Emerging American Identity (1765–1865)

How do we define our identity as Americans? How do many diverse cultures come together to form the basis of this American identity? What will it become in the future? During this course, participants will examine how the concept of an American identity began in the colonial period and continues to evolve and transform with each generation of Americans. Through inquiry-based analysis of primary sources while exploring throughout the Colonial Williamsburg Historic Area, teachers examine how that identity influenced American citizens to shape and change the Republic through the 1860s.

During the week, teachers will:

- Chart the evolution of citizenship and American identity from the American Revolution through the U.S. Civil War and make connections to present-day United States.
- Evaluate the way historical events from 1765 to 1865 have impacted American identity.
- Apply instructional strategies that encourage civil discourse from multiple perspectives using primary and secondary sources.
- Create opportunities for continued professional development in social studies education with fellow teachers and Colonial Williamsburg educators.
- Identify and analyze four pairs of seemingly contradictory American values that, while in tension, influence the course of American history.

Compelling (Essential) Questions

- What did freedom mean to the nation’s founders, and how did it change over time?
- Did the American Revolution accomplish its goals?
- What does it mean to be an American? How does this impact one’s identity?
Arrival/Travel Day

4:00–7:00 p.m. Teachers arrive and check in at hotel

7:00 p.m. Welcome and Orientation
          Introduce Value Tensions

Dinner on Own
Day 1
Jamestown and Yorktown

Morning Value Tension Focus: Common Wealth vs. Private Wealth
Afternoon Value Tension Focus: Unity vs. Diversity

7–8:15 a.m. Breakfast, drop-in
8:15 a.m. Bus to Jamestown
8:30 a.m. A Charter to the Virginia Land Company
9:00 a.m. Arrive at Historic Jamestowne
9:15 a.m. Guided tour of Jamestowne’s History
10:45 a.m. Meet a Person of the Past
11:45 a.m. Lunch and Exploration Time
12:45 p.m. Depart Yorktown
1:30 p.m. Museum of the American Revolution and Yorktown Gallery Tour
3:30 p.m. Yorktown Battlefield
5:30 p.m. Depart Yorktown for Williamsburg
6:00 p.m. Dinner on Own
Day 2
Colonial Virginia: Our British Legacy, 1765
Value Tension Focus: Unity vs. Diversity

Supporting Questions:
- Who were the colonists on the eve of the American Revolution and what elements shaped their perspectives regarding being subjects and citizens?
- How do we know what we know about people who lived in the past?
- How do issues of power, wealth, and morality influence exploration and colonization?

Quotation: “All and every persons being our Subjects, which shall dwell and inhabit within every or any of the said colonies and every of their children Shall have and enjoy all the Liberties, Franchises, and Immunities within any of our other dominions, to all Intents and Purposes, as if they had been abiding and born, within this our Realm of England, or any other of our said Dominions.”
—Virginia Land Company Charter, 1606

7–8:00 a.m. Breakfast, drop-in

8:00 a.m. Welcome and Introduction to the Day

8:15 a.m. Orientation Walk
On this stroll through town, learn about the geography and significance of eighteenth-century Williamsburg. Explore how Colonial Williamsburg as a museum has come to feed the human spirit by sharing America’s enduring story, and pick up tricks to find your way as you explore throughout the week.

9:30 a.m. Native Americans: Contact to American Revolution
During the eighteenth century, Cherokee delegations traveled to Williamsburg to negotiate trade agreements and alliances. Members of local tribes, such as the Nottoway and Pamunkey, also came to Williamsburg as students, peddlers of wares, and enlistees for Virginia forces in times of conflict. View colonial Virginia through Native American eyes as you experience how Indian delegations represented an abundance of distinct cultures, languages, religions, and unique world views.

10:15 a.m. Break and Travel

10:30 a.m. Eighteenth-Century Agriculture
Tobacco was the lifeblood of Virginia’s colonial economy. Investigate how this 13-month crop was cultivated and transported, as well as the role of enslaved Virginians working in the cultivation of this "green gold."

11:15 a.m. Break and Travel
11:50 a.m.  Resolved, An American Experiment
A thought-provoking and playful museum theatre experience unfolds around you as our troupe of diverse actors explores the events of the 5th Virginia Convention. Become a part of the story as a Member of Parliament, a Burgess, and maybe even Patrick Henry relive and reexamine the moment Virginia said yes to American Independence.

12:30 p.m.  Resolved Debrief

1:00 p.m.  Tavern Lunch

2:30 p.m.  Stories Objects Tell
Work with Colonial Williamsburg archaeologists at an excavation site. How are the objects identified? What can objects tell us about the evolution of a site and the people who lived and worked there?

4:00 p.m.  Break and Travel

4:15 p.m.  Meet a Person of the Past: An Enslaved Virginian
Meet an enslaved Virginian who lived in eighteenth-century Williamsburg. Discuss what their life and work was like in the capital city and how it compared to that of the enslaved living in rural areas.

