

Start a Hetch Hetchy civics inquiry

Choose by what learners can do

Teach students to trace who asks whom for what government action, then distinguish a public request, a proposed bill and an enacted law. Use one historical dispute about water and public land. For selected Grades 6–8 learners who can read or listen to short passages, attribute a claim and explain an answer with a source detail.

Begin with the starting task and the context and sources packet. A learner may support or oppose the water project; agreement is never a scoring criterion. This collection teaches documented institutional action, not a complete civics course or current legal advice.

- Print starting task and context and sources. Keep teacher guide and answers with the teacher.
- Use Lessons and guided practice for two 35–45 minute lessons; timing is a planning estimate.
- Give Independent inquiry, then the separate Short check. Select a focused Next task using the teacher guide.
- Keep Follow-up check and Later revisit for another learning opportunity. Those documents use different sources, but remain within the same case.

Choose access without supplying the reasoning

Offer neutral read-aloud of the paraphrases, larger original scans, typed or spoken responses, or a bilingual glossary. Leave the institution, action, status and evidence choices to the student. Do not require deciphering handwriting to demonstrate civic reasoning. Record support so you know what the response shows.

Complete local materials

The classroom ZIP contains separate student and teacher folders, printable PDFs, adaptable HTML text, all eight petition/resolution scans, the bill image and the government Act PDF. No account or internet connection is needed to finish the supplied tasks once the ZIP is downloaded. HTML files open in a browser; their source can be adapted. Print PDFs at actual size on Letter paper.

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Plan a short sequence

- Before teaching: read the source credits. The six National Archives item records list use as Unrestricted; private petitions are not called federal government works merely because an archive holds them.
- Lesson 1: model the Hypatia request; compare the two actions requested by the Graffort Club.
- Lesson 2: compare the proposed bill with the enacted Act and its map-approval condition.
- Independent inquiry: read the Merced resolution. Check: use the Widows and Orphans petition.
- Respond: give only the selected Next task. Recheck with the Massachusetts resolution; revisit with the Maine resolution.

Source limits to keep visible

These selected letters and resolutions are voices in the dispute, not a poll of everyone affected. None is an Indigenous-authored account. Do not use their absence to infer Indigenous consent or opposition. Do not ask students to invent such a voice. The supplied National Park Service context describes a longer Indigenous relationship with the valley; it does not supply a 1913 position for any community.

The Hypatia original is dated February 5, 1910. A National Archives feature caption gives a different day; use the original and catalog date. The Maine original has no printed date; the catalog identifies 1913 without a known day. A club adopting a resolution makes a club decision; it does not enact a federal law.

Scope and classroom use

Copy or adapt the original Mentor Teaching instructional text for planning and classroom use under the site Terms of Use. Keep historical-source credits with copies and verify rights for any additional material you add. Classroom effectiveness has not been established. This focused collection does not replace local curriculum planning.