



The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

CREATED EQUAL: INVENTING THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC



Grade 8
United States History and Geography

I. Introduction

In the 250 years from the founding of the first English colonies to the end of the Civil War in 1865, Americans created a democratic nation, a nation fundamentally unlike any that had come before. From small beginnings on the margins of European civilization, the United States had thrust itself into the forefront of history—an enormous continental republic in which the idea of government by the people is continually shaped and tested.

The materials that follow are designed as an introduction to, and resource for, a student field trip to examine the history encompassed by the images, documents, and records in Section III of The Huntington Library's permanent exhibit, "Created Equal: Inventing the American Republic." Accompanying lesson plans will utilize these resources, other documents in the exhibit, and additional documents from The Huntington's collections to build a deeper understanding of the role of slavery and the constitutional crisis that led the United States into the cataclysm of the Civil War.

II. Objectives

- ◆ To prepare students for a visit to the exhibit, "Created Equal: Inventing the American Republic."
- ◆ To review major historical themes in American history, from colonization to the Civil War.
- ◆ To analyze the role of slavery in early American history.

III. History-Social Science Standards Addressed

- 8.2** (3) Evaluate the major debates that occurred during the development of the Constitution and their ultimate resolutions in such areas as shared power among institutions, divided state-federal power, slavery, the rights of individuals and states (later addressed by the addition of the Bill of Rights), and the status of American Indian nations under the commerce clause.
- (6) Enumerate the powers of government set forth in the Constitution and the fundamental liberties ensured by the Bill of Rights.
- 8.5** (2) Know the changing boundaries of the United States and describe the relationships the country had with its neighbors (current Mexico and Canada) and Europe, including the influence of the Monroe Doctrine, and how those relationships influenced westward expansion and the Mexican-American War.
- 8.7** (3) Examine the characteristics of white Southern society and how the physical environment influenced events and conditions prior to the Civil War.

IV. Materials Needed

Class set copies of the following primary documents:

Document A: The Journal of Major George Washington, 1754

Document B: Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

Document C: *Constitution of the United States*, 1787

Document D: James Hillhouse letter, January 28, 1804

Document E: Slave Auction in Richmond, VA, 1865

Document F: The First Vote, 1867

Document G: *Constitution of the Confederate States of America*, 1861

Document Analysis Worksheet

Illustrated Document Analysis Worksheet

V. Introductory Lessons/Preview for a Class Field Trip

Inform students that when they visit the main exhibition hall at the Huntington Library they will study an exhibit titled, “Created Equal: Inventing the American Republic.” There they will see a variety of original documents and records that reflect the major themes of American history from colonization through the Civil War. Dominant issues depicted in the materials include the development of democratic ideals and institutions, and the pervasive influence of slavery throughout this period of history. The exhibit is divided into seven sections, and the present lesson is a general overview of the materials on display. (Two additional lessons add more in-depth study of Civil War-related topics).