5:00 p.m.  Teacher Collaboration
You know your students best! Work with other teachers to identify ways to use the Institute materials, content, and strategies in your classroom.

5:30 p.m.  Dinner on Own
Day 3
Mercantile Economy and Political Unrest

Value Tension Focus: Common Wealth vs. Private Wealth

Supporting Questions:
- How were colonial Virginians connected to the global economy?
- What key events led to the American Revolution and how did they impact the nation as a whole?
- What was the role of gender in the home and in politics?
- What factors did Virginians consider when making their choices regarding independence from Great Britain?

Quotations:
“He that commands the sea, commands the trade, and he that is Lord of the Trade of the world is lord of the wealth of the world.”

“The right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy's fire ... I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.”
— George Washington, letter to his brother, May 31, 1754

7–8:15 a.m.  Breakfast, drop-in

8:15 a.m.  Bus to Historic Area

8:30 a.m.  Trades Tour Experience
Explore how trade shops created and maintained connections within the community from the point of view of a local tradesperson.

10:30 a.m.  Break and Travel

10:45 a.m.  Meet a Person of the Past: A Local Business Person
Stepping into the role of an apprentice, explore the global mercantile economy with the help of a colonial Virginian well-acquainted with its intricacies. Discover how connections in the community and across the globe impacted the supply and demand of goods and services. How was business transacted in the eighteenth century? How did the events of the American Revolution influence these practices?
11:45 a.m. Lunch Voucher and Exploration in Historic Area
Locations open for exploration are designated by flags. Check out the Colonial Williamsburg Explorer app for more details, hours, and special events

1:00 p.m. Committees of Correspondence
Join or Die! On the eve of the American Revolution, thirteen disparate colonies came together with a common goal: to protect their rights as freeborn English subjects. Investigate how the Committees of Correspondence were a first attempt to bring the colonies together, and how these committees helped unite the colonies into a new country.

1:45 p.m. Break

2:00 p.m. Introduction to Rights and Controversies
John Adams once estimated that, on the eve of Revolution, a third of people had been patriots, a third loyalists, and a third undecided. As war broke out in the North, Virginians had to decide whether to declare their independence from Great Britain, or remain colonial subjects of the British Empire. Take on the role of an eighteenth-century Virginian, discuss your stance on independence with like-minded, and prepare for open debate on the floor of the House of Burgesses.

2:45 p.m. Break and Travel

3:00 p.m. Williamsburg at War
Enlist with the Virginia State Garrison Regiment! Sign the rolls and muster in to experience the rations, work, and daily life of a soldier during the American Revolution.

4:00 p.m. Self-Guided Exploration in the Historic Area
During this time, we recommend visiting the Governor’s Palace for a self-led tour, as this will be your best opportunity to do so during the week.

5:00 p.m. Dinner on own
Day 4  
Revolution to New Republic  
*Value Tension Focus: Law vs. Ethics*

Supporting Questions:
- How were families and friends impacted by the decision to declare independence from Great Britain?
- How did the colonists evolve from British subjects to American citizens?
- Why do people create, construct, and change governments?
- As the United States expanded, what effect did the diversity of ideals have on the nation?
- How did the expansion westward increase the possibilities for U.S. citizens?

Quotations:

> “Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle.”
> — Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801

> “...But what do we mean by the American Revolution? The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments, of their duties and obligations... This radical change in the principles, sentiments, and affections of the people was the real American Revolution.”
> — John Adams, letter to Hezekiah Niles, editor of *The Register*, 1818

7–8:00 a.m.  **Breakfast, drop-in**

8:00 a.m.  **Bus to Historic Area**

8:15 a.m.  **Rights and Controversies: A Debate for Independence**  
On May 15, 1776, a group of men met in the former Hall of the House of Burgesses to determine the future of Virginia. Should Virginians remain subjects of the British crown or become citizens of a new nation? Recreate the debate about independence and see if your decision matches theirs.

8:50 a.m.  **Brief Capitol Walkthrough for Photos/Q&A**

9:20 a.m.  **Break and Travel**

10:00 a.m.  **Meet a Person of the Past: Lady Dunmore & Martha Washington**  
Join Lady Dunmore and Martha Washington as they discuss the meanings of loyalty and patriotism in June 1775.

11:15 a.m.  **Lunch Voucher and Exploration in Historic Area**  
Locations open for exploration are designated by flags. Check out the Colonial Williamsburg Explorer app for more details, hours, and special events

2:00 p.m.  **Coded Messages: President Jefferson & Colonel Lewis**  
Use President Jefferson’s codes and ciphers to aid Colonel Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their exploration of America’s new lands to the west.
2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. **Westward Expansion through Maps**
During the nineteenth century, Americans’ imaginations were captured by the idea of moving west for land and a new beginning. Using maps to trace the routes Americans took westward, examine and discuss the different motivations people had for braving this often hazardous journey.

4:00 p.m. **Colonial Williamsburg Education Resource Library**
Explore the rich resources available through the Colonial Williamsburg Education Resource Library and learn how they can be used to supplement your curriculum.

