Fifth Grade

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Foundations of Religious Liberty: Understanding Faith, Freedom, and the Constitution

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Key Themes

- Faith and Politics in Early America
- The Influence of Early Colonial Religions
- The Legacy of Religious Freedom
- Religious Freedom vs. Religious Uniformity
- Religious Pluralism in Early America
- Where does "Separation of Church and State" Come From?
- Thomas Jefferson's Role in Religious Liberty



Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain the meaning of key American symbols, including the Pledge of Allegiance and the phrase "In God We Trust," and how they reflect the role of faith in U.S. history.
- Define religious freedom and explain why it is important in a free society.
- Identify natural rights, including religious liberty, and explain why the Founding Fathers believed these rights come from God.
- Describe the purpose of government and how it protects individual rights, including the freedom to practice religion.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain the structure of the U.S. government, including the difference between the federal and state governments and the roles of the three branches.
- Analyze the First Amendment and distinguish between the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause.
- Explain the origin of the term “separation of Church and State.”



Key Terms

01 **Anti-Federalists:** people who opposed the Constitution.

02 **Declaration of Independence:** an important document that declared the colonists' independence in 1776.

03 **exemption:** special permission to not have to follow a rule or pay something that others do.

04 **faith:** belief in someone or something even when it can't be seen.

05 **Federalists:** people who supported the Constitution.

06 **Founding Fathers:** the leaders who helped create the United States of America.

07 **government:** a system of rules and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly.

08 **honor:** to show deep respect for something.

09 **motto:** a short phrase that represents an important belief or value.

10 **natural rights:** special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.

11 **opportunity:** having the chance to do something or achieve something.

12 **religious freedom:** the right, given by God, to practice your faith however you choose.

13 **unity:** coming together as one, despite our differences.

14 **worship:** showing respect and honor to a higher power or belief, often by praying, singing, or attending a religious service.

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

Hello, young patriots! Today, we're going to explore some important American symbols that reflect how faith has always been a part of our country's foundation. Let's start with the Pledge of Allegiance. When we recite the Pledge, we stand tall, place our right hand over our heart, and focus on the flag as a sign of **honor**, which means showing deep respect and appreciation. **[Reference Salute Image]** We honor our country because it provides us with freedom, security, and the opportunity to learn and grow. **Opportunity** means having the chance to explore new ideas, develop skills, and work toward achieving goals.

ASK Students

What opportunities are you most thankful for in your life? [Make a list of these on the board and help students connect these opportunities to the freedoms offered in our country.]

TELL Students 🔑

You may have the opportunity to earn money by doing chores at home! Let's take a look at a few coins and bills that you may have earned before. [If possible, provide groups of students with American currency to examine. If currency is not available, print and provide currency images.] Do you notice anything special written on the coin? The phrase "In God We Trust" is printed on our money, serving as our nation's motto. A **motto** is a short phrase that represents an important belief or value. The words "In God We Trust" remind us that faith and freedom played important roles in shaping our country. **Faith** is a strong belief in something or someone, even without physically seeing or touching it. For example, people show faith when they believe in and follow their religious beliefs. Even though we cannot see what they believe in, they trust in it and rely on its guidance in their lives. When we recite the Pledge of Allegiance and see our national motto on money, we are reminded that faith and freedom were important from our nation's start. Now, let's honor our country together by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. [Recite the Pledge of Allegiance with the class.]

ASK Students

What do you think the phrase "In God We Trust" means? Why do you think it was chosen as our national motto?

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

"One Nation Under God" means that our country stands united under God's protection and guidance. **Unity** means people coming together as one, even when they have different backgrounds, beliefs, or ways of speaking. **[Reference Unity Image]** When we are united, we are stronger and more capable of achieving great things—just like a family or a team that supports one another to reach a shared goal. When we say "One Nation Under God," we recognize that God's protection and guidance help keep us united.

ASK Students

Did you know that the words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president? The change was made to emphasize that the United States believed in God, while communist countries were atheist, which means that the people living in those countries were told that God didn't exist.

