

Declarations of Independence: A Comparative Look

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Grade level: Middle School

Subject: American History

Standards:

PA Standards:

8.1.6.B Explain and analyze historical sources

8.3.6.B Explain and identify historical documents, material artifacts or historic sites important in US history

Objectives: Students will be able to

Explain parallels between the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico, the American Declaration of Independence and French Declaration of Rights of Man

Evaluate the outcomes of these Declarations to describe the circumstances of each

Materials: copies of each declaration, venn diagrams, possibly internet access depending on the assignment chosen

Procedure:

1. Students will answer the opener question in a full paragraph (with complete sentences): What do you do if you break an agreement or contract?
2. Have students share answers and discuss the feasibility of their answers and discuss feasibility.
3. After a few students have answered, ask if their answer would change if, instead of a contract, they were breaking away from a country or government? Discuss this while trying to ask students about dangers involved or possible consequences.
4. "Today we will look at ways in which groups declared independence lead up to this period." Each group will begin with a document—and answer questions about that document. Then we will discuss them all together.
5. Break the class into 3 groups and give them the one document. Each group should answer the following questions:
 - a. Who wrote it?
 - b. When did they write it?
 - c. What was the purpose of writing?
 - d. Summarize their concerns.
 - e. Do you think their concerns are enough to break away? Support your answer with details.
6. Have students present the information by writing their answers on the board.

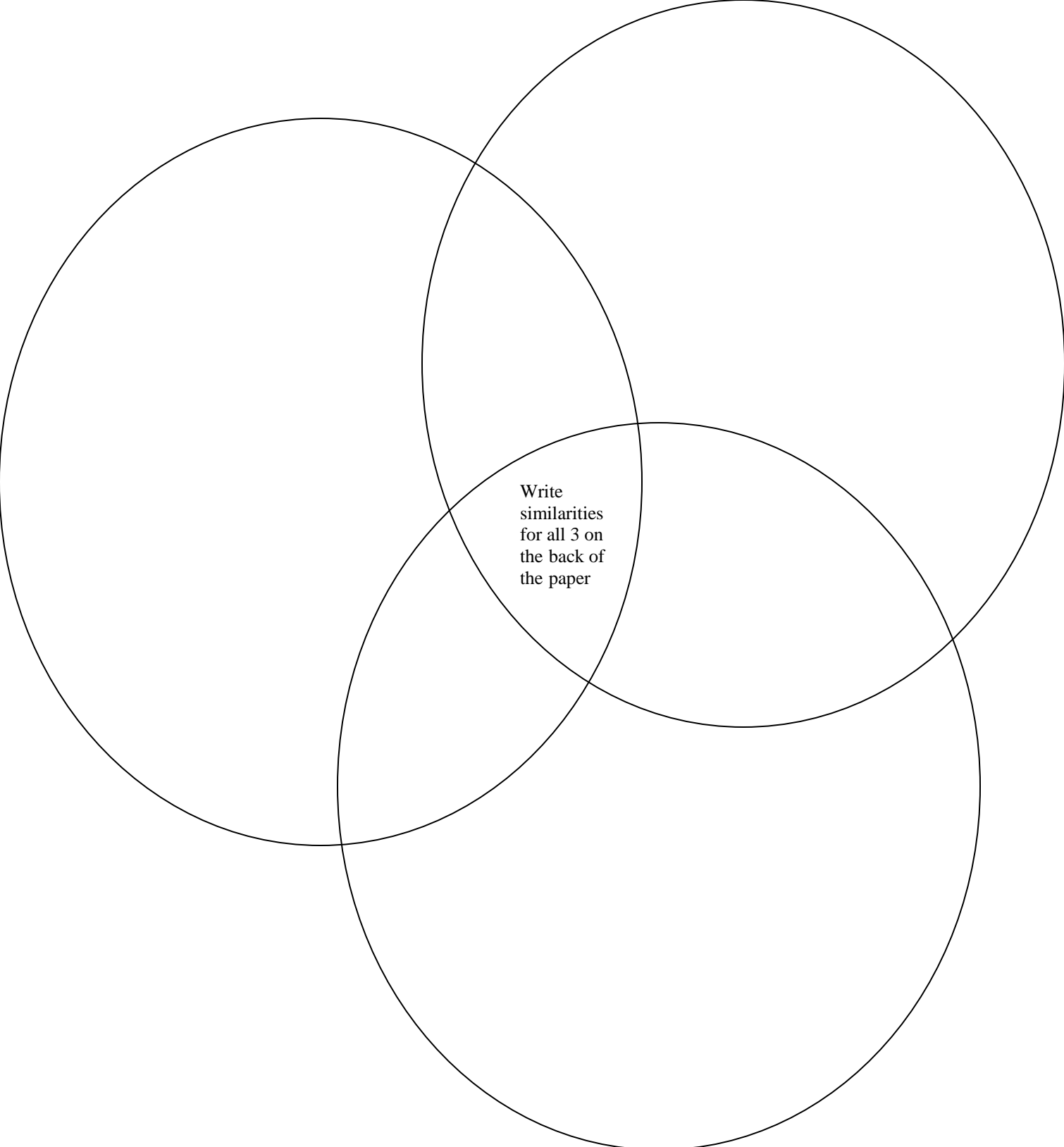
7. Give students a Venn diagram (see attached) and ask them to compare the 3 declarations.
8. Go over the information and then chronicle the outcomes of each Declaration, i.e. what happened in the short term, and the long term
9. Ask students what would make the documents “successful”? Ask them to consider: 1) time taken to achieve goals, 2) loss of life, 3) stability and independence over time
10. Ask students to complete one of the assignments below and end activity by asking them to review for you what all 3 had in common.

Assignment:

After the discussions, assign students to

1. find a more recent declaration of independence* and compare it to thee others;
or
2. have them write a speech in support of the Declaration they feel is most successful. In their speech they must use, but explain, arguments in the document. They do NOT need to use the document they presented in class. Have spare copies of the documents as they will need one to look at for this assignment.

**Many Eastern European and African countries, such as Armenia, Chechnya and Croatia, have declared independence since 1990.



Write
similarities
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the paper