4:45 p.m. **Teacher Collaboration**
You know your students best! Work with other teachers to identify ways to use the Institute materials, content, and strategies in your classroom.

5:15 p.m. **Dinner on Own**
Day 5
The Early Nineteenth Century: Revolution Realized?
Value Tension Focus: Freedom vs. Equality

Supporting Questions:
- How did slavery evolve throughout the 19th century? How did its evolution ignite the nation?
- What strategies are helpful for discussing and teaching controversial issues in the classroom?
- What role did Williamsburg play in the Civil War?

Quotation: "What have you to gain by division and dissension? Delude not yourselves with the belief that a breach once made may be afterwards repaired. If the Union is once severed, the line of separation will grow wider and wider, and the controversies which are now debated and settled in the halls of legislation will then be tried in fields of battle and determined by sword. Neither should you deceive yourselves with the hope that the first line of separation would be the permanent one, and that nothing but harmony and concord would be found in the new associations formed upon the dissolution of this Union."
—Andrew Jackson, Farewell Address, March 4, 1837

7–8:15 a.m. Breakfast, drop-in

8:15 a.m. Bus to Session Location

8:30 a.m. Nineteenth-Century Issues
Explain how competing sets of values (law vs. ethics, private wealth vs. commonwealth, freedom vs. equality and unity vs. diversity) fostered tension and conflict throughout the 19th century. Analyze primary source materials to learn more about the issues faced during the 1800s, uncover competing perspectives, and present information gathered from primary sources.

9:30 a.m. Break

9:45 a.m. Evolution of Slavery in the Antebellum South Walking Tour
As the new nation grew and evolved, so did the institution of slavery. Join us on a walking tour of Colonial Williamsburg and discover how the changing economy and shifting political movements of the early nineteenth century caused massive changes to the slave labor system of the south.

10:45 a.m. Meet a Person of the Past: Nat Turner
“Something was about to happen that would terminate in fulfilling the great promise that had been made to me.” Learn from Nat Turner about his great promise.

11:15 a.m. Nat Turner Debrief and Classroom Connections
Noon  |  Lunch Voucher and Exploration in Historic Area  
Locations open for exploration are designated by flags. Check out the Colonial Williamsburg Explorer app for more details, hours, and special events

1:30 p.m.  |  Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues  
It is incumbent on the Colonial Williamsburg interpretive staff to present and discuss controversial topics on a daily basis. An accurate depiction of our nation’s history requires that many sensitive issues, including slavery, cultural conflict, and women’s roles, must be included as a part of the story. Interpreters and other staff are confronted with the challenge of addressing these subjects in an informative, non-confrontational, and sensitive manner. Share ideas with some of these individuals, learn about their techniques, and discuss how to transfer these lessons to the classroom.

2:15 p.m.  |  Break

2:30 p.m.  |  Donor Recognition

3:00 p.m.  |  Checkout and Departure Procedures

3:15 p.m.  |  Application Session  
Drawing from previous successes, your Colonial Williamsburg Master Teacher demonstrates ways to bring history to life in the classroom using the experiences and materials gained from participating in the Teacher Institute.

4:00 p.m.  |  Break

4:15 p.m.  |  Civil War Walking Tour  
“The invaders ransacked the house from cellar to roof; there was no one to ask McClellan to protect it. I have never looked upon such a more deplorable picture of the ravages of war than when standing amid the litter of half destroyed books, papers and documents . . . Shattered marble busts and statuary, fragments of ornamental book cases, heaps of old engravings, loose manuscripts, vellum bound volumes of precious colonial newspapers… mixed with straw and mud on every side. Hundreds of heavy-booted and spurred cavalrmen had played football with every thing of value in the house.” — An eyewitness, in reference to the home of Robert Saunders, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1862

5:30 p.m.  |  Tavern Dinner
Day 6
An Ever-Changing World

Supporting Question:
• How do we raise up student leaders to be active, participating citizens?

Quotation: “America’s leadership must be guided by the lights of learning and reason.”
—President John F. Kennedy, undelivered speech to the Dallas Citizens Council, November 22, 1963

7–8:15 a.m. Check Out & Breakfast, drop-in

8:15 a.m. Bus to Session Location

8:30 a.m. Characteristics of An Effective Leader: Yesterday and Today
Study the characteristics and styles of effective leaders. How do the individuals you’ve met and studied this week fit these styles?

9:30 a.m. Break

9:45 a.m. Meet a Person of the Past: A Freed Slave’s Journey
Meet Jenny, an enslaved woman freed by the Thirteenth Amendment. Discuss with her the hardships of life in the post-emancipation South during Reconstruction.

10:30 a.m. Group Photo

10:45 a.m. End-of-Week Lesson Idea Sharing
Share ideas for classroom applications with small groups and through larger discussions, highlighting favorite lesson plan ideas and reflections.

11:30 a.m. Graduation and Wrap-Up

1:00 p.m. Departures Begin