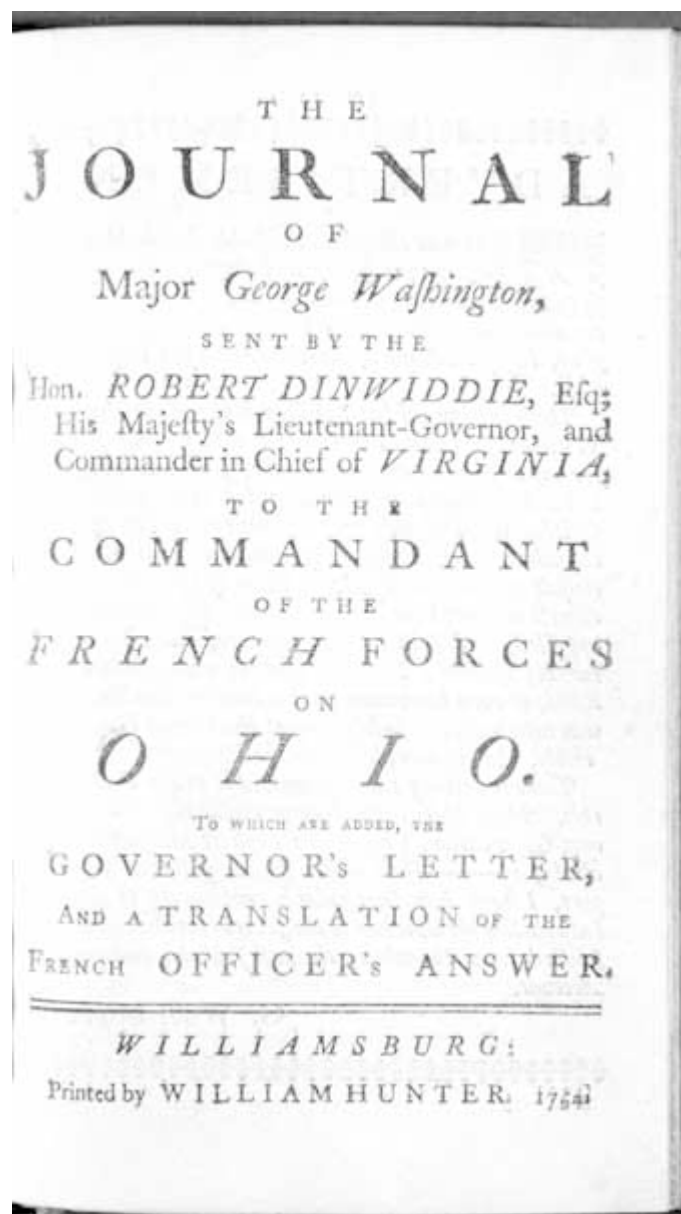
1. Begin the lesson by placing a rudimentary timeline on the board, beginning with 1607 and ending with 1860. Divide the line into roughly fifty-year increments, and have students volunteer significant dates and events that occurred over this period of 250 years.
2. When students begin their tour of the exhibit, they will first see early colonial history materials under the title “A World for the Taking”: these include documents relating to John Smith, to the cultivation and exporting of tobacco, and to early slavery. Moving to the next case along the wall, students will come across materials under the heading, “The War for North America.” Review the conflicts between France and England in establishing (and maintaining) colonies in the New World by sharing **Document A** with the class. Utilize this document to generate discussion around George Washington's early life as an English soldier, and to review events associated with the French and Indian (or Seven Years) War. (At the library, students will see actual pages from Washington's journal; and, looking over their shoulders to the display case behind them (“Atlantic Colonies”), they will find one of Washington's drawings as a teenaged-surveyor).
3. The next section of the exhibit is titled “The American Revolution,” and includes illustrations of famous political cartoons associated with the coming of the Revolution, and a quote from Tom Paine, “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.” The display case contains materials from the First Continental Congress, and an early reprint of the Declaration of Independence. Show students **Document B**, the cover page of Thomas Paine's influential pamphlet, *Common Sense*, and have them consult their textbook (or other sources) to re-read Paine's exhortations regarding “the cause of America.”
 - Extension activity: Divide the class into two parts (for/against), and have students on either side of the room pair up to create an outline in which they sketch out reasons to either support or oppose Paine's “common sense” argument.
4. Moving to the exhibit case in the center of the room, students will find the seminal documents of “The New Nation.” To prepare, they should review the main points of the Northwest Ordinance (paying attention to its effect in limiting the spread of slavery in the new territories), the writing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, and the addition of the Bill of Rights.
 - Extension activity: Have students study the copy of the Bill of Rights on display at The Huntington, and copy down the first two amendments in the original draft of the document. Have them research the First Congress and the Bill of Rights to discover the final edition of the first ten amendments, and explain what became of the “original” first and second amendments to the Constitution.

