

## Teacher's Guide: Who Was Alexander Hamilton?

Recommended Grade Level: 5-8

*(also applicable to grades 9-12 for students requiring significant support in learning)*

Suggested Time: About 50-60 minutes spread over one or more class periods, plus additional time to complete a writing assignment

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### Goals

Following are the big ideas that students should take away after completing this lesson:

- Alexander Hamilton played a key role in helping establish the U.S. government after the Revolutionary War
- Skills people learn in their youth can help them achieve their goals when they are adults

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### Vocabulary

(See definitions on page 6.)

- accomplish
- approve
- currency
- establish
- trade
- treasury

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### Key Literacy Strategies

Following are the primary literacy strategies students will use to complete this activity:

- Making inferences (screens 4 and 5, writing assignment 2)
- Determining important information (screens 4 and 7, writing assignment 2)
- Sequencing events (screen 9)
- Constructing summaries (writing assignment 1)

Note: In addition to using the key literacy strategies listed above, students will use each of the strategies below to complete this lesson:

- Monitoring comprehension
- Synthesizing
- Making predictions
- Developing vocabulary
- Connecting prior knowledge to new learning
- Developing a topic in writing
- Identifying and using text features (photographs, captions, diagrams, and/or maps)

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### Overview

*Who Was Alexander Hamilton?* is a student-directed learning experience. However, while students are expected to work through the lesson on their own, teachers should be available to keep the lesson on track, organize groupings, facilitate discussions, answer questions, and ensure that students meet all learning goals.

The following is a summary of the lesson screens:

- Screen 1: Students learn that a young man who had a difficult childhood went on to become one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.
- Screen 2: Students read about Alexander Hamilton's struggles growing up in the Caribbean, and find out that these difficulties helped him achieve great things in adulthood.
- Screen 3: Students learn what the goals are for the lesson, which strategies they will be using to complete the lesson, and the important vocabulary words they will use during the lesson.
- Screen 4: Students watch a video to learn more about Hamilton's early challenges and the skills and lessons he learned. They then write down two to three things that Hamilton accomplished as a young man (such as running a trading company, writing for newspapers, and reading many books), and two to three skills he learned from his early experiences that would have been useful to him when he helped create the new U.S. government.
- Screen 5: Students read about Alexander Hamilton's experiences during the Revolutionary War, particularly his work for General George Washington. After they have finished reading, they write down one to two sentences to describe how Hamilton used the skills he learned in his youth during the war.
- Screen 6: Students read a passage to learn about Alexander Hamilton's belief in a strong central government, and how this view influenced him to draft The Federalist in support of the U.S. Constitution. They also read about how he put his belief into practice as the nation's first Treasury secretary. After they have finished reading, students write down two to three contributions that Alexander Hamilton made to the creation of the new U.S. government.
- Screen 7: Students answer four multiple-choice questions to show their comprehension of what they've learned so far about Alexander Hamilton.
- Screen 8: Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity, and then choose two words from the vocabulary list and write a new sentence for each word. These tasks demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of the words.
- Screen 9: Students use an interactive activity to categorize Alexander Hamilton's responsibilities and accomplishments during different phases of his life: during his childhood in the Caribbean, during the Revolutionary War, after the war, and during George Washington's presidency.
- Final  
Assignment: Students select and complete a writing assignment about the lesson topic.

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## Before the Lesson

- ❑ Go through each screen of the lesson, including all the interactive activities, so that you can experience ahead of time what students will be doing. As you go through each screen, jot down your own expectations for students' responses.
- ❑ Determine if students will be working individually or in pairs on the lesson. Some students may be able to work independently with little or no support. Students who are less familiar with the subject area or who struggle with literacy skills may benefit from working with another student. An effective way to do this is to pair a stronger student with a less able reader. You can also have students work individually on certain tasks and in pairs on others, depending on their experience and needs. If students will be working in pairs on any portion of the lesson, let them know if they will be expected to type in their notes individually or together.
- ❑ Provide instruction on key vocabulary (vocabulary words are defined in the lesson on screen 3, and on page 6 of this guide).
- ❑ Determine what students already know about Alexander Hamilton: details about his early life, his role in helping win ratification of the U.S. Constitution, or his position as Treasury Secretary. You may want to use specific questions to start the discussion, such as: Who is Alexander Hamilton and why is he important in U.S. history? Alexander Hamilton is pictured on the \$20 bill. Why do you think Hamilton was given this honor? What were some of the challenges that leaders faced in creating the new government of the United States after the American Revolution? Record their ideas on a chart, highlighting the words that may come up in the lesson. This will give you a sense of the background knowledge and possible misconceptions that students have before beginning this lesson. If time allows, return to the chart after students have completed the lesson to add new learning and correct misconceptions. Note: You may want to record their new learning in a different-colored ink so they can see how much they've learned.
- ❑ Arrange computers with Internet access so students can work individually or in pairs.
- ❑ Before students begin, suggest a timeline for completing the lesson, mention the different types of media they will encounter, and let them know how you expect them to submit their work. You may want to provide an outline of this information on a chart, chalkboard, or whiteboard, or as a handout.

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## Lesson Assessments

The following are descriptions of the lesson features that will be part of the packet of materials that students will submit. Students will use the packet for reference when writing their final assignment. It also serves as a formative assessment tool to monitor students' work as they're progressing through the lesson.

- **Notes** - Students take notes on screens 4, 5, and 6. If time allows, review their notes before students begin their writing assignment.