TELL Students 📷🔑

This change was also made to emphasize that our nation was founded on faith and freedom. Faith and religious freedom are central to who we are as Americans. **[Reference American Flag Image]** While these two concepts are different, they are deeply connected. **Religious freedom** means that every person has the right to practice their faith in their own way—whether that includes praying, singing, attending a religious service, or reading a holy book like the Bible. **[Reference Bible Image]** This freedom is important because it allows people to openly express and practice their beliefs without fear. It ensures that no one is forced to follow a particular faith or prevented from worshiping in the way they choose. **Worship** means showing respect and honor to a higher power or belief, often by praying, singing, or attending a religious service.

ASK Students

Why do you think religious freedom is important for everyone, no matter what they believe? How does it help make our country a place where people can live peacefully together? [Do a think-pair-share to discuss.]

Introduction

TELL Students

What would you do if you made a 100 on a really hard math test? Would you go home and immediately tell your parents? Of course you would! You would want to share that good news with the people you love. Now, imagine having a strong belief in something but never being allowed to share it with others. You might still believe it in your heart, but practicing your faith would be extremely difficult if you could not talk about it. Unfortunately, in some countries, people are not free to openly express or follow their religious beliefs. However, in the United States, we are blessed with the freedom to practice and express our faith without fear.

ASK Students

How do you think you would feel if you believed strongly in something but were not allowed to talk about it or share it with others?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Religious freedom is one of our **natural rights**—fundamental freedoms that every person is born with simply because they are human. The **Declaration of Independence**, which declared that the American colonies were no longer ruled by Great Britain, states that every individual has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. **[Reference Washington and Jefferson Images]** The **Founding Fathers**—leaders such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson who helped shape the United States—believed that these rights were not granted by a government or ruler but were given by God. Natural rights cannot be given or taken away by anyone because they are given by God.

ASK Students

Why do you think the Founding Fathers believed that natural rights, like religious freedom, come from God rather than from a king or government? How does this idea help protect our freedoms today? [Give students three minutes to discuss with their neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

TELL Students 📷

Religious freedom is one of the most important natural rights in our country. Natural rights are given by God, meaning they cannot be taken away by any person or government.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Every individual is born with these rights simply by being human. They include the ability to speak freely, live freely, and practice one's faith. Religious freedom is the natural right that allows each person to worship in the way they believe is right. **[Reference Worship Image]** Because religious freedom is a God-given right, no authority can dictate how a person should practice their faith.

ASK Students

Who should protect religious liberty?

TELL Students 📷🔑

The government plays an important role in protecting our rights, including religious freedom. A **government** is an organized system of laws, leaders, and institutions that maintain order, protect citizens, and ensure fairness in society. **[Reference Government Image]** It creates and enforces rules that define what is lawful and determines consequences when those rules are broken. One of the government's key responsibilities is to protect our natural rights, such as the right to worship freely. This means individuals can practice their faith in the way they believe is right. In some countries, people are not allowed to openly practice their religion and may even face consequences for their beliefs. However, in the United States, our government protects religious liberty, allowing people to express their faith without fear. By defending these rights, the government helps create a society where fairness, safety, and freedom are protected for everyone.

ASK Students

Why did the colonists believe it was necessary to break away from England to protect their natural rights?

TELL Students 📷

When discussing why the government must protect our rights, we must remember that the government doesn't give us our rights. This concept is important to understanding why the United States was founded.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

The colonists believed their rights were being taken away by England, which made laws and imposed taxes without their consent. **[Reference Colonial America Image]** They felt this was unfair, especially when it affected their ability to make decisions about their faith and worship. When their rights were not respected under British rule, the colonists made the decision to declare independence. They created a new nation based on freedom, ensuring that future generations would have the right to make their own choices and worship according to their beliefs.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists believed it was so important to create a new country where people could make their own choices and practice their faith freely?