5. “The Impending Crisis” is the title of the next section students will visit. This area deals with the territorial growth and the population growth of the United States from 1790–1860. One of the documents on display is a letter from James Madison to the United States Senate announcing the conclusion of a treaty with France by which the United States acquired the vast Louisiana territory. Pass out copies of **Document D**, a letter written by northern Congressman after the Louisiana Purchase was completed, and have students underline the section of the letter that refers to “the Acquisition of Louisiana.” Next, have students explain Hillhouse’s view of the event, and provide evidence for their reasoning. (Alternate exercise: Use **Document Analysis Worksheet** for analyzing the letter).
 - Extension activity: Students can study the two official census documents on display at either end of the case to discover population growth (from 4 to 32 million) in the course of seventy years. Further research could be conducted to chart the demographic trends for African Americans as well.
 - Extension activity: Have students review the territorial growth of the United States from 1790–1860, and explain the means by which the country acquired the territory that allowed the nation to stretch across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans.
 - Extension activity: Lead students in an in-depth study of the Lewis and Clark Expedition during the course of the bicentennial commemoration of the event.
6. As students complete their observations of the materials on display in the section titled, “The Impending Crisis,” draw their attention to the final item in the display case, a book containing a speech by a southerner named John B. Thrasher. Encourage students to locate the sentences (at the bottom of the first page) where Thrasher, on the day before Abraham Lincoln was elected President, uses religious arguments to assert that white Americans were intended to enslave black Americans. In class, distribute copies of **Documents E** and **F**. Have students study each illustration in turn and discuss with a partner what the images depict. Alternate activity: Use **Illustrated Document Analysis Worksheet** to provide focus for the paired discussion, or to have students complete the task individually.
7. Turning to the left, students will encounter the final section of the exhibit, “The Civil War.” In the case beneath the photograph of Abraham Lincoln, documents ranging from the *Constitution of the Confederate States* to the *Emancipation Proclamation* are on display. Subsequent lessons will provide more depth for student study of this crucial period.
 - Extension activity: Use an overhead image of **Document G** to frame a review the issue of Southern secession from the Union, and the

establishment of the Confederate States of America. Have students study the Confederate Constitution's treatment of the topics of state's rights, and the right to hold slaves. Compare key sections of Document G with similar articles in the U.S. Constitution (**Document C**).

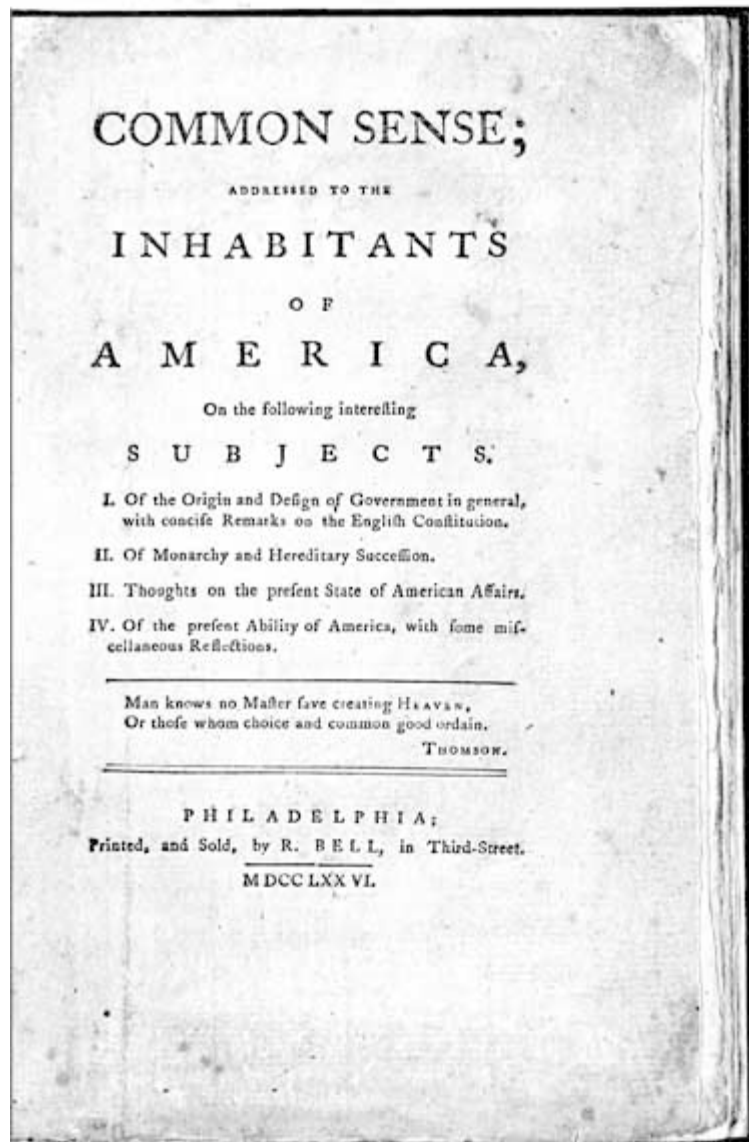
Journal of Major George Washington
London, 1754

