Britain. The states were completely free from Great Britain's rule, but that was only the beginning.

## NOW WHAT?

Following the war, the American leaders had to decide how to run the country. They remembered what life was like under Great Britain's rule and wanted to share political power between the people and those who governed.

In order to do that, the Founding Fathers wrote the Articles of Confederation. This was a document that explained the duties of the states' governments. It also determined the limits of what the central government could do. The central government would have the power to start a war, but it wasn't allowed to assemble an army. The central government would also be prohibited from collecting taxes. There wasn't even a president! Instead, those jobs were handled by individual states, and each state was allowed to decide how to complete them. At the time, the Founding Fathers felt their rights would be safer if the states had the most power.

Unfortunately, this system caused a lot of problems. In Massachusetts, farmers, upset by what they considered to be unfair taxation, started Shays' Rebellion.<sup>2</sup> It was a serious conflict, and the central government couldn't do anything to help. They didn't have any power in the state.

Another problem was trade and debts, which could not be handled for the whole country at once. Making separate agreements state by state was not working well. These kinds of problems continued for years.

[10] Many Founding Fathers realized that they were going to have to make a change. In 1786, Alexander Hamilton<sup>3</sup> called for a meeting to fix the Articles of Confederation. Leaders met in

2. Rebels used weapons to try to overtake the state government.

3. Alexander Hamilton was a Founding Father and first secretary of the treasury.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to talk about how they would solve this.

## A CONVENTION OF COMPROMISES

The meeting of the Founding Fathers in May 1787 was called the Constitutional Convention. The meeting took all summer, for many of the delegates disagreed on what needed to be done. Some wanted to alter the Articles; others wanted to start from scratch. In the end, everyone had to make compromises.

### *The Great Compromise*

One of the biggest arguments was about representatives. It was important to decide how many delegates each state would have in Congress, which is the law-making body of the government. The bigger states wanted the number of representatives to be based on each state's population. The smaller states worried that this would be unfair. They wanted every state to have the same number of delegates. In the end, they agreed on the Great Compromise. Congress would be split into two parts. The House of Representatives would be based on population. The Senate would have an equal number of representatives from each state.

### *The Three-Fifths Compromise*

Before and after the official founding of the United States, many people were taken from Africa to the Americas against their will and forced into slavery. States with large populations of enslaved people thought they should count as part of their overall populations. A high total population meant that these states could have more delegates in the House of Representatives — and therefore more power. States with fewer enslaved persons were against this.

Eventually, the states came to an agreement. Only three-fifths of each state's population of enslaved people counted toward the state's total population. Despite contributing to a state population and therefore the number of state representatives, enslaved people were not considered citizens and therefore had no voice in the country where they lived and that their forced labor helped build. This rule remained a part of the U.S. Constitution until after the American Civil War.

## THE CONTENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION

- [15] The meeting ended on September 17, 1787. The result was a document called the Constitution of the United States of America. It had only seven articles and was the shortest constitution in the world. It wasn't long, but it covered what the Founding Fathers believed to be the most important parts of government.

### ***Separation of Powers***

The Founding Fathers remembered the problems they experienced under Great Britain's rule. They were determined to preserve their rights. At the same time, the Articles of Confederation taught them that the central government needed to have some power.

They decided to split the government into three sections. The legislative branch, or Congress, makes the laws. The executive branch, or the president, makes sure the laws are followed and handles relationships with other countries. The judicial branch interprets the laws and makes decisions on legal cases. The judicial branch is made up of the Supreme Court and all federal courts.

Giving each branch different responsibilities ensures no branch has too much power. This then makes it harder to take away the rights of the people.

### ***Checks and Balances***

Beyond organizing the government in branches, the Founding Fathers made it so each branch could stop another from making certain decisions or gaining too much power. This is called a system of checks and balances.

- [20] For example, Congress writes the laws, but it's up to the president to approve them. The Supreme Court can reverse new laws if they deem them unconstitutional.

### ***Federalism***

The Founding Fathers also wanted to make sure the states maintained some authority. The balance of power between the central government and all of the state governments is called federalism.

One example of this balance is the Senate. Every state has two representatives, no matter how big it is, making the states equally powerful in the Senate. Another example is the presidential election. Each state holds its own election. The results are counted later as part of the Electoral College.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL DISAGREEMENTS**

The U.S. Constitution was carefully written to share power between the states and the central government. However, not every one of the Founding Fathers thought it was good enough. The first two-party system, consisting of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists, was formed. The Anti-Federalists feared the central government would have too much power.

James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay<sup>4</sup> all wrote essays supporting the new

constitution. These were called the Federalist Papers. They argued in favor of a small but strong central government. The papers worked, and by 1790, all 13 colonies ratified<sup>5</sup> the U.S. Constitution.

## THE BILL OF RIGHTS

[25] The Founding Fathers' job was still not done. Many states requested that Congress also add a Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution. This resulted in 10 important amendments<sup>6</sup> attached to the original document. The purpose of the Bill of Rights is to clearly state and secure the rights of citizens<sup>7</sup> in the United States.

The Bill of Rights is what protects freedom of speech, of the press, religion, and protest in the United States. Other amendments deal with legal issues, such as securing people the right to a fair and speedy trial. The 10th amendment establishes that anything the central government does not control is up to the states.

## THE CONSTITUTION TODAY

Today, the U.S. uses its constitution to make new laws and policies. Congress has made 17 additional amendments over the nation's history. The U.S. Constitution is still the shortest governing document in the world.

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4. Like Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay were also Founding Fathers.
5. Ratify (**verb**) to make a document (such as a law or treaty) official by signing it or voting for it
6. a change to a law or document
7. At the time, only a select population was considered citizens in the United States, namely European colonists and their descendants.



## Text-Dependent Questions

*Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.*

1. Which of the following options best summarizes why American colonists separated from Great Britain?
  - A. The colonists were unhappy with life in Great Britain because there were few jobs and low wages.
  - B. The colonists struggled to communicate with Great Britain because of the distance between the two countries.
  - C. The colonists wanted to expand their territory further into North America, but Great Britain forbade them from doing so.
  - D. The colonists were unhappy under British rule because they had little power and representation in Great Britain's government.
  
2. What is the meaning of "agitated" as it is used in paragraph 4?
  - A. accustomed
  - B. confident
  - C. embarrassed
  - D. upset
  
3. Why did the Articles of Confederation eventually need to be replaced?
  - A. The Articles of Confederation gave the central government too much power.
  - B. The Articles of Confederation did not give the central government enough power.
  - C. The Articles of Confederation were too similar to that of Great Britain's constitution.
  - D. The Articles of Confederation demanded higher taxes than Americans were willing to pay.

4. Which of the following best describes a central idea about the Constitution discussed in the text?
- A. The Constitution was written based on ideas and values outlined in the Bill of Rights.
  - B. The Constitution sought to balance power between the central government and the state governments.
  - C. The Constitution strengthened the central government's power by giving the most power to the president.
  - D. The Constitution has been amended so many times that today it bears no resemblance to the original document.
5. How does the system of "checks and balances" contribute to American democracy? (Paragraphs 19-20)7