

James Forten: Philadelphia Citizen, Activist, and Entrepreneur



Component	Description
Title of Lesson	James Forten: Philadelphia Citizen, Activist, and Entrepreneur
Content/Subject Area	US History
Context	<p>James Forten (1766-1842) was an abolitionist, entrepreneur, soldier with the Philadelphia militia, one of the thirty-five black men in the Second Pennsylvania Brigade of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, sailmaker, and one of wealthiest people in Philadelphia. He was born free, to free black parents, in Philadelphia and attended a Quaker school, the Anthony Benezet's School, learning how to read and write, and acquiring the essence of the Quaker principles about the universality of humankind.</p> <p>After his father died, Forten left school prematurely to seek employment in order to help his family. He spent several years at sea, enlisting in 1781 on the <i>Royal Louis</i>. Upon return to Philadelphia in 1786, Forten became an apprentice to Robert Bridges, a white sailmaker, who soon made him foreman of his shop, and by 1798 Forten owned the shop. He employed more than forty workers, black and white; Forten's personal fortune soon grew to an estimated \$100,000, one of the wealthiest men in Philadelphia.</p> <p>James Forten was dedicated to the cause of racial equality. Forten joined Richard Allen in 1800 in circulating a petition calling on the U.S. Congress to emancipate slaves. During the War of 1812, he organized, with the assistance of Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, a black volunteer force of 2,500 men for the defense of Philadelphia. His efforts throughout the 1820s helped to gain important black support for the radical abolitionist movement, and he was closely associated with William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Weld. Extremely influential with Garrison, Forten is credited with convincing the future publisher of the <i>Liberator</i> to call for emancipation and equality rather than colonization. In 1833 Forten helped to organize the American Antislavery Society and was active in the society until 1841, when he became ill. A supporter of the women's suffrage movement and temperance movements, he founded, in 1839, the American Moral Reform Society, which he established for the "promotion of Education, Temperance, economy, and Universal Liberty."</p> <p>Forten married and had children who were active in the abolitionist movement, as was his granddaughter, Charlotte Forten Grimke.</p>

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Duration	1 class period
Objective	SWBAT discover the importance of James Forten's effort in the abolitionist movement in order to analyze his public plea for the for the eradication of slavery.
Standards	<p>PA Academic Standards 8.2.9.B Identify and analyze primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to PA 8.3.9.B Compare the impact of historical documents and artifacts</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5 Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.</p>
Anticipatory Set	<p>Show 2-minute YouTube video, historian Erica Dunbar on James Forten. (https://youtu.be/MqojwFUll6g)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>History Making Productions' <i>Philadelphia, The Great Experiment: Disorder, 1820-1854</i> (show only the first 7 minutes discussing James Forten) (http://bit.ly/Disorder_1820-1854)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss highlights about Forten from videos: childhood, how he became wealthy, position in Philadelphia community, use of wealth, etc.
Direct Instruction	1- Using background information, review briefly the life of James Forten's life. Brainstorm pivotal moments and events in his life with the students. Discuss why

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	<p>he was unique, what was important to him based on the information given, and how he made a difference.</p> <p>2- Show 2 -minute YouTube video on James Forten, Philadelphia: The Great Experiment (excerpt) by historian, Erica Dunbar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSSSOpm-ZHw)</p>
Guided Practice (and/or Cooperative Practice)	<p>Distribute a copy of the James Forten letters (originally a pamphlet) to each student. Have students read in small groups and discuss the meaning of each of the five letters independent of each other.</p> <p>(http://oieahc.wm.edu/wmq/Jan07/winch.pdf)</p>
Independent Practice	<p>Distribute a copy of the document Analysis Worksheet for students to complete independently.</p> <p>(http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/document.html)</p>
Closure	<p>Review students' answers for the Document Analysis Worksheet.</p> <p>Discuss differences that may have arisen.</p>
Assessment	<p>Exit Ticket: Why, by standards of the times in which Forten lived, and even by today's standards, would James Forten be considered an extraordinary man. What were his most important accomplishments.</p>
Key Terms	<p>Abolitionist, entrepreneur, Quaker principles</p>
Resources and Materials	<p>James Forten letters (pamphlet) to the Senate of Pennsylvania http://oieahc.wm.edu/wmq/Jan07/winch.pdf</p> <p>Document Analysis Worksheet http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/document.html</p> <p>History Making Productions' video, Philadelphia, The Great Experiment: Disorder, 1820-1854 Show first 7 minutes on James Forten... http://bit.ly/Disorder_1820-1854</p> <p>YouTube Videos on James Forten:</p> <p>1-Black American Inventors-- James Forten https://youtu.be/MqojwFUll6g</p> <p>2- Philadelphia: The Great Experiment Webisode Excerpt on James Forten narrated by historian, Erica Dunbar https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSSSOpm-ZHw</p>