Washington was only twenty-one when he made the perilous winter journey that made his a famous name on both sides of the Atlantic. He had traveled to a French fort in the wilderness to demand that France renounce its claim to the Ohio Valley. When the French refused, war became inevitable. In 1754, Major Washington's soldiers in the Ohio country fired the shots that touched off the great world war between Britain and France for control of North America.



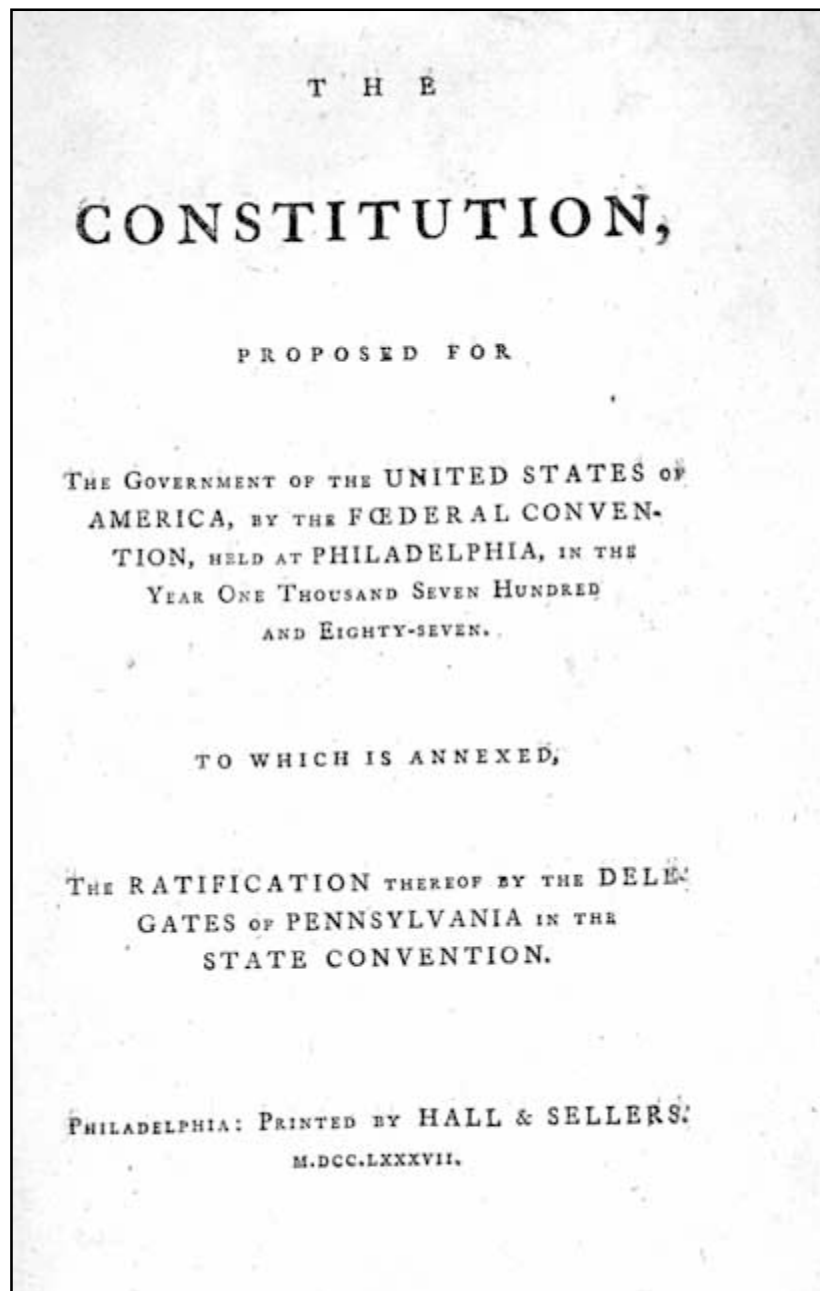
Common Sense
Addressed to the Inhabitants of America
 Thomas Paine, London, 1776

