



FOUNDATION  
AGAINST  
INTOLERANCE  
& RACISM

**Lesson and Unit Titles:** FAIR Video #3, Justice and the Pursuit of Human Equality

**Recommended Grade Levels:** K-12

**Recommended Pacing:** 45-120 minutes, depending on teacher/class interest

**FAIR Standards and Objectives:** All

**Theme(s):** All

**Era(s):** Enlightenment, Abolition, Suffrage, and Civil Rights

**Areas of Focus:** Enlightenment, John Locke, American Founding, Slavery, Abolition, Humanity

**Lesson Objectives:**

- Become conversant in:
  - the ways civilization has overcome tribalism
  - the essential qualities of the Enlightenment
  - the basic ideas of John Locke
  - how John Locke's thought influenced the American founders
  - the essential promises of the Declaration of Independence
  - the how the essential promises of the Declaration of Independence were used in the movements to abolish slavery, recognize women's right to vote, and promote civil rights

**Teacher Instructions:**

1. Discuss vocabulary words for this lesson
2. Watch FAIR Video # 3 together: Justice and the Pursuit of Human Equality
3. Take quiz on FAIR Video #3 either during or after the video
4. Discuss the quiz questions and answers
5. Homework assignment possibilities

6. Time and interest permitting, continue by watching together the video on John Locke's philosophy and his influence on the American founding.
7. Have students answer the quiz questions for the video and discuss the answers together.
8. Time and interest permitting, give the students time or read together the three excerpts by Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and Martin Luther King
9. Discuss the article(s) together.
10. Time and interest permitting, lead a discussion of and assign an essay on the prompt provided.

### 1. Key Vocabulary:

Natural Rights: Rights which every human has as a human, that cannot be given or taken away by a government, but only recognized or not recognized

Enlightenment Thought: A modern way of revealing reality that prioritizes open dialog, logic, and conclusion based upon evidence

Social Contract: People voluntarily coming together to give up some individual freedoms to form a government that protects their essential rights

Divine Right: The idea that every monarch has a right to rule because God must have wanted them to rule

Declaration of Independence: A document that lays out the reasoning for why the American colonies were breaking with England and forming their own government

### 2. Watch FAIR Video #3 together: [https://youtu.be/Dk-hf9us1\\_I](https://youtu.be/Dk-hf9us1_I)

### 3. Take quiz on Video #3 either during or after the video:

1. How has civilization invented ways to overcome the human tendency toward tribalism?
  - a) Many religions have taught that all humans are made in the image of God.
  - b) Many cultures have taught that their culture is the one true culture.
  - c) Philosophy has appealed to reason and evidence common to all humans.
  - d) *a and c*
2. Which of the following was not a way that John Locke's thought influenced the American founders?
  - a) People have natural rights that no ruler can justly ignore.
  - b) Rulers rule justly only with the consent of the governed.
  - c) *Each nation should choose one national religion.*
  - d) Free speech and debate are essential to understanding reality well.
3. Which of the following was not an ideal of the Enlightenment to move toward social improvement?

- a) *Silence those who disagree with the majority*
  - b) Respect each other's freedoms
  - c) Discuss ideas openly
  - d) Work together to achieve common goals
4. John Locke's writings influenced Thomas Jefferson to write in the Declaration of Independence that all people have an equal right to
- a) Life
  - b) Liberty
  - c) Pursuit of happiness
  - d) *All of the above*
5. What was the greatest flaw in the founding of the American government?
- a) Tax rates were too high.
  - b) The army was too small.
  - c) There were not enough colonies.
  - d) *American laws did not live up to America's highest principles.*
6. Which people did not have their right to vote acknowledged by the United States government when it was founded?
- a) Native Americans
  - b) Women
  - c) African Americans
  - d) *All of the above*
7. In what way was America's founding generally good, not only for landholding, white men?
- a) Because most people around the world did not have their rights respected at that time.
  - b) Because even though many people suffered from not having their rights respected, some managed to succeed anyway.
  - c) Because there are many more important things in life than having fundamental rights respected.
  - d) *Because the principles in the founding were used successfully over time to achieve the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and civil rights for all Americans.*

**4. Discuss** quiz questions and answers.

- 5. Possible Homework assignment:** American is an experiment in the idea that the people themselves are best suited to elect leaders who will respect the people's rights to equal opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In a paragraph, explain how well you think that experiment has worked so far and why.

6. Time and interest permitting, **watch** the video on John Locke's philosophy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7-Abmn9lZY>

7. Have students answer the **quiz questions** and discuss the answers together:

1. According to John Locke, what is the great question in the world?
  - A) Is there power in the world?
  - B) Which king is the best king?
  - C) Which language should we speak?
  - D) *Who should rule?*
2. What event did Locke live through that had a major impact on his philosophy?
  - A) A terrible earthquake
  - B) An invasion by Spain
  - C) *A civil war*
  - D) A terrible famine
3. True or False? Locke supported the idea that kings need to be respected because they get their power directly from God?
  - A) True
  - B) *False*
4. Locke thought that power ultimately should come from the people because
  - A) *People have natural rights.*
  - B) The people as a whole never make mistakes.
  - C) Kings go to war too often.
  - D) He had a supernatural vision that told him so.
5. Locke thought that governments should ideally arise when:
  - A) Mobs of people overthrow the previous rulers
  - B) *People come together to elect governors to protect people's rights*
  - C) The winner of a war decides to make a government
  - D) Powerful people decide it is in their interest.
6. According to Locke, when should people be allowed to replace a governor?
  - A) Every four years
  - B) When the people stop liking the governor
  - C) When a powerful mob gets enough support
  - D) *When the governor fails to protect the people's rights*
7. How did America's founders use Locke's idea about replacing a governor to justify their own revolution?
  - A) They argued that they could make more money without the rule of the English king.

