

Is Freedom Free? So...What's in It for Me?

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As an English teacher, my goal is to teach reading comprehension and writing skills. Therefore, my approach is to utilize social studies information to teach ELA Common Core Standards. The developed unit marries the two curricula and addresses Social Studies Civics Standard 2 (Politics) and Civics Standard 3 (Citizenship) for grades 6 – 8; as well as ELA CCS in reading comprehension and writing for grade 8. The unit begins by discussing the concept and various definitions of the word, *freedom*, requiring students to critically evaluate the meaning and develop a definition of their own as compared to that of a reputable source. The unit incorporates the skills of note-taking, identifying valid evidence and reliable sources, writing/developing substantiated claims, and introduces other concepts to encourage independent thought processing and critical thinking. Students self-reflect and determine: “Is freedom really free? So...what’s in it for me?” The resulting discussion engages students in critically thinking about their world; vocabulary development encouraging verbal and written connotation; presentation skills (proper diction, voice); methods of persuasion; informed decision making; and perhaps positive choices today to impact individual lives tomorrow!