TELL Students

Recall that many colonists first came to America for religious freedom from the Church of England. The colonists wanted to make their own choices and practice their faith freely because they had experienced a government that controlled their decisions and limited their freedoms. They wanted to live where people would not be forced to follow rules about how or when to worship. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote the famous words "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." These rights that come from the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" and include the right to worship freely and to practice their faith without interference or fear. Faith can provide strength, purpose, and hope, while religious freedom ensures that individuals can express and live out their beliefs without restriction. Faith and belief both stem from what we think is true, from within our minds. After he wrote the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson became President of the United States. The question of whether religious freedom was an unalienable right or a privilege given by the government is important to understand. Let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more!

Introduction

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon
Ep. 40: Thomas Jefferson/Religious Liberty



Lesson

TELL Students

Let's begin our journey by discussing what "separation of Church and State" means by understanding the "official rules of the United States." First, we have the Constitution. Remember, the Constitution is the document that explains how our government works. Part of the Constitution is the Bill of Rights, which is the first ten amendments (or changes to the Constitution) that protect our individual freedoms. Today, we are dealing with the First Amendment. **[Reference United States Constitution Image]** The First Amendment is part of the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. The Constitution was ratified in 1788. This means the states officially agreed to approve and put it into action as the law of the land in 1788.

ASK Students

What did it mean when the Constitution was ratified?

TELL Students

When the Constitution was ratified in 1788, it created a framework for how the federal government would operate. The federal government is the national government of the entire United States, while state governments each govern their individual states. The Constitution explains how these two levels of government share power and responsibilities. The Constitution also explains how the three branches of government work:

- The legislative branch makes the laws. This includes Congress, which is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate. **[Reference Legislative Branch Image]**
- The executive branch carries out and enforces the laws. This branch is led by the President. **[Reference Executive Branch Image]**
- The judicial branch interprets the laws and decides what they mean. This includes the Supreme Court and other courts. **[Reference Judicial Branch Image]** These three branches were designed to work together, with each having its own role, so that no one part of the government becomes too powerful.

ASK Students

What is the purpose of having more than one branch of government?

Lesson

TELL Students 📷🔑

America was free, and America had the Constitution to form the government. One problem, though! What about those natural rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? They were the whole reason America broke from England! Well, the Constitution originally said very little about the rights of individual citizens. Because of this, many people worried that the new government could become too powerful and take away basic freedoms. After winning independence from Great Britain, many states feared a strong central government would act like the British monarchy. **[Reference King George III Image]** Leaders such as Patrick Henry warned that the new government could become "a great and mighty empire." People who supported the Constitution were called **Federalists**, and those who opposed it were called **Anti-Federalists**.

ASK Students

What is the name of the group that supported the Constitution? Patrick Henry feared the Constitution might give too much power to a central government. Which group would he have been a part of?

TELL Students 📷

Debates took place across the country at state ratifying conventions between Federalists and Anti-Federalists. **[Reference Ratifying Convention Image]** Many Americans believed a Bill of Rights was necessary to protect individual freedoms. Because of this, when the Constitution was ratified, Federalists promised that one of the first actions of the new government would be to add a Bill of Rights. Remember, the Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The First Amendment protects five freedoms: religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition. Today, we are focusing on the two parts of the First Amendment that protect religious freedom:

- Establishment Clause – The government cannot "establish" or create a national religion, or favor one religion over another.
- Free Exercise Clause – The government cannot stop people from "exercising" or practicing their religion.

ASK Students

Why do you think it is important that the government cannot create a national religion or stop people from practicing their religion?

Lesson

TELL Students

Let's go back to the cartoon to understand this idea more clearly. We saw leaders, called elders, from the Danbury Baptist Church. In colonial times, some states, like Connecticut, had an official state church. In Connecticut, it was called the Congregational Church. **[Reference Congregationalist Church Image]** Remember at the time, the First Amendment said the federal government was not allowed to do that. People living in Connecticut had to pay taxes to support the Congregational Church, even if they did not go to service or belonged to another church. Non-Congregationalists, like the Baptists, had to make statements to state authorities to receive tax exemptions. An **exemption** is special permission to not have to follow a rule or pay something that others do. The Baptists felt this was not fair, and they worried their religious freedom could be taken away.

