



Maximilien Robespierre: Lesson Plan

Topic	
<p>First known for his talent as a lawyer, Robespierre quickly became involved in the French political sphere. A persuasive writer but a mediocre speaker, Maximilien Robespierre was most influential behind the scenes rather than in direct spotlight. He's commonly credited as an instrumental figure in both the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. For this reason, he is considered to be a highly controversial figure by many historians, who can't seem to reconcile his lofty ideals with the actions taken during the Reign of Terror. One thing is certain however: Maximilien Robespierre strongly believed in the necessity of creating a united France.</p>	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
Government, History, Politics, Philosophy	30 - 35 minutes
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/status-quo-sticking-to-what-you-know/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List specific aspects of the ideal society Maximilien Robespierre was trying to create. Explained what occurred during the Reign of Terror and some of its commonly cited causes Identify different perspectives on Maximilien Robespierre's legacy. 	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
<p>Maximilien Robespierre, Committee of Public Safety, Reign of Terror, Law of 22 Prairial, Cult of the Supreme Being</p>	
Materials Needed	



Access to the Internet (for the Research It Activity).

Before you watch

Think-Pair-Share: What are some controversial historical figures? Why are they controversial?

While you watch

1. What did Maximilien Robespierre believe was most important to achieving the ideal French society?
2. What is the Reign of Terror?
3. What are two events that lead to the downfall of Maximilien Robespierre?

After you watch/discussion questions

1. What was Robespierre's greatest accomplishment? His greatest detriment?
2. How do you view Robespierre? Why?
3. How do you think Robespierre compares to other Enlightenment thinkers?

Activity Ideas

- Research It: Examine one of the previously mentioned laws or decrees passed during the Reign of Terror. What specifically does the legal document achieve? How does this compare with some of Robespierre's beliefs and actions, either in his early life or towards the end of his life?
- Compare and Contrast: Robespierre was a huge fan of Rousseau and his beliefs. How are the two similar? How are they different?
- Debate It: Create a character analysis of Maximilien Robespierre. How should he be remembered by history? Cite specific facts from your character analysis to defend your answer.

Sources/places to learn more

1. Israel, Jonathan. *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre*. Princeton University Press, March 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4008-4999-4.
2. Jones, Colin. "The Overthrow of Maximilien Robespierre and the "Indifference" of the People." *The American Historical Review*, vol 119, issue 3, pp 689-713, June 2014. Doi: 10.1093/ahr/119.3.689.



3. Jordan, David P. *The Revolutionary Career of Maximilien Robespierre*. The University of Chicago Press, 1989. ISBN: 0-226-41037-4.
4. Lynch, Kevin. "A Plagued Mind: The Justification of Violence within the Principles of Maximilien Robespierre." Providence College, Spring 2013.
5. McPhee, Peter. *Robespierre: A Revolutionary Life*. Yale University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-300-11811-7.