

## Curriculum Project

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### Title: **“Let’s Write Our Charter”**

#### Summary:

There are multiple purposes defined in this curriculum project. Primarily, I used the ASEAN charter document to introduce my middle school students to the form and function of a charter in order to generate cooperation and personal responsibility within the classroom.

1. In the initial phase of the project, we define and study “charter” and become familiar with vocabulary, such as: sovereign, grantee, rights, and privileges. Our primary sources for this are the internet. (We used Wikipedia and Dictionary.com.)

To familiarize my students with vocabulary, we spent a class discussing who sovereigns are in different settings. Of course, we used different levels within our own school system, our town and then the concept was broadened to include sovereigns in the state and the nation.

2. Then it was time to come up with our lists of “rights” and “privileges” with the understanding these are granted by the sovereign in many cases. We spent another class period discussing the differences between the two, and then the students brainstormed ideas for both

categories. These identified items were categorized, discussed and, in the case of privileges, ranked from lowest to highest.

Our charter lessons came after we had read the student handbook and student contract the first two days of school. We had spent a great deal of time discussing behavior, respect, and the educational environment. Historically, I receive some quite disruptive students, so it is common for us to spend significant time at the beginning of the year (or quarter or semester) to set expectations. Frequently, students feel a great deal of relief and reduced stress in my class for a variety of reasons, but in short order they are believers in themselves and truly want to succeed. Consequently, the ideas they come up with for these two components of a charter are both very accurate, oriented towards their own success, and pro-school. Their contributions created wonderful class discussion in which all participated, and even disagreed without arguing. It was easy to tell how proud they were of their ideas and the fact that they were able to reach consensus.

3. Meanwhile, intertwined in our charter creation, we are teaching North Carolina History. Online sources assist in this component of the project. From the North Carolina History Project I get information on the Queen Elizabeth's 1584 charter to Sir Walter Raleigh and the Carolina Charter of 1663. There are two documents I use from the Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library Avalon Project. A Carolina charter we use is "A Declaration and Proposals of the Lord Proprietor of Carolina, August 25 - September 4, 1663. We use highlighters and dissect it point by point to understand exactly what is being granted and what is being expected. The actual "Charter of Carolina; June 30, 1665" is a wordy document, and using a version I condense, they are able to

hear the language structure and style of the era. Surprisingly, my students attempted to make their charter sound Old English when organizing the rights and privileges they had identified.

4. Throughout the time it takes to complete this project, I am also using the ASEAN charter booklet to show them the structure and components of the ASEAN charter. We identify the participating countries and locate them on the world map. Our class then tries to evaluate why countries in this region would need to have a charter, what it could benefit and how. Their type of government and resources are identified. Considering this research, the students try to analyze similarities and differences, and ultimately evaluate how and why the ASEAN charter benefits its members. Throughout this discussion we relate this to our own personal class situation and determine the benefits we receive by having our own charter. How are we like countries in southeast Asia? Their opinion is important to the discussion, but more importantly, the confidence to speak it is what I seek.

These documents that we research are confusing to my students so our pace is not very rapid. We have much discussion and check for understanding on a regular basis. They are learning the technical aspects of colonizing an area while learning about early colonization of our state. The effort is to develop an understanding of common principles that not only govern a state or nation, but a classroom as well.

5. This unit took almost three weeks for completion. Two final days are dedicated to the actual writing of the charter. Using their sticky notes that identify the rights and privileges, the students then place them in an order to create sentences which were then transferred to a formal

document. This is placed up on the wall in the room for all to see. Our introduction identifies to whom the charter applies followed by what the inherent rights of the students are and the consequent privileges. It is far superior to any mission statement in its intent.

This is a living document and since it has been composed, we have had occasion to refer to it several times. It is helpful in creating a culture in which all students can be learners and one in which their rights as well as classmates' rights are protected. Everyone in the room has certain unalienable rights and my students identified them based on their charter research and are now working on accomplishing all they are entitled to by virtue of having it in their charter.

#### Curriculum Standards:

English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) Common Core State Standards(CCSS, 2010):

Standard 10: Reading and comprehension; Objective 5.01

Standard 4: Craft and Structure; Objective 6.01

Standard 5: “ “ ; Objective 2.01

Standard 2: Writing Standards; Objective 2.02

Standard 4: “ “ ; Objective 3.02

Standard 7 & 8 “ “ ; Objective 2.02

#### Social Studies Essential Standards:

8.H.1 - Apply historical thinking to understand the creation and development of N.C. and the U.S.

Objectives: 8.H.1.1, 1.2,1.3,1.5

8.C&G.1 - Analyze how democratic ideals shaped government in N.C. and U.S.

Objectives: 8.C&G1.1, 1.2

8.C&G.2 - Understand the role that citizen participation plays in societal change.

Objectives: 8.C&G.2.2

Resources:

Charter of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN)

<http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/25/entry>

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/statech.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/statech.asp)

<http://dictionary.reference.com/>

<http://www.wikipedia.org/>

<https://www.cia.gov/>

[www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)