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* was the most influential political tract of the American Revolution. The bestselling pamphlet angrily condemned King George and called for immediate independence from Britain. "The cause of America," Paine said, was "the cause of all mankind," and he invoked an intoxicating vision of a new American republic on the cutting edge of history: "We have it our power to begin the world over again."



United States Constitution Philadelphia, 1787

Drafted in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, ratified by the states in 1788, and brought to life in the first federal government under President George Washington in 1789, the United States Constitution has been the charter by which Americans have governed themselves for more than 200 years. This "Members" Edition" of the Constitution was printed for the delegates to the Constitutional Convention shortly after they signed the completed document on September 17, 1787.



Autograph letter to James A. Hillhouse
James Hillhouse, January 28, 1804

A Connecticut Congressman offered a dour counterpoint to the joyous celebrations in the nation's capital that greeted the passage of the Louisiana Purchase. Hillhouse disagreed with

"those who consider the Acquisition of Louisiana as a great boon to the United States.... this new Paradise cannot be cultivated without Slaves. . . . I am inclined to believe that such an addition to our territory will prove a curse, rather than a blessing. . . ."

Several new slave states were created from the Louisiana Purchase.

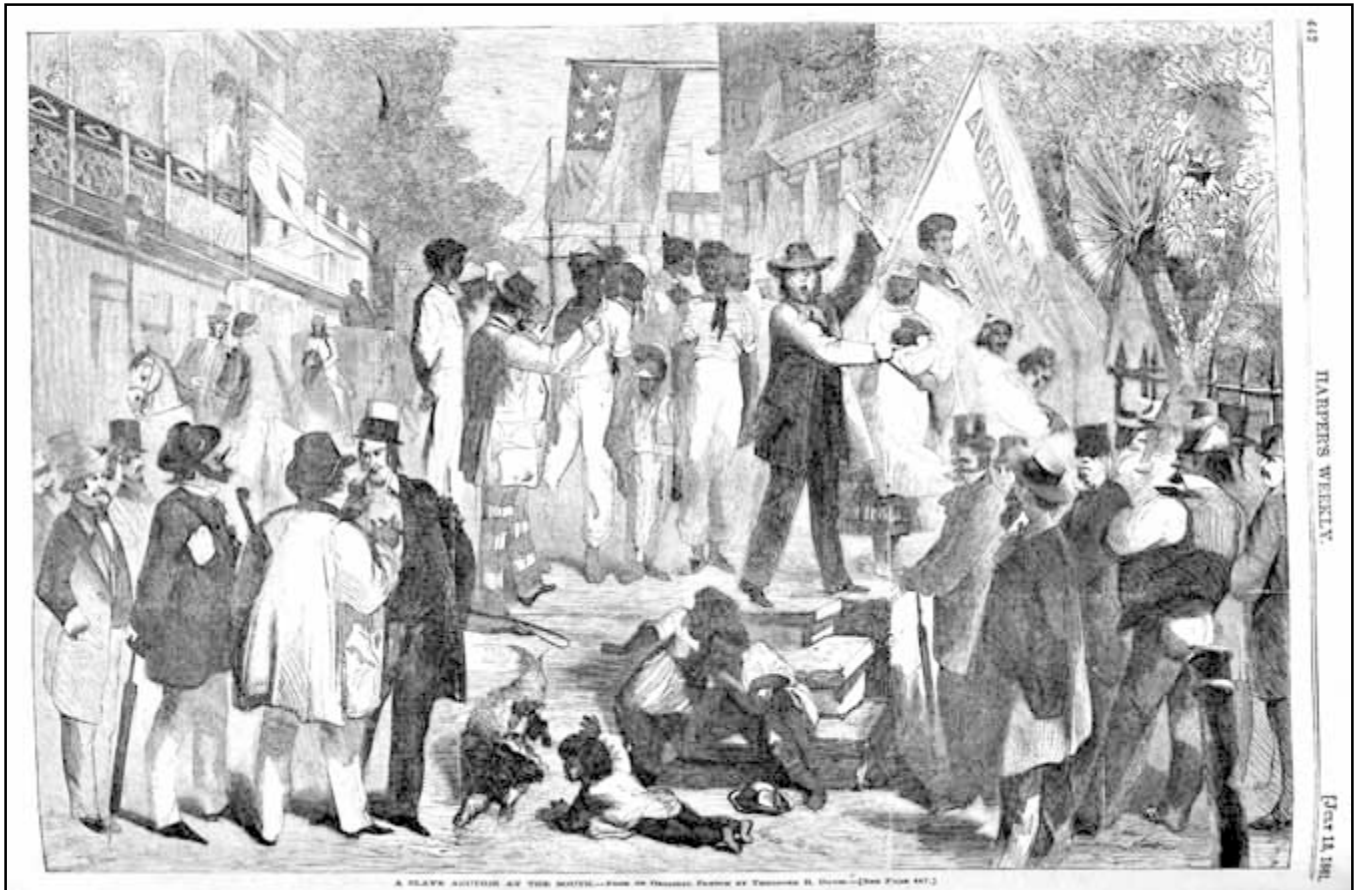
City of Washington Jan^y 28th 1804 -

my Dear James.