ASK Students

What were the Danbury Baptists worried could happen? What did they decide to do?

TELL Students

In 1801, the Danbury Baptists wrote a letter to the new president, Thomas Jefferson, because they were worried that the government might interfere with their ability to freely practice their religion. **[Reference Thomas Jefferson Image]** They believed their religious freedom was being treated like a special favor given by the government, instead of an unalienable right that they were born with. Remember that the Founders believed that the government exists to protect your unalienable rights, and it has no power to give or take those rights away! In other words, they felt like they had to rely on the government's permission to practice their faith, which they believed went against their natural rights. Even though they were not complaining about the federal government, only the Connecticut state government in their case, they had hoped that Thomas Jefferson would support them.

ASK Students

As President, who is Thomas Jefferson in charge of—the federal government or the state governments? Why did the Danbury elders think the President would be able to help in a matter of state law?

Lesson

TELL Students

Thomas Jefferson had a famous history and the Danbury Baptists had good memories! Years earlier, in 1785, Thomas Jefferson was part of Virginia's state government when he served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. During this time, Baptists and Presbyterians in Virginia had asked him and his mentor, George Wythe, to help protect their religious freedom. Jefferson listened to them and wrote an important law in Virginia called the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. In January of 1786, the law passed! James Madison said it best in a letter to Jefferson: "...in this country extinguished forever the ambitious hope of making laws for the human mind." **[Reference Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom Image]** Madison summarized the key effect of the new law, which stated that the government cannot force people to support a religion or control what they believe. Well, the Danbury Baptists remembered—and reminded Jefferson that his "past services...in a course of more than 30 years" gave them great hope, even though he had no control over Connecticut. The Virginia Statute protected the idea that religion is a personal matter between each person and their faith, not something controlled by the government. Jefferson was so proud of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom that he listed it as one of his three great achievements on his gravemarker!

ASK Students

Why is it important that the government does not control what people believe or how they practice their faith?

TELL Students

In the cartoon, James Madison reminds President Jefferson of the Virginia Statute. **[Reference Virginia Image]** Remember, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom said that everyone has the right to pick their own beliefs—your mind is free, and no one, not even the government, can tell you what to believe about God or religion. The Virginia Statute also said you should be able to talk about your beliefs without being punished or treated unfairly. Whether you are Christian, Jewish, or have no religion at all, this law protects your right to choose your beliefs. Thomas Jefferson wrote it because he believed that forcing someone to pray is wrong, and it was so important that it helped inspire the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion (and several other individual freedoms) for the whole country. Let's watch a Learn More with Liberty video to learn more!

Lesson

WATCH

Liberty Explained: The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom



ASK Students

Who wrote the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom?

TELL Students

In the cartoon, Liberty the Eagle also mentions that our Founders knew that faith was important to the American people. **[Reference Founders Image]** This leads to a point that is important to the Founders' understanding of religious freedom: "freedom of religion" doesn't mean "freedom from religion." This means the government isn't supposed to remove religion from people's lives or completely remove religion from public issues—it just means that the government does not get to tell people how to worship, and no church gets to control the government.

ASK Students

What is the difference between "freedom of religion" and "freedom from religion"?

TELL Students

In Jefferson's response to the Danbury Baptists, he said, "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should *'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,'* thus building a wall of separation between Church and State." Please turn to your neighbor and discuss what this means. [Give students three to five minutes to read this together and discuss.]

ASK Students

What did Jefferson mean by a "wall of separation between Church and State?"

