

MINI-UNIT

Democracy and Freedom: US History Capstone Project

Overview

About This Mini-Unit

This mini-unit is intended to bolster the central throughline of our **US History Curriculum Collection: Democracy & Freedom**, while also offering an opportunity for students to use the lessons they have learned in their US History course to reflect on their own role as a steward for democracy. It is tailored to fit the themes and sources from our US History materials, but is broad enough to be accessible to educators who have not taught our US History Curriculum Collection in full.

The mini-unit includes two components:

- Three lessons that help students revisit some of their key learnings from the Democracy and Freedom curriculum supplement and gather evidence that they will use in the capstone project
- A capstone project entitled "My Freedom Dream," which includes a project handout/description, activities for introducing/implementing the project with students, and a project planning tool for teachers

Essential Question

How can I make real the ideals of freedom and democracy?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Develop the capacity for informed civic participation

What's Included

This mini-unit supports a multiple-week exploration of the Democracy and Freedom curriculum supplement and includes the following. Access materials from this unit in [this Google Folder](#).

- Lesson 1: Introducing Freedom Dreams: Culminating Lesson
- Lesson 2: Exploring the Freedom Dreams of Past Generations: Culminating Lesson
- Lesson 3: Enacting Freedom Dreams: Culminating Lesson
- "My Freedom Dream" Capstone Project

Preparing to Teach

Notes to Teacher:

1. Prerequisite Knowledge

The lessons that students explore are intended to serve as a capstone experience that builds students' capacity for civic participation while also tying together key themes from Facing History's **US History Curriculum Collection**, particularly our focus on Democracy and Freedom.

This mini-unit is tailored to fit the themes and sources from our US History materials, but it is also designed to be broad enough so that most educators will be able to access it even if they have not taught our **US History Curriculum Collection** in full. We encourage you to select key sources from units and/or inquiries that you have taught from our Facing History program (particularly in Lessons 1 and 2) to tie back to students' learning throughout the year.

2. Implementing the CulminatingFinal "My Freedom Dream" Project

The three lessons in this mini-unit are designed to prepare students for a final civic participation project entitled "My Freedom Dream." We have created activities to help students at all stages of the project, but teachers will likely need to spend additional time helping students to fully implement the project (the "act" component). This includes creating a rubric or other format for evaluating students' performance and assisting with any logistical aspects of implementation.

For more guidance on implementing the project in your classroom, explore this Teacher-Facing Handout: **Planning the "My Freedom Dream" Capstone Project**.

The teacher-facing handout refers to strategies from the resource [From Reflection to Action: A Choosing to Participate Toolkit](#). We encourage you to have the toolkit on hand for reference as you implement this project.

3. Using Laptops or the Computer Lab

Some of the suggested activities for implementing the **"My Freedom Dream" Project** require students to have access to a computer to conduct online research. We recommend taking care of logistics prior to teaching these activities, for example, by reserving the computer lab or laptop carts for students.