- B) *They argued that the King of England had failed to protect their rights.*
- C) They argued that England was too far away to rule them.
- D) They argued that they would rather be ruled by France.

8. Time and interest permitting, give the students time or **read** together the three excerpts by Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and Martin Luther King:

**Frederick Douglass:** I have said that the Declaration of Independence is the ring-bolt to the chain of your nation's destiny; so, indeed, I regard it. The principles contained in that instrument are saving principles. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost.

<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

**Susan B. Anthony:** Nor can you find a word in any of the grand documents left us by the fathers that assumes for government the power to create or to confer rights. The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the constitutions of the several states and the organic laws of the territories, all alike propose to protect the people in the exercise of their God-given rights. Not one of them pretends to bestow rights.

"All men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Here is no shadow of government authority over rights, nor exclusion of any from their full and equal enjoyment. Here is pronounced the right of all men, and "consequently," as the Quaker preacher said, "of all women," to a voice in the government. And here, in this very first paragraph of the declaration, is the assertion of the natural right of all to the ballot; for, how can "the consent of the governed" be given, if the right to vote be denied. Again:

"That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such forms as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Surely, the right of the whole people to vote is here clearly implied. For however destructive in their happiness this government might become, a disfranchised class could neither alter nor abolish it, nor institute a new one, except by the old brute force method of insurrection and rebellion. One-half of the people of this nation to-day are utterly powerless to blot from the statute books an unjust law, or to write there a new and a just one. The women, dissatisfied as they are with this form of government, that enforces taxation without representation, -that compels them to obey laws to which they have never given their consent, -that imprisons and hangs them without a trial by a jury of their peers, that robs them, in marriage, of the custody of their own persons, wages and children, -are this half of the people left wholly at the mercy of the other half, in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this

government, every one of which was based on the immutable principle of equal rights to all. By those declarations, kings, priests, popes, aristocrats, were all alike dethroned, and placed on a common level politically, with the lowliest born subject or serf. By them, too, me, as such, were deprived of their divine right to rule, and placed on a political level with women. By the practice of those declarations all class and caste distinction will be abolished; and slave, serf, plebeian, wife, woman, all alike, bound from their subject position to the proud platform of equality.

The preamble of the federal constitution says:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and established this constitution for the United States of America."

It was we, the people, not we, the white male citizens, nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed this Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings or liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people—women as well as men. And it is downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government—the ballot.

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/anthonyaddress.html>

**Martin Luther King:** It wouldn't take us long to discover the substance of that dream. It is found in those majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, words lifted to cosmic proportions: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by God, Creator, with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This is a dream. It's a great dream.

The first saying we notice in this dream is an amazing universalism. It doesn't say "some men," it says "all men." It doesn't say "all white men," it says "all men," which includes black men. It does not say "all Gentiles," it says "all men," which includes Jews. It doesn't say "all Protestants," it says "all men," which includes Catholics. (*Yes, sir*) It doesn't even say "all theists and believers," it says "all men," which includes humanists and agnostics.

Then that dream goes on to say another thing that ultimately distinguishes our nation and our form of government from any totalitarian system in the world. It says that each of us has certain basic rights that are neither derived from or conferred by the state. In order to discover where they came from, it is necessary to move back behind the dim mist of eternity. They are God-given, gifts from His hands. Never before in the history of the world has a sociopolitical document expressed in such profound, eloquent, and unequivocal language the dignity and the worth of human personality. The American dream reminds us, and we should think about it anew on this Independence Day, that every man is an heir of the legacy of dignity and worth.

Now ever since the founding fathers of our nation dreamed this dream in all of its magnificence—to use a big word that the psychiatrists use—America has been something of a schizophrenic personality, tragically divided against herself. On the one hand we have proudly

professed the great principles of democracy, but on the other hand we have sadly practiced the very opposite of those principles.

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/publications/knock-midnight-inspiration-great-sermons-reverend-martin-luther-king-jr-4>

**9. Discuss** the excerpts together.

**10.** Time and interest permitting, lead a **discussion** of and **assign** an essay on the prompt provided.

Frederick Douglass, a formerly enslaved person who escaped to freedom, was one of the great voices for the abolition of slavery in his day. Susan B. Anthony was one of the most influential people who fought for women's right to vote. Martin Luther King was the most effective person who advocated for civil rights. In small groups, discuss why these three were such champions of the words of the Declaration of Independence, even though that document did not call for the end of slavery, recognize women's right to vote, or guarantee civil rights for most Americans. Do you agree with their focus on the principles of the American founding is an effective strategy? Why or why not? Be prepared to present your best arguments to the class as a whole. Students may also write an essay on this topic.