

## Lesson Plan Rationales

### Concept Formation Lesson- Absolutism

#### Rationale:

In this lesson students will form a strong understanding of the concept of absolutism and the critical attributes that make up its definition. By fully comprehending the concept, students will learn critical content knowledge necessary to understand the age of absolutism and the emergence of modern European states including France, Spain, Prussia, and Russia. A lesson on absolutism provides a wonderful opportunity for students to comprehend a key term and topic required by state and school standards. Absolutism lends itself nicely to a concept formation lesson. The term has a common definition and three to four commonly identified critical attributes. Examples and non-examples of absolutism can be taken from the era being studied as well as from ancient and current examples. In the course of teaching a lesson on absolutism students also have the opportunity to encounter and learn related terms such as constitutional monarchy, enlightened despot, and divine right. Students may also find the opportunity to compare and contrast absolutism to totalitarianism and dictatorships. Concept lessons are also conducive to scaffolding, providing a succinct structure to guide students that struggle with task and time management, through the many parts of the lesson.

### Rousseau's *Social Contract*—A Socratic Seminar

#### Rationale:

I have selected this lesson to complete a unit on the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution. I chose Rousseau's *Social Contract* for a number of reasons. Rousseau was an influential philosophe and enlightenment writer. State standards require students to be familiar with Rousseau and the term social contract. His ideas concerning government and politics are also important ideas that students should be familiar with. His writing contrasts with absolutism which students learned in their previous unit. His ideas also set the stage for the next unit on the French Revolution. Although this is a world history class, students who master an understanding of Rousseau's ideas will be able to apply them to American History when they cover the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War.

I believe that a Socratic seminar is an appropriate lesson. It provides a gifted class with the opportunity to engage in discussion of the text as well as learn and practice discussion skills. The lesson differentiates learning, and gives students the opportunity to do all the talking while finding value in an aspect of history. Finally, the seminar will provide students with an opportunity to compare the ideas proposed in *Social Contract* with other Enlightenment political writers and prepare them for an upcoming test.