

8th Grade U.S History - The Nullification Crisis

Is there ever a justifiable reason to break a law?

Standards and Content	Texas Standards: TEKS 8.17 B, "explain constitutional issues arising over the issue of states' rights, including the Nullification Crisis..."
Staging the Compelling Question	Class discussion questions: Are all laws fair? Should laws have to be fair for everyone? Should people have to follow laws that they feel harm them, or are not fair?

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
When has a law been ignored before?	Do some laws benefit some and hurt others?	If you break a law, does it cause conflict?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Write a small paragraph analyzing the nullification crisis (1832) and compare the crisis to a time today when they personally have chosen not to follow a rule or law (@ school, home, etc...)	Analyze a collection of three images (2 political cartoons & 1 painting) For every image use the corresponding image analysis sheet to complete the analysis	Create a Venn diagram comparing the two key figures during the Nullification Crisis "John C. Calhoun & Andrew Jackson". Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences: "What caused the Nullification crisis? How did Jackson and Calhoun play a major role?"
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: Britannica Reading on The Nullification Crisis Source B: Historical Summary	Source A: Political cartoon 1 for analysis Source B: Political Cartoon 2 for analysis Source C: Image 1 (Protective Tariff Poster, 1828)	Source A: Jackson biography Source B: Calhoun biography Source C: Jackson vs. Clay and Calhoun – may be difficult reading for some students

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT: Construct a written argument that addresses the compelling question, “is there ever a justifiable reason to break a law”, using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.
	EXTENSION. Create a five section poster identifying the 5 W’s of the Nullification crisis
Taking Informed Action	ASSESS Unit test or quiz on the Nullification Crisis or “The Age of Jackson” ACT Checklist for when to follow a rule? what standards of a rule make it something that should be followed (EX: agreed upon by _____amount of people, it is fair but what is fair, etc.)

**Featured sources are suggested. It may be that these resources are no longer available, and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*

*Is there ever a justifiable reason to break the law?***Overview****Inquiry Description**

This inquiry is designed to have students engage and address the “Nullification Crisis of 1832” in a meaningful way through the use of primary and secondary sources. The teaching of the Nullification crisis is universal throughout the United States, but this particular IDM is designed to address Texas educational standards: TEKS 8.17 B, "explain constitutional issues arising over the issue of states' rights, including the Nullification Crisis...". The IDM centers on building student skills in primary and secondary source analysis skills. The complete IDM mini unit should take between 3 -5 instructional days.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question [Should people have to follow laws that they feel harm them, or are not fair?] students work through supporting question(s), formative performance task(s), and featured source(s) to construct an argument supported by evidence while also acknowledging competing perspectives. The structure of the inquiry is broken into three supporting questions, and three formative performance tasks to help address said questions.

Staging the Compelling Question

Teacher may begin the inquiry by engaging students in a class discussion about fairness. Questions may include: Are all laws fair? Should laws have to be fair to everyone? Should people have to follow laws that they feel harm them or they consider unfair?

Supporting Question 1

The inquiry begins with the supporting question, “When has a law been ignored before?” To address the issue of previous knowledge, the first day of the unit will be spent researching the topic in a broad sense so that students will gain a general understanding of the crisis. It is important that the students have this understanding as the next two days are scaffolded off of this baseline of knowledge. After the students have researched the Nullification Crisis, they write a paragraph in which they connect the crisis to a time in their lives where they have chosen not to follow a rule.

Supporting Question 2

The inquiry continues with Supporting Question 2, “Do some laws benefit some and hurt others?” As students have already gained a baseline understanding of the Nullification Crisis, the second formative performance task moves into document analysis. To guide student thinking, pre-built “analysis pages” should be given to the students to help them analyze the sources. Students will use these guides to analyze two political cartoons and one painting. Questions include: What do you see? Where and when is the image depicting? What is the tone of the image?

Supporting Question 3

The inquiry concludes with Supporting Question 3, “If you break a law, does it cause conflict?” To deepen students’ understanding of the event, students will analyze a broad set of primary and secondary sources to compare and contrast John C. Calhoun & Andrew Jackson. The narrative based sources analyzed on day one and the images analyzed on day two should have given the students the necessary experience and skills to complete a combination of the two. Teachers might encourage students to use the document analysis guides from Supporting Question 2 for any images they encounter. This section concludes with students creating a Venn diagram comparing Jackson and Calhoun, which they use to answer the questions “What causes the Nullification Crisis?” and “How did Jackson and Calhoun play a major role?”

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the Nullification Crisis of 1832. Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument using sources to answer the compelling question, is there ever a justifiable reason to break a law?”

Students’ arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- “There are justifiable reasons to break laws. Some laws are useless and do not help people. ”
- “There are justifiable reasons to break laws. Some laws are designed to help some people, and hurt others. Some taxes do this to people.”
- “There are not justifiable reasons to break laws. Although some laws are not great, they are still law. If you get to pick and choose what law you follow then laws do not work.”

As an extension activity, teachers may have students create a poster on the “5 W’s” of the Nullification Crisis.

Supporting Question 1: Featured Sources

Source A: Britannica Reading on The Nullification Crisis (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/nullification-crisis>)

Source B: Historical Summary (https://historica.fandom.com/wiki/Tariff_of_Abominations)

Supporting Question 2: Featured Sources

Source A: Political cartoon 1 for analysis

(<https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.timetoast.com/public/uploads/photo/10915311/image/4c23d7da900da73c7f018904c2b7c58b>)

Source B: Political Cartoon 2 for analysis

(<https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/12/16/the-happiest-man-in-the-south/>)

Source C: Image 1 (Protective Tariff Poster, 1828)

(<https://www.sutori.com/en/item/tariff-of-1828-may-19th-1828-designed-to-protect-industries-in-the-north-and>)

Supporting Question 3: Featured Sources

Source A: Jackson biography

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/andrew-jackson/>)

Source B: Calhoun biography

(https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Calhoun.htm)

Source C: Jackson vs. Clay and Calhoun

(<https://www.ushistory.org/us/24e.asp#:~:text=Calhoun%20and%20Jackson%20held%20separate,Secretary%20of%20War%2C%20John%20Eaton.>)