Lesson

TELL Students

The wall of separation between Church and State means that the government, on one hand, cannot force everyone to follow one religion. On the other hand, it also means that the people are free to believe or worship without the government interfering or picking favorites. Both religion and government can exist side by side. They are not hidden. They are both in plain view and both essential! They are almost like neighbors, with a wall between them. Church and State have separate roles, but that doesn't mean faith disappears from everyday life. People can still live out their beliefs in public, even though the government and the Church are not the same and do not control each other. The State (government) is in charge of the State, and the Church is in charge of the Church. Each has its own role, and one is not in charge of the other.

ASK Students

Where does the phrase "wall of separation between Church and State" come from?

TELL Students 📷

In the cartoon, Liberty the Eagle reminds us that separation of Church and State does not mean faith disappears from public life. Thomas Jefferson would never have wanted the Statute, and later the First Amendment, to be interpreted this way! The separation of Church and State means the government does not control religion or pick favorites. Freedom of religion also does not mean freedom from religion. Instead, it means people are free to believe and practice their faith. The First Amendment protects religious freedom so every person can believe and worship in a way that feels right to them. **[Reference Bill of Rights Image]** If the government could choose a religion or control worship, it would limit freedom and individual rights. That is why the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause are so important. These protections ensure that every person has the right to believe freely and live according to their faith without government interference.



Freedom Founders: Filming the Virginia Statute

Objective

To deepen understanding of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom through creative expression and collaborative learning.

Materials Needed

- Informational resources on the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
- Access to video recording equipment (or instructor's phone, if available)
- Paper, markers, and other craft supplies for creating props (optional)

Instructions

1. Introduction

Begin by explaining the historical significance of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom using age-appropriate language. Highlight its connection to Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the principles of religious liberty.

2. Group Formation

Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students. Encourage diversity within groups to foster different perspectives.

3. Research and Planning

- Provide resources (approved books, articles, websites) for students to research deeper into the Virginia Statute.
- Each group should outline their commercial's main points, deciding on roles like scriptwriter, actor, and editor.

4. Scriptwriting

- Guide students to create a script that explains the statute's purpose, historical context, and its impact on American history.
- Emphasize clarity, creativity, and the use of persuasive language to engage viewers.



5. Production

- Students can use available equipment (if possible) to film their commercial or use props to enhance their presentation.
- Encourage creativity in filming styles, backgrounds, and the use of visual aids to effectively convey their message.

6. Presentation

- Each group presents its commercial to the class.
- After each presentation, allow time for questions and peer feedback.

7. Reflection

- Facilitate a discussion on what students learned about the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom through this activity.
- Discuss the effectiveness of different presentations and the importance of creative communication in historical education.
- For deeper understanding, explain: The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom is important because it helps us understand Thomas Jefferson's thinking about religious liberty before the First Amendment was applied more broadly to the states. It shows his belief in protecting both freedom of belief (free exercise) and preventing government control of religion (no established church).

Extension

- Share the videos with other classes or parents to showcase students' learning and creativity.
- Encourage students to explore how the principles of religious freedom apply in their lives today.

This interactive activity not only reinforces historical knowledge but also enhances students' teamwork, communication skills, and creativity in presenting complex ideas.

