**Subject area/course**: History; U.S. History

**Grade level/band**: 11-12

**Task source**: Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC)

**The United States Constitution: Strict or Broad Construction?**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

Students write a 3-page paper analyzing the constitutional issues that divided Jefferson, Hamilton, and their followers during the Washington administration. Then they examine their personal and political philosophy and determine if they would be “Jeffersonians” or “Hamiltonians” in today’s political climate. The goal is to determine if students consider themselves to be strict or broad constructionists when considering constitutional issues.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Primary Common Core State Standards**

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.RH.11‐12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to the understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.RH.11‐12.2 Determine the central ideas as information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA‐Literacy.RH.11‐12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions and events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11‐12.4 Determine the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate the authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11‐12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11 CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

1. **Critical Abilities**

Research**:** Conduct sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem, narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate, and demonstrate understanding of the subject under investigation. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, use advanced searches effectively, and assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience.

Analysis of Information: Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to address a question, make informed decisions, understand a process, phenomenon, or concept, and solve problems while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Communication in Many Forms: Use oral and written communication skills to learn, evaluate, and express ideas for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting while considering the audience.

1. **C3 College, Career & Civic Life Framework**

D1.5.9-12. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

D2.Civ.2.9-12. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans’ participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.

D2.Civ.4.9-12. Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.

D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s

perspectives.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

After students have finished reading the assigned chapters in their primary text on the conflicts between Jefferson and Hamilton during Washington’s administration, plan about a week to ten days to complete their independent research and the various drafts of their paper. Plan to spend one class session after papers are submitted to discuss and compare students’ ideas and opinions on this topic.

1. **Materials/resources:**

A selection of several current editions of major American history texts would be helpful. Also, a copy of *The Federalist* and political biographies of both Jefferson and Hamilton would be very useful.

1. **Prior knowledge:**

Students should be able to:

* Have a working knowledge of “liberalism” and “conservatism” in today’s political environment.
* Draw inferences from primary and secondary sources.
* Write an argumentative essay.
* Use MLA style or another format of your choice.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

None listed.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

* Students should work independently throughout this task.
* Students should have a fairly thorough understanding of the concepts of strict and broad construction as they are related to the writing and interpretation of the Constitution. They should have a basic understanding of the contemporary use of “liberal” and “conservative” when applied to political philosophies.
* Teachers should discuss these topics in class and clear up any confusion before students begin their work on their paper.

1. **Student support:**

The following suggestions are examples of scaffolding that can be used to meet the diverse student needs within the classroom.

* Provide class time for research on students’ topics.
* Provide definitions of new vocabulary words ahead of time.
* For the final product, all learners will benefit from peer assistance while brainstorming their topics, as well as a peer or teacher review of their papers before final submission.
* Some students will have good research skills, but some will need guidance in the determination of appropriate sources and where to look for them. It is important to spend class time in review of what constitutes an appropriate source in advance of students’ independent work time.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* Students could present the results of their research to the class via an oral or multimedia presentation.
* If there is a particularly interesting and/or controversial topic, a debate could be organized where students choose sides on the topic and defend their views.

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the College and Career Ready (CCR) Task Bank Scoring Rubric.