Founding Fathers: Who Should Be Represented on United States Currency?

**Civics EOC Benchmarks:**

SS.7.C.1.6 Interpret the intentions of the Preamble of the Constitution.

SS.7.C.1.8 Explain the viewpoints of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists regarding the ratification of the Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights.

For this decision-making lesson, students will research four Founding Fathers and determine which one should appear on a future U. S. banknote. Students will use their civics textbooks and other resources to rank their choices and explain how they reached that decision.

**Problem**

Which Founding Father should be represented on U. S. currency?

**Alternatives**

Oliver Ellsworth, John Dickinson, George Mason, Charles Cotesworth Pinkney

**Criteria**

Education and career choice(s), role in the formation of the United States, impact of Federalist or Antifederalist viewpoints, and service to the United States after the Constitutional Convention

**Decision**

How were the Founding Fathers ranked? How was that decision reached?

Read the letter from Our Founding Fathers. Discuss the problem (which Founding Father should be depicted on a future banknote), the alternatives (Oliver Ellsworth, John Dickinson, George Mason, and Charles Cotesworth Pinkney) and the criteria (education, occupation, service to the United States after the Constitutional Convention)

1. Use the link below to review the most famous Founding Fathers and discuss their impact on the formation of the United States:
   1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rxMBNw1pXc>
   2. Discuss the names of Founding Fathers that are familiar. Point out that there are many Founding Fathers whose names are not familiar to us.
2. Discuss the role that the Founding Fathers played in the creation of a new, stronger United States government as outlined in the Constitution.

Remind students that the opening statement of the Constitution, The Preamble, explains the reasons why the Framers of the Constitution made our government a republic.

* 1. A review of the key components of the preamble can be found at <https://kids.laws.com/preamble-of-the-constitution>

1. Review the list of people whose faces have appeared on U. S. banknotes at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_on_United_States_banknotes>
   1. Note that people other than Founding Fathers have appeared on banknotes including one woman (Martha Washington).
      1. Review a few of the people depicted on the notes. Point out the titles held by these individual and discuss the different types of duties they performed in service to their country.
   2. There are many types of banknotes. Federal Reserve Notes are the notes currently used in the United States.
2. Show pictures (on the lesson plan below) of the Founding Fathers who have not been honored by having their faces on United States currency. Explain that they will research each one and make a decision for the Our Founding Fathers.
3. Provide students with the decision-making matrix or note-taking tool, and review the alternatives and criteria. Use the link below to research each of the Founding Fathers
   1. <https://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/founding-fathers>
   2. Discuss the skills each of these men had and how they needed certain skills in the personal jobs and in their work as a founding father.
4. View the videos about each of the Founding Fathers on the matrix. Stop frequently to discuss the criteria and take notes.
   1. Oliver Ellsworth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tazUtjW4uDQ>
   2. John Dickinson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwiPGINerSk>
   3. George Mason <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lBuMhbWaL2U> (this is a student-created presentation; it is worth viewing not only for the factual information but the example of presenting research)
   4. Charles Cotesworth Pinkney <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngMMEEOJhm0>
5. Working in groups, students discuss the criteria for each Founding Father. Which Founding Father meets the criteria for being depicted on U. S. currency? Why? Rank the choices from highest to lowest.
6. Encourage students to discuss their processes for making their choices. What did they do first? After that?
7. Groups write a letter to explaining how they made their choices.

Extension/ideas:

* Have each group create a presentation explaining how they made their choices.
* Research other little-known Founding Fathers
* Visit the Colonial Williamsburg website and play Name That Founding Father
  + <http://www.history.org/kids/games/foundingfather.cfm>
* Learn more about the United States government at ReadWorks: <https://www.readworks.org/article/United-States-Government/56b179e0-ae31-4a2f-b277-8bf0073b98c6#!articleTab:content/contentSection:33c29eba-a072-47f4-a783-7b55b90768ea/>
* Learn more about Florida’s Government at MyFlorida: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Welcome/index.cfm?CFID=88710252&CFTOKEN=77daf0e524e37ca0-AEF91F6A-5056-B837-1AD176EF3BEC1540>
* Have students role play the founding fathers and debate which one should have his face on a future banknote.

Differentiation:

* Reduce alternatives and/or criteria.
* Increase alternatives and/or criteria.
* Provide note-taking tools with some of the information from textbooks, videos, and/or web articles already filled in.