Freedom Founders Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Criteria	Excellent (4 Points)	Good (3 points)	Satisfactory (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Content Knowledge	Accurate, comprehensive coverage of the Virginia Statute, including historical context, key figures (Jefferson, Madison), and its impact on religious freedom in America.	Mostly accurate coverage of the Virginia Statute with some minor inaccuracies or omissions.	Limited understanding of the Virginia Statute, with significant inaccuracies or omissions.	Little to no understanding demonstrated.
Creativity and Originality	Highly creative and original approach in presenting the commercial, including innovative use of props, visuals, and persuasive language.	Creative approach in presenting the commercial, using some props and visuals effectively.	Limited creativity in presenting the commercial, with minimal use of props or visuals.	Little to no creativity demonstrated.
Clarity and Organization	Information is clearly organized, logically presented, and easy to understand. Clear script with a well-structured presentation.	Information is generally organized and presented in a clear manner. Script is mostly clear with some minor organizational issues.	Information is somewhat disorganized, making it difficult to follow at times. Script lacks clarity and structure.	Information is poorly organized and difficult to understand. Script is unclear and lacks structure.
Presentation Skills	Confident, engaging delivery with excellent use of voice, gestures, and eye contact. Group members actively contribute to the presentation.	Generally confident delivery with good use of voice and gestures. Group members contribute adequately to the presentation.	Delivery lacks confidence and may be monotone. Group members contribute minimally to the presentation.	Delivery is hesitant and lacks engagement. Group members do not contribute effectively to the presentation.
Teamwork and Collaboration	Strong evidence of effective teamwork, with all group members contributing equally and working cooperatively. Roles are clearly defined and executed well.	Evidence of teamwork, with most group members contributing effectively and working cooperatively. Roles are defined but execution may be uneven.	Limited evidence of teamwork, with some group members not contributing effectively or working cooperatively. Roles are unclear or not well executed.	Little to no evidence of teamwork. Group members do not contribute effectively or work cooperatively.

Freedom Founders Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Good (3 points)	Satisfactory (2 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)
Overall Impact and Creativity	Commercial has a strong impact, effectively engaging the audience and leaving a lasting impression. Highly creative elements enhance understanding of the Virginia Statute.	Commercial has a positive impact, engaging the audience and effectively conveying the key aspects of the Virginia Statute. Creative elements support understanding.	Commercial has minimal impact, with limited audience engagement. Creative elements are lacking or not effectively utilized.	Commercial has little to no impact. Audience engagement is minimal. Creative elements are absent or ineffective.

Total Score: _____/24

- **Scores can range from 1 to 4 for each criterion.**
- **Total points possible: 24 (6 criteria x 4 points each).**
- **The rubric should be shared with students prior to starting the project to clarify expectations and criteria for assessment.**

Teacher Recommendations:

_____

_____

_____

Comprehension Activity

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Instructions:

- Read the passage carefully.
- Answer each question in complete sentences.
- Use information from the passage to support your answers.
- After completing the questions, discuss your answers with a partner or in small groups.
- Share your answers with the class and compare interpretations.

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, written by Thomas Jefferson and passed by the Virginia government in 1786, was a groundbreaking document in American history. It declared that the government must allow people to profess, discuss, and follow their own religious beliefs without interference. Jefferson, influenced by the ideas of religious toleration promoted by British philosopher John Locke, believed that religious freedom was essential for people of all faiths to pursue happiness. This statute served as a model for the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, ensuring that Congress would make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

Questions:

1. What was the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and who wrote it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comprehension Activity

2. *What did the Virginia Statute declare about religious beliefs and the government?*

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. *Who influenced Thomas Jefferson in writing the Virginia Statute, and what were their ideas?*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comprehension Activity

4. How did the Virginia Statute influence the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Why did Thomas Jefferson believe religious freedom was important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Extension (Optional):

- Research other documents or writings by Thomas Jefferson or James Madison to explore their views on religious freedom further.
- Discuss how the principles of religious freedom apply in society today, using examples from current events or personal experiences.

Answer Key: Comprehension Activity

1. What was the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and who wrote it?
    - The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was a document written by Thomas Jefferson.

2. What did the Virginia Statute declare about religious beliefs and the government?
    - The Virginia Statute declared that the government must allow people to profess, discuss, and follow their own religious beliefs without interference.

3. Who influenced Thomas Jefferson in writing the Virginia Statute, and what were their ideas?
    - Thomas Jefferson was influenced by the ideas of religious toleration promoted by British philosopher John Locke, as well as his friend and fellow patriot, James Madison.

4. How did the Virginia Statute influence the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution?
    - The Virginia Statute served as a model for the First Amendment, which prohibits Congress from making laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

5. Why did Thomas Jefferson believe religious freedom was important?
    - Thomas Jefferson believed it was sinful and tyrannical to force people to believe or support a particular religion. This violated a person's natural right that was unalienable and endowed by their Creator.

