



Lesson Plan 1, Task 2 Close Reading Guide:

Ho Chi Minh "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam"

(NOTE: Make sure to have a copy of the original text)

Text Under Discussion	Guiding Questions	Answers and Notes:
<p>"All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness... Those are undeniable truths."</p>	<p>Why does the author choose to include this reference? What are the implications?</p>	
<p>"Nevertheless, for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow-citizens... they have deprived our people of every democratic liberty."</p>	<p>Why does Ho use the words "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity"? What is the "Fatherland"?</p>	
<p>"They have enforced inhuman laws; they have set up three distinct political regimes in the North, the Center and the South of Vietnam in order to wreck our national unity and prevent our people from being United... To weaken our race they have forced us to use opium and alcohol."</p>	<p>In this section, what evidence does Ho give for the French government's violation of their espoused ideals?</p>	
<p>"In the fields of economics, they have fleeced us to the backbone, impoverished our people, and devastated our land."</p>	<p>In this section, what does "fleeced" mean? What is Ho saying has happened between the French and Vietnamese in the exchange of goods and services for money?</p>	
<p>"They have robbed us of our rice fields, our mines, our forests, and our raw materials."</p>	<p>In this section, why does Ho say the French have "robbed" the Vietnamese of rice fields and raw materials?</p>	

<p>"They have monopolized the issuing of bank-notes and the export trade."</p>	<p>What does the term "monopolized" mean? What is Ho's accusation?</p>	
<p>"They have invented numerous unjustifiable taxes and reduced our people, especially our peasantry, to a state of extreme poverty. They have hampered the prospering of our national bourgeoisie; they have mercilessly exploited our workers."</p>	<p>What does "bourgeoisie" mean? How have the French "hampered" their prosperity?</p>	
<p>"In the autumn of 1940, when the Japanese Fascists violated Indochina's territory to establish new bases in their fight against the Allies, the French imperialists went down on their bended knees and handed over our country to them."</p>	<p>What important events were occurring in 1940?</p>	
<p>"Thus, from that date, our people were subjected to the double yoke of the French and the Japanese...The French colonialists either fled or surrendered, showing that not only were they incapable of "protecting" us, but that, in the span of five years, they had twice sold our country to the Japanese."</p>	<p>Why does Ho blame the French?</p>	
<p>"On several occasions before March 9, the Vietminh League urged the French to ally themselves with it against the Japanese. Instead of agreeing to this proposal, the French colonialists so intensified their terrorist activities...the Vietminh League help many Frenchmen to cross the frontier, rescued some of them from Japanese jails, and protected French lives and property."</p>	<p>How does Ho characterize the Vietminh as compared to the French?</p>	

<p>"From the autumn of 1940, our country had in fact ceased to be a French colony and had become a Japanese possession."</p>	<p>Why does Ho include this political technicality of ownership through occupation?</p>	
<p>"The French have fled, the Japanese have capitulated, Emperor Bao Dai has abdicated. Our people have broken the chains which for nearly a century have fettered them and have won independence for the Fatherland. Our people at the same time have overthrown the monarchic regime that has reigned supreme for dozens of centuries."</p>	<p>Why does Ho mention the history of their struggle under different rulers?</p>	
<p>"we abolish all the special rights the French have unlawfully acquired in our Fatherland."</p>	<p>How does Ho use legal reasoning in this section?</p>	
<p>"A people who have courageously opposed French domination for more than eighty years, a people who have fought side by side with the Allies against the Fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent."</p>	<p>Why does Ho mention the Vietminh involvement with the Allies against the Japanese?</p>	
<p>"For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has the right to be a free and independent country and in fact it is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty."</p>	<p>What seventeenth-century foundational U.S. document of historical significance does this conclusion reflect?</p>	