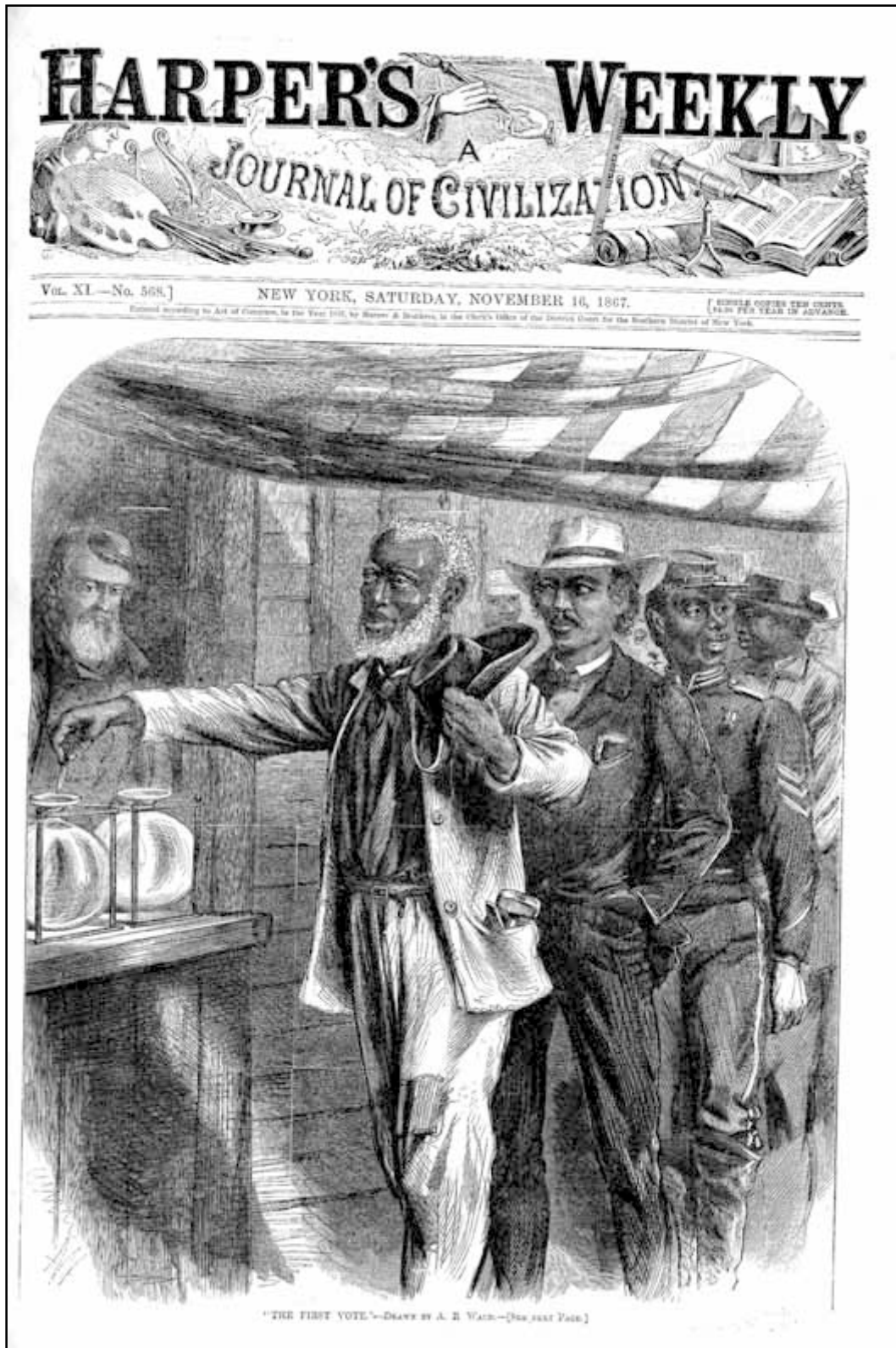
Your letter of the 11th Inst^d has been duly received, and was read with pleasure - I was glad to hear you had an agreeable Christmas, I should have been ~~very~~ happy to have made one of the party - Aunt Hillhouse is very good to make a feast for your Children every year, and I hope you will ever remember with gratitude her kindness, and will never be wanting in attention and respect on your part -

Yesterday was ushered in by the discharge of cannon, and other tokens of joy, which procured an entertainment, prepared for those who profess to consider Acquisition of Louisiana as a great boon to the United States - But when I am told by the most zealous admirers of this measure, who profess to have the most correct information on the subject, that this new Paradise cannot be cultivated without Slaves - and accordingly advocate measures which will

