

Tracing Freedom Through Time Magna Carta Hall to Independence Hall

Educators Guide and Lesson Plan created by Sidney
Sisemore, *Early ISD*



Grade Level

11th and 12th Grade
AP Language and AP
Literature

Time Required

3 hours
Pre-Visit – 1 hour
Museum Visit – 1 hour
Post-Visit – 1 hour

Supplies/Materials Needed

- [Aristotle's "Politics"](#)
- John 3:16 and Luke 4:17-21
- [The Magna Carta](#)
- [The Declaration of Independence](#)
- [The US Constitution](#)
- [Douglas MacArthur's Farewell speech](#)
- Analysis Worksheet

Standards

11th Grade TEKS
11.2(A), 11.2(B),
11.4(E), 11.4(F),
11.4(G), 11.4(I),
11.5(A), 11.5(B),
11.5(C), 11.5(E),
11.5(F), 11.5(G), 11.5(J)

Key Vocabulary

Effective Agency –
whether humans have

Essential Question(s)

- How has the concept of freedom evolved?
- How do historical concepts of freedom compare to our understanding?
- What is freedom?
- How do literature and philosophy encapsulate the concept of freedom?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze the concept of freedom.
- Compare contrasting ideas to their own and create a unique and individualized concept of freedom.
- Understand the connection of freedom to the human experience.
- Connect the concept of freedom to various historical contexts.

Pre-Visit

Have students create a definition of “freedom” together. Write this on a poster board or something that can be referenced at a later time.

To prepare for this trip, it is important that students have an understanding of the different rooms, how they are linked to the concept of freedom, and why they are significant. This may take several days, and can be abbreviated as needed, but the idea is to show the connection between the ideas and concepts of freedom, and how it has evolved.

Discuss and read as a class about the Greek conceptions of freedom and the origins of democracy:

- <https://fee.org/articles/did-the-ancient-greeks-believe-in-freedom/>
- <https://www.history.com/articles/ancient-greece-democracy-origins>
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4388947?seq=3>

the power to deliberate and act effectively to shape the future

Moral responsibility – whether individuals are rightfully subject to praise, blame, reward or punishment for their actions.

Freedom should be defined by their group.

Watch scenes from “How the Magna Carta Changed Freedom and Power Forever”:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lktpJ4k0ZE>

(Documentary is 50 minutes long, but can be abbreviated)

Review the founding documents of the United States and discuss how these documents affect our understanding of freedom as Americans.

- <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs>

Museum Visit

Set Up: In Mediterranean Hall, some version of Aristotle’s excerpt and the Bible passages need to be accessible or on display. In the Magna Carta Room, the Magna Carta should be on display or accessible. The Constitution and Declaration should be on display in Independence Hall, and MacArthur’s Farewell speech should be on display in the Gallery.

Students will be divided into 4 groups and separated between the 4 rooms. In each room, they will engage with the works in the room and answer the questions on their worksheet. They should have about 20-30 minutes per room, as needed.

After students have visited each room, they will meet in one room or in a classroom and discuss how their definition of freedom has evolved. Students will debate their understanding of freedom using the texts they engaged with.

Students will also discuss how freedom is a theme found in literature and why it is such an important part of human agency and autonomy. In other words, they will discuss why we care about freedom.

Post-Visit

Students can write an argumentative essay arguing the definition of freedom. They must support their definition using the texts they read and outside texts they’ve read in class or independently. They can also use their individual experiences.

AP Lit: Students can write a literary analysis (Q3) essay utilizing the theme of freedom.



Example: In many historical documents, like the Declaration of Independence, the concept of freedom and the rights of individuals is defined by the people and serves to shape the future government. Knowing this, choose a novel or play in which a character struggles with or embraces a certain concept of freedom. Then, write an essay in which you explain how their experience of freedom changes the perspective of the future and contributes to the perspective and meaning of the work as a whole.

AP Lang: Students can write an analysis (Q3) essay on how freedom is an essential part of the human experience.

Example: The Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which freedom is an essential, or unalienable, part of the human experience.

Variations and Extensions

Student choose one:

- Design a modern Magna Carta for their school Include 5 rights and 5 responsibilities.
 - Become a delegate in Philadelphia. Write a journal entry describing the debates taking place in Independence Hall.
 - Create a comic relief titled: The 561-year Journey from Magna Carta to Independence Hall.
- 

Worksheet for each room-students should have one copy per room. It should have the following questions:

- What is your definition of freedom that you've made with your class?
- What is _____'s concept of freedom?
- How do you know? Use text evidence to support your answer.

