

## **Petition for Freedom by African Americans**

By Wendy Zorea

**Unit:** What Tensions did America Face During the Revolutionary War Period?

**Title of lesson:** Why didn't African American's gain Freedom with the Declaration of Independence?

**Timeframe:** 45 minutes first day/ 20 minute follow-up the 2<sup>nd</sup> day

**Standards addressed:** National Standards 5A and Alaska State Standards C4

**Social Studies Knowledge:**

Slavery, Petition for Freedom by African Americans, Declaration of Independence, opinion

**Skills:**

Students will state relationships between categories.

Students will express personal opinions.

Students will identify situations in which social action is required

**Dispositions:**

Students will understand point of view and perspective

**Learning objectives:** At the completion of this lesson, students will know & be able to:

- Recognize the perspective of African Americans on the Declaration of Independence.
- Compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence with the Petition for Freedom
- Form and express an opinion disagreeing or agreeing with the Petition for Freedom

**Cooperative skills addressed:**

Students will listen to one another and express their own opinions

**Materials needed:**

Primary Documents:

Petition for Freedom by African Americans in Massachusetts (Anthology, Page45-46)

The Declaration of Independence (Anthology, Pages 40-44)

Interactive Notebook

### **Lesson Plan/Lesson Design**

**Prior assignment/preparation** – Students have completed the lesson on the Declaration of Independence. Prior to lesson show the opinion column from your local newspaper. Select a few for your students to read that would be appropriate for their grade. Familiarize your class with “letters to the editor” and how they are written.

**Opening activity:**

Say to students:

You have read the Declaration of Independence. Find a meaningful statement from the Declaration in the Independence. Write that statement in your Interactive Journal. Why did you choose that statement? Explain in your journal.

**Specific lesson design:**

Students work in groups of 5 or five in each group. Ask students to share the statements that they chose to write down with their group. They should also share their reasons for choosing that particular statement. Why was the statement meaningful?

Pass out a copy of “A Petition for Freedom” by African Americans of Massachusetts in 1777 to every student. Review words written in bold print prior to the reading of the document. Ask one person from each group to read the document to their group. The other students will listen and highlight statements of this document that are similar in meaning to the Declaration of Independence.

After groups discuss document, the teacher should read it to the entire class. Ask students if they found any similarities between the two documents. Ask what the purpose of the Petition was. Ask students to open their Interactive Notebooks up and respond to the following task.

**Task:** On the left side of the Interactive Notebook Process students process the Petition for Freedom by doing the following task.

Imagine you are living in 1776. Write a letter to the editor to a newspaper explaining why you agree or disagree with the Petition from the African Americans. Make connections to the Declaration of Independence.

For follow-up on the next day, ask students if they would like to share their “letters to the editor” with the class.

**Assessment** – The Scoring Rubric for the Interactive Notebook will be used to assess students for this lesson.

