Rise of Discontent – Declaration of Independence
1750’s-1780’s

“The Meaning of Independence Project”
Based upon the book written by Edmund S. Morgan

Project Directions: The goal of this project is to have students gain more understanding about the ideas, reasons and importance of American Independence from the perspectives of John Adams, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Edmund S. Morgan’s book titled The Meaning of Independence will provide this depth of knowledge.

1. Students will choose or be provided ONE of the three readings from the book The Meaning of Independence (instructor may choose to place students in groups).

2. ALL students will read the “Preface” and pages 3-4 (the first 4 paragraphs).

3. The goal/s or focus of each reading selection is clearly defined within the pages to follow in the form guided reading questions to answer. Each reading selection starts with vocabulary terms to be defined.

4. On the date provided below students will have their work completed.

5. On the date provided below students will present their work to the rest of the class; for a grade.

6. When a classmate presents their work ALL other students will take notes of the presentations… ALL notes will be turned in for a grade at the conclusion of the project.
1. Vocabulary: Define the terms or words listed below.
   
   A. acceded (pg.ix)
   B. archaic (pg. ix)
   C. cultural independence (pg. x)
   D. affirmations of allegiance (pg. 3)
   E. writ (pg. 4)

2. What is the “Thesis” (the central argument or focus; the opinion of the author; what is the author defending or arguing?) of the Preface section? Explain why, in your opinion this is the “Thesis.”

3. According to Morgan, what did Americans want from the mother country (pg. ix)?

4. Explain how American Independence gave opportunity to individuals to become “great” or historically “famous” for all time.

5. Why is Benjamin Franklin an “exception” when it comes to great people in the American Independence Era?
1. Vocabulary: Define the terms or words listed below.

   A. provincial (pg. 6)
   B. métier (pg. 8)
   C. bicameral legislature (pg. 8)
   D. virtue (pg. 14; 21)
   E. vice (pg. 14)
   F. sycophantic (pg. 15)
   G. conservatives (pg. 15)
   H. great American (pg. 23)

2. What is the “Thesis” (the central argument or focus; the opinion of the author; what is the author defending or arguing?) of the section on John Adams? Explain why, in your opinion this is the “Thesis.”

3. The author breaks down John Adams’ revolutionary character into (at least) eight traits or even limitations (in this entire section). Explain each of these eight characteristics & explain why each is vital to Morgan’s argument about Adams’ importance to American Independence?
4. Why was John Adams the “Unknown” revolutionary?

5. Explain Adams’ opinion on bicameral legislature.

6. Was Adams a devoted puritan? If not, what was he committed to?

7. Why does Morgan, the author, compare John Adams to John Winthrop?

8. What is the impact of the Stamp Act & the Boston Massacre on Adams’ career?

9. Explain why John Adams, around the year 1765, came to identify virtue as American and vice as English?

10. What was Adams’ opinion on Party Politics?
1. Vocabulary: Define the terms or words listed below.

A. apocryphal (pg. 31)
B. aloofness (pg. 32)
C. knavery (pg. 32)
D. laurels (pg. 42)
E. laudable (pg. 46)
F. obloquy (pg. 48)

2. What is the “Thesis” (the central argument or focus; the opinion of the author; what is the author defending or arguing?) of the section on George Washington? Explain why, in your opinion this is the “Thesis.”

3. The author breaks down George Washington’s revolutionary character into (at least) nine traits or even limitations (in this entire section). Explain each of these nine characteristics & explain why each is vital to Morgan’s argument about Washington’s importance to American Independence?
4. Explain how honor and interest are related to the embodiment of George Washington; include in your response how the image of Washington might relate to image of the American Republic in the future.

5. What was Washington’s opinion on getting help from the French to win the Revolutionary War (War for Independence)?

6. On page 46 the author mentions that Washington’s “…contempt of Europe touched him personally and deeply; and he felt the shame redoubled when the people of western Massachusetts broke out in rebellion (known as Shay’s Rebellion) and neither the state government nor the national government seemed able to cope with them.” Explain why Washington felt such contempt for Europe, as well as, for the rebellious people of western Massachusetts.

7. Explain Washington’s opinion of the American Republic (United States) being involved in (or with) foreign affairs (or nations).
**Thomas Jefferson**

ONLY selected students do this section (pgs. 63-87)

1. Vocabulary: Define the terms or words listed below.
   
   A. hypocrisy (pg. 64)
   
   B. sophistry (pg. 64)
   
   C. mystic aura (pg. 72)
   
   D. expatriation (pg. 77)
   
   E. primogeniture (pg. 78)
   
   F. entail (pg. 78)
   
   G. usufruct (pg. 81)

2. What is the “Thesis” (the central argument or focus; the opinion of the author; what is the author defending or arguing?) of the section on Thomas Jefferson? Explain why, in your opinion this is the “Thesis.”

3. The author breaks down Thomas Jefferson’s revolutionary character into (at least) six traits or even limitations (in this entire section). Explain each of these six characteristics & explain why each is vital to Morgan’s argument about Jefferson’s importance to American Independence?
4. Why might Jefferson be considered a hypocrite? Explain (there may be several instances or examples).

5. Explain how Jefferson’s knowledge of power was opposed to his use of power.

6. What lesson/s did Jefferson learn from his experience/s in France? How did the lesson/s relate to his work with America (United States)?

7. What was Jefferson’s opinion on the relationship of government with its citizens (or people it represented)?

8. On pg. 74 Jefferson defines who he considers to be the virtuous citizens or, as he stated, “…the chosen people of God;” Explain who these people are according to Jefferson and WHY he defines them as such.

9. Explain what Independence meant to Jefferson; in doing so explain his opinion on the role of education & how it helped to maintain his vision of American independence in the future.
Group Grading Sheet
Mr. Hunwick’s Class
Honors US History
Grade 8

Individual or Group Presentation Grade Sheet

Directions: The instructor will fill out this sheet. The points earned (above in grading box) are the points earned for each individual group member. The breakdown of points earned is listed below along any additional comments.

Reading Section (Circle)      ADAMS WASHINGTON JEFFERSON

PRINT the first & last name of individual or group members below:

1.____________________________   5.____________________________
2.____________________________   6.____________________________
3.____________________________   7.____________________________
4.____________________________   8.____________________________

Areas of Grading-
A. Equality of Group Member Participation (if applicable)
B. Organization of Presentation
C. Ownership of Material by Presenter/s
D. Overall Speaking Quality of Presenter/s
E. Total Quality of Presentation
F. Other Comments:

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