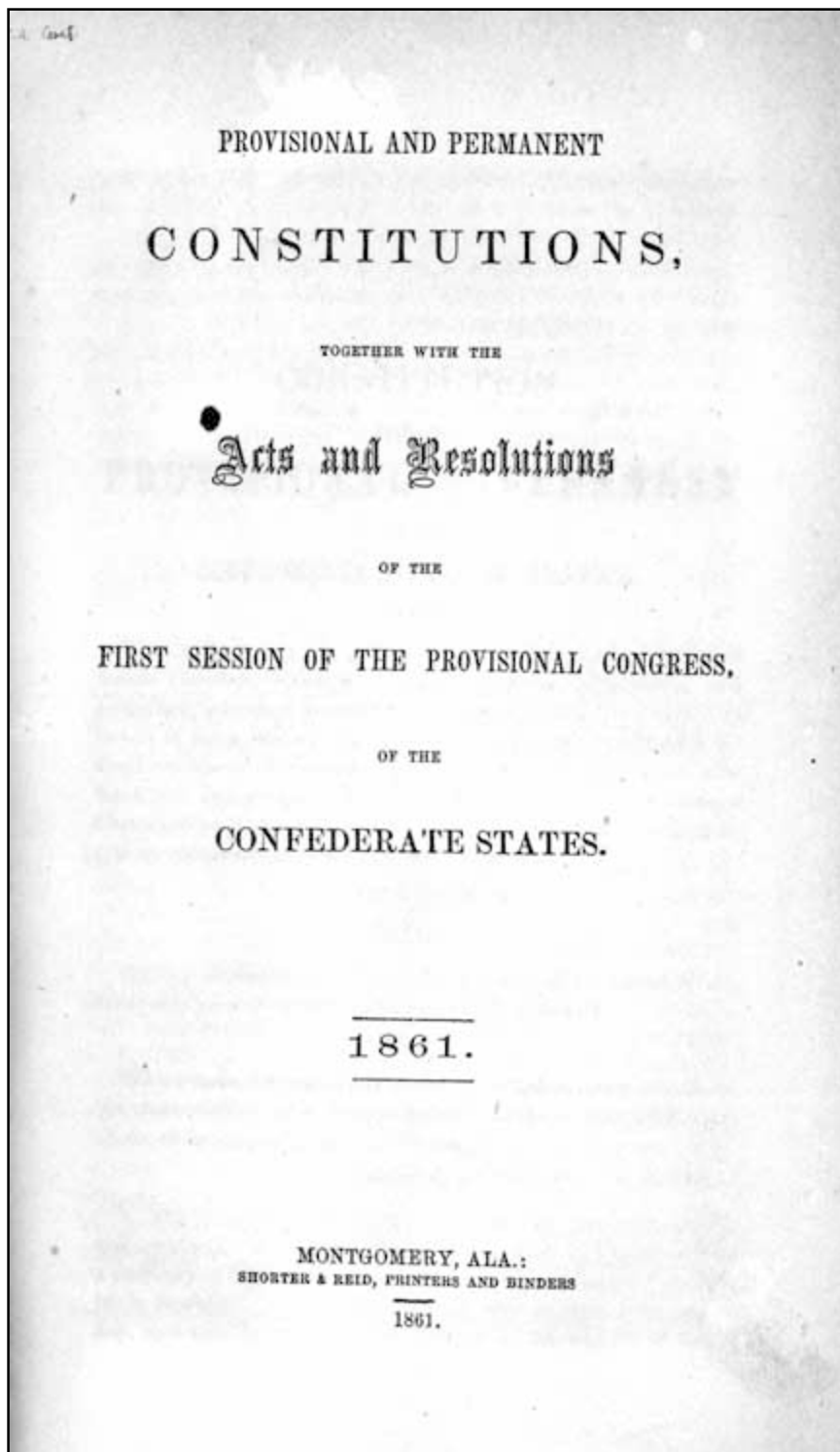
Slave Auction in Richmond, Virginia 1865



The First Vote
1867



Constitution of the Confederate States of America
1861



Document Analysis Worksheet

1. Type of Document: (check one)

- Newspaper Map Advertisement
- Letter Telegram Congressional Record
- Patent Press Release Census Report
- Memorandum Report
- Other (specify type) _____

2. Unique Physical Qualities of the Document (check one or more)

- Handwritten Interesting Letterhead
- Typed "Received" Stamp
- Seals Other
- Notations

3. Date(s) of the Document: _____

4. Author (or creator) of the document:

Position (Title)

5. For what audience was the document written?

6. Document information:

A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

B. Why do you think this document was written?

C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written:

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Illustrated Document Analysis Worksheet

STEP 1. OBSERVATION

- A. Study the document for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the document and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.
- B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the document.

People	Objects	Activities

STEP 2. INFERENCE

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this document.

STEP 3: QUESTIONS

- A. What questions does this document raise in your mind?

- B. Where could you find answers to them?

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