Notes:

- Answers should reflect understanding of the historical context, the influence of John Locke, the connection to the First Amendment, and Jefferson's beliefs about religious freedom.
- Encourage students to use specific details and language from the passage to support their answers.

Resources

- https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-01-02-0057
- https://minio.la.utexas.edu/webeditor-files/coretexts/pdf/163020model20of20christian20charity.pdf
- https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205%3A13-15&version=KJ21
  https://www.history.com/news/pilgrims-puritans-differences
- https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/church-of-england-in-virginia/
- https://www.history.com/news/religion-13-colonies-america
- https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/gods-mosaic/
- Thomas Jefferson, "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom," The Jefferson Monticello, https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/virginia-statute-religious-freedom/.
- United States Supreme Court, "Reynolds v. United States (1879)," Library of Congress, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/usrep/usrep098/usrep098145/usrep098145.pdf.
- James Madison, "From James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 22 January 1786," National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0249.
- Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Margaret Bayard Smith, 6 August 1816," National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-10-02-0186.

Images

Salute



Credit: Canva Pro

United



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro

Bible



Credit: Canva Pro

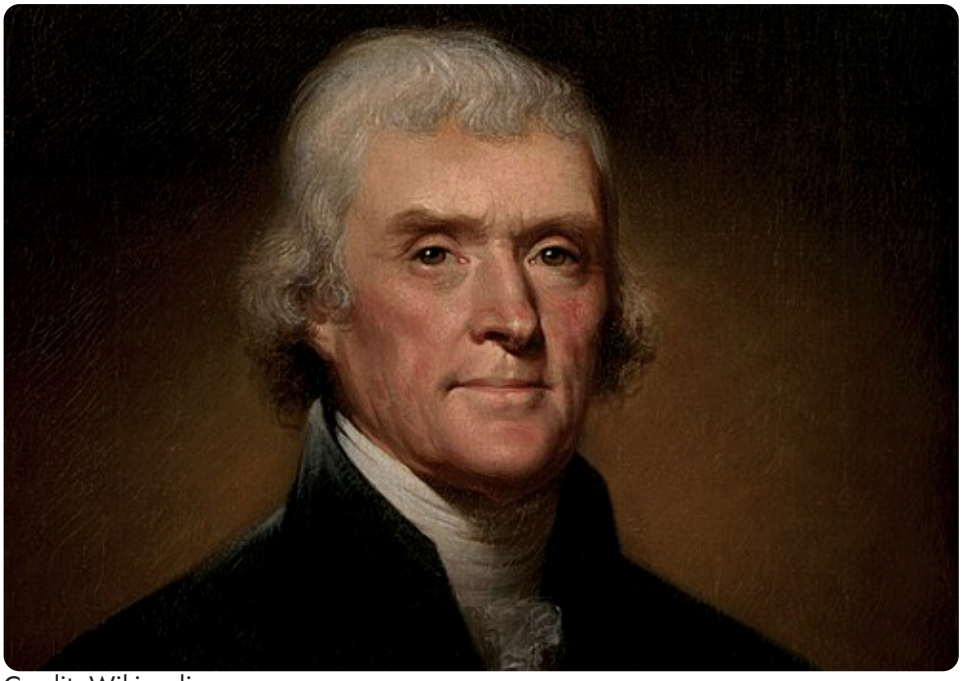
Images

George Washington



Credit: Canva Pro

Thomas Jefferson



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

Worship



Credit: Canva Pro

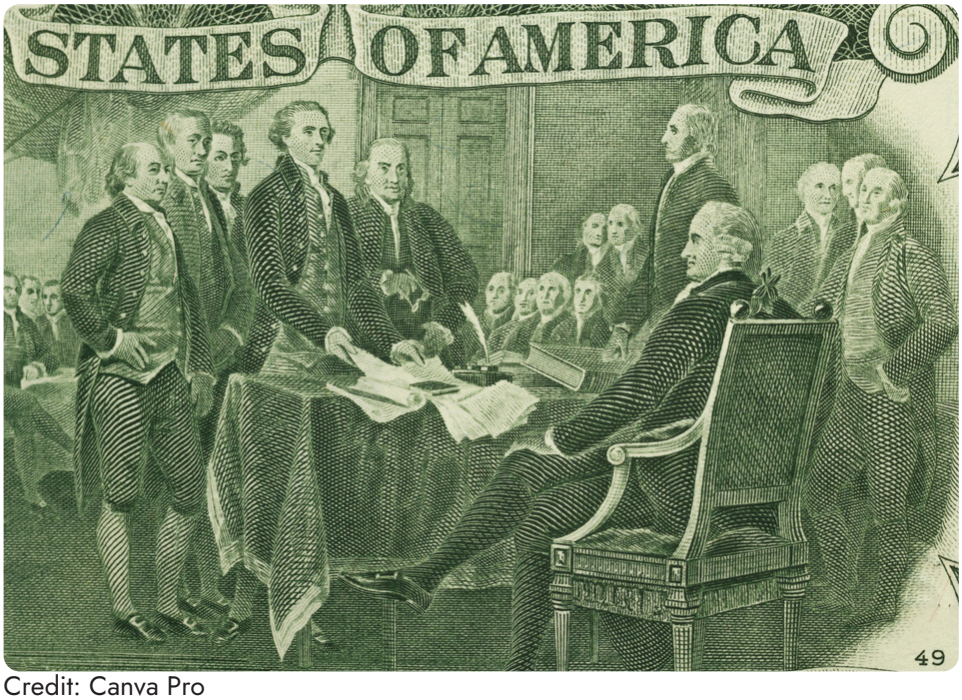
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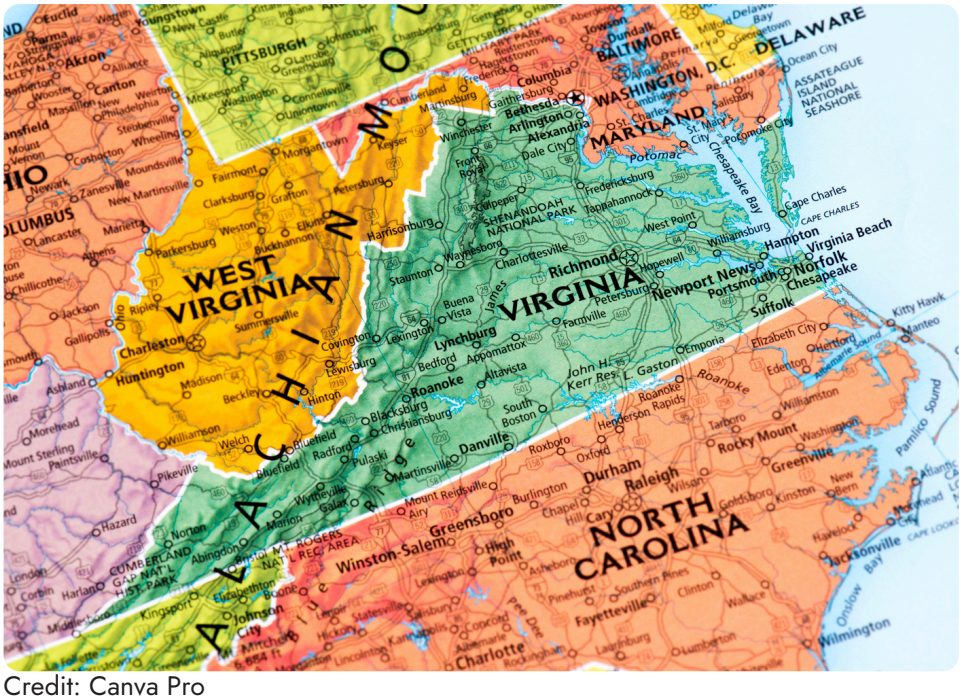
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Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom



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Founders



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Bill of Rights



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Notes