- **Multiple-choice questions** - Students complete the four questions on screen 7. Walk around to make sure students answer all four questions before they continue. If students click to go to the next screen before they finish, their work will not be saved.
- **Match It!** - Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity on screen 9. They begin by placing the vocabulary terms into the correct sentences. After they finish and save their work, they will be able to check their answers against an answer key. When they are done, they will be asked to choose two vocabulary words and write a new sentence for each word. Sentences should demonstrate a clear understanding of the meaning of each word. An inappropriate response would be “Alexander Hamilton had accomplishments.” An appropriate response would be “One of Hamilton’s main accomplishments was to help create a strong federal government.”
- **Arrange It!** - Students complete the concept map activity Arrange It! on screen 9. Students determine whether given accomplishments of Hamilton happened during his early life, during the war, after the war, or while Washington was president. Students will not be able to check their answers online, so you will need to provide them with correct answers when they are finished with the lesson. You can choose to review the answers as a class or return the corrected packet of materials to students before they begin the final assignment.

Following are the jobs and accomplishments that students will drag and drop on the concept map in the appropriate category:

#### **During His Childhood in the Caribbean**

- Works for American trading company
- Reads books about great leaders of the past

#### **During the War**

- Writes documents for General George Washington
- Leads men into battle

#### **After the War**

- Attends the Constitutional Convention
- Writes “The Federalist” essays to help get the Constitution passed in New York

#### **While Washington Was President**

- Becomes nation’s first Treasury secretary
- Arranges for the national government to take on states’ debts
- Creates a national bank

- **Final Assignment** - Students complete one final writing assignment. You can choose to let students make their own selection, or assign one according to your goals for the lesson. Use the rubric on page 7 to assess the writing assignments.

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## Lesson Aids and Extensions

Use the following suggestions to help students if they are stuck on a particular screen, to prepare students for completing their writing assignments, or as follow-up discussions to reinforce learning.

- **Watching Videos** - Encourage students to watch the video more than once. After the initial viewing, provide students with a specific content focus to frame their next viewing(s) of the video. This will help them draw connections between the main topic and the information that the video has to offer.
- **Participating in Discussions** - Organize class discussions or encourage students to talk about their questions in pairs. You may want to use the following discussion starters.
  - o What were some of the challenges Alexander Hamilton faced in his youth? How did he confront (deal with) them?
  - o What skills did Hamilton learn during his childhood and as a young man during the Revolutionary War?
  - o What skills did Alexander Hamilton draw upon as the nation's first Treasury secretary?
  - o How did Hamilton view the differences in power of the federal government versus the state governments? Why do you think he felt this way?
- **Reading the PDF Text** - Before they read the PDF text on screen 6, ask students to consider in what ways Alexander Hamilton was different than many of the other Founding Fathers, and how this might have influenced the type of government he wanted for the U.S.
- **Sharing Student Work** - It may be motivational, and a further learning opportunity, for students to post their final essays so that their classmates, peers, and/or parents can see them. This may also provide an opportunity for students to comment on and discuss each other's essays.

If you do not already have access to an online writing community, Teaching Matters™ provides TeXT, free classroom publishing tools that allow teachers and students to create and publish their own online eZine. More information and a free signup are available at Teaching Matters: TeXT (<http://text.teachingmatters.org>).
- **Reflection and Self-Assessment** - After students have turned in their writing assignments, you can choose to have them assess their learning. Bring students together as a whole class or in small groups to discuss the questions below. You may want to return to the chart of their ideas developed before the lesson and record their new learning. You may also have students respond individually to the questions and then convene the class to discuss the chart.
  - o What did you learn?
  - o What was surprising?
  - o What questions do you still have?
  - o What was the easiest for you to understand and do?
  - o What was the most difficult?

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## Vocabulary Definitions

### **accomplish**

To do or complete a task. An *accomplishment* is something that has been completed, successfully.

### **approve**

To agree with something. When people give their *approval*, they give their okay for it to go forward.

### **currency**

Any form of money, such as the U.S. dollar, that is used to buy goods and services.

### **establish**

To create or begin something new.

### **trade**

Buying and selling goods and service for money. A *trading company* is a business that deals with the exchange of goods and services.

### **treasury**

The money owned by a government or company. The *Treasury* can also refer to the department or group in charge of this money.

## Final Assignment Rubric Who Was Alexander Hamilton?

- Describe how Alexander Hamilton's early experiences helped him in his work for George Washington during the war and later at the Constitutional Convention.
- Alexander Hamilton is one of the few people who never served as president but still appears on U.S. currency. Describe some of Hamilton's accomplishments as the nation's first Treasury secretary, and how you think his early experiences helped him achieve these successes.

4	3	2	1
<p>Provides a clear and accurate response to the question. Ideas are elaborated, with three or more relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides an adequate response to the question. Topic and ideas are generally well organized, with two relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides a generally accurate response, with one supporting detail from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	
<p>Uses at least three vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them all correctly.</p>	<p>Uses two vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them both correctly.</p>	<p>Uses one vocabulary word (or a form of the vocabulary word) from the lesson, and uses it correctly.</p>	<p>Does not use any vocabulary words, or uses vocabulary words incorrectly.</p>

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## Scoring the Rubric

Here are two suggestions for scoring the final assignment rubric. Select the option that best meets your needs or develop your own grading system.

**Option 1:** This option provides one score for each submitted assignment.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric), for a total maximum score of 8. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
7-8	A	Excellent
5-6	B	Good
4	C	Adequate (Fair)
3 or below	D	Minimal

**Option 2:** This option provides two scores for each submitted assignment: one for written content and one for the use of key vocabulary. An advantage of separate scores is that you can weight students' comprehension and composition differently than you do their knowledge of vocabulary. It can also help you identify specific needs for future instruction.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric) and then score them separately. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
4	A	Excellent
3	B	Good
2	C	Adequate (Fair)
1	D	Minimal

The final grade may look like this: A/B (A for content and B for vocabulary use).