Was the Haitian Revolution a Turning Point for Freedom? Causes, Consequences, and Enlightenment Ideals, 1791–1804

Teacher	Educator
School	ULAT Partner
Date	October 17, 2026
Duration	47 minutes
Grade Level	Global History, Grade 10
Instructional Model	Launch-Explore-Discuss
SEL Focus	None

Section 1: 10-Component Plan

1. Title

Was the Haitian Revolution a Turning Point for Freedom? Causes, Consequences, and Enlightenment Ideals, 1791–1804

2. Standards

- **NY 10.2c:** Students will examine the causes and consequences of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) and its relationship to Enlightenment ideas and the French Revolution.
- **NY 10.2:** Students will analyze how political, economic, and social revolutions shaped the modern world, comparing ideals of liberty and equality with their limits.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6:** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1:** Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content, supporting claims with evidence.

3. SEL Inquiry Aim

Aim: Was the Haitian Revolution a turning point for freedom, or did it show the limits of Enlightenment ideals?

4. Objectives

- I can explain at least one cause and one consequence of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) using accurate historical details.
- I can compare the perspectives of two brief historical sources and cite author, date, and evidence.
- I can support a claim about whether the Haitian Revolution fulfilled or exposed limits of Enlightenment ideals, using document evidence.

5. Vocabulary Bridge

English Term	Translation in Haitian Creole	Translation in Spanish	Definition (English)
revolution	revolisyon	revolución	A major, often rapid change in government or society, sometimes through conflict.
enslaved people	moun ki te esklav	personas esclavizadas	People forced into slavery and treated as property; the term centers their humanity rather than their status.
abolition	abolisyon	abolición	The ending of a system, especially the legal ending of slavery.
uprising	soulèvman	levantamiento	An organized act of resistance or revolt by a group against those in power.
independence	endepandans	independencia	Freedom from control by another country; self-rule.
Enlightenment	Syèk Limyè	Ilustración	An 18th-century movement of ideas emphasizing reason, natural rights, liberty, and equality.
perspective	pèspektiv	perspectiva	A person's point of view, shaped by their time, position, and experiences.

6. Materials

- Student Handout A (Support version): 'Freedom in Three Acts' reading, timeline, and Source 1 + Source 2 with sentence stems
- Student Handout B (Core version): 'Freedom in Three Acts' reading, timeline, and Source 1 + Source 2 with comparison organizer
- Student Handout C (Challenge version): 'Freedom in Three Acts' reading, timeline, and Source 1 + Source 2 with perspective-analysis prompts
- Teacher Key (complete answers, citations, and rubric)
- Exit ticket slip (half sheet)
- Chart paper or board for the Discuss circle

- Highlighters and sticky notes

7. Lesson Flow

0-3 min

Teacher: Display the Do Now. Read the aim aloud. Tell students they will read two short historical sources and decide whether the Haitian Revolution was a turning point for freedom. Do not preview answers.

Students: Students write 2–3 sentences: 'The French Revolution declared liberty and equality, yet France still held enslaved people in Saint-Domingue. What question does that raise for you?' Students may use the vocabulary bridge.

Key Questions:

- What question does it raise when a country declares liberty but still holds enslaved people?

3-8 min

Teacher: Launch: Share 2–3 student questions. Introduce the three acts on the timeline (1791 uprising, 1794 abolition, 1802 capture, 1804 independence). Distribute differentiated handouts by neutral title. Model one sentence stem.

Students: Students copy the four timeline dates into their notes and circle the act they think is most important. They turn and talk to a partner about their circled choice.

Key Questions:

- Which of the four dates do you think changed the most for enslaved people, and why?

8-26 min

Teacher: Explore: Students read 'Freedom in Three Acts' and both sources. Circulate and prompt with the key questions. For Support, point to sentence stems. For Challenge, ask students to name each author's position and purpose. Remind students: no role-play; we analyze evidence as historians.

Students: Students read the reading and timeline, annotate Source 1 and Source 2, complete the comparison organizer (author, date, claim, evidence), and draft a claim with one piece of cited evidence.

Key Questions:

- Who wrote this source, when, and what is the author trying to get readers to believe?
- Which details in the reading show a cause, and which show a consequence?
- How does Source 1's perspective differ from Source 2's?

26-40 min

Teacher: Discuss: Facilitate a structured circle or pairs-to-whole-class share. Chart claims and evidence. Push students to cite author and date. Ask students to connect the revolution to Enlightenment ideals and to name one limit.

Students: Students share claims, cite evidence with author and date, and respond to a peer by agreeing, extending, or respectfully challenging with evidence.

Key Questions:

- Did the Haitian Revolution fulfill Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality, or expose their limits?
- Whose perspective is missing from these two sources, and how could that change the story?

40-43 min

Teacher: Transition to the exit ticket. Restate the success criteria. Collect handouts and exit tickets.

Students: Students put materials away and prepare to write independently.

Key Questions:

- What is one cause and one consequence you can prove with evidence?

43-47 min

Teacher: Administer the exit ticket. Read the prompt aloud. Collect slips. Note common patterns for the next lesson.

Students: Students write one cause and one consequence of the Haitian Revolution and support each with evidence from the reading or a source, naming author and date.

Key Questions:

- Which evidence best supports your cause, and which best supports your consequence?

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8. Differentiation Overview

- **ELL:** Use the trilingual vocabulary bridge (English, Haitