



What Should New York Do?

This inquiry is a prelude to students' November 17 viewing of *Fateful Hour* at the Bardavon. Complete the lessons before the performance, whenever they align with your curriculum. Students will know the historical outcome; investigating the arguments beforehand will help them understand the debate presented onstage.

The inquiry also works as a standalone assignment in years without a performance. Viewing and follow-up assignments are being developed separately by another teacher.

Learning goal: Students will compare arguments about New York's ratification of the Constitution and defend a recommendation using historical evidence.

The following outlines offer suggested pacing for each set of materials. Each allows approximately two class periods, combining group work and independent practice. Please adapt them as appropriate for your students and classroom.

Option 1 Slides and Source Readings

Materials: Documents 1 and 2, or Spanish versions 1S and 2S.

Period 1 Introduce and investigate

1. Present the fictional Marcus–John Jay conversation and establish the problem facing New York.
2. Students identify concerns and develop investigation questions in small groups.
3. Discuss bias and model how to analyze one source.
4. Groups begin the readings, recording each speaker's position and supporting evidence.

Period 2 Decide and explain

1. Finish source analysis and share findings from all four speakers.
2. Students independently choose a recommendation, consider possible outcomes, and support their decision with at least two documents.
3. Review the historical outcome.
4. Students write the two-paragraph letter to John Jay, explaining whether they defend Marcus's initial opposition or have changed their position.

Assessment: Source responses, recommendation, and letter demonstrate a clear position supported by evidence.

Option 2 Paper Inquiry

Materials: Document 3 or Spanish version 3S.

Period 1 Define the problem and investigate

1. Read the fictional opening and discuss Marcus's concerns.



2. Students identify issues, develop questions in groups, and consider how perspective affects their thinking.
3. Model one source response.
4. Groups begin the readings and analysis. Students record their own responses.

Period 2 Evaluate and respond

1. Finish the readings and discuss competing arguments.
2. Students independently summarize their findings and choose a recommendation supported by at least two documents.
3. Read the historical outcome.
4. Students complete the two-paragraph letter, explaining which concerns were addressed, which remain, and whether their position has changed.

Assessment: Source responses and the letter demonstrate accurate interpretation, relevant evidence, and reasoning.

Option 3 Guided Close Reading

Materials: Document 4 or Spanish version 4S.

Period 1 Model and practice

1. Introduce students' role as advisers to a New York delegate and review the decision options.
2. Model the reading routine with Document A: examine the historical excerpt, identify a claim, and consult the simplified explanation.
3. Use the vocabulary support and answer the first questions together.
4. Students work in pairs or small groups on Document B, recording their own answers.

Period 2 Compare and recommend

1. Groups work through Documents C and D with teacher support as needed.
2. Discuss where the speakers agree and disagree.
3. Students independently complete the recommendation using at least three documents, including one quotation, and address an opposing argument.
4. Review the historical outcome: New York ratified on July 26, 1788, by a vote of 30–27, while recommending amendments.

Assessment: Reading responses and the final recommendation demonstrate accurate interpretation and supporting evidence.

One-period adaptation: Select readings or questions and shorten the written response. Allow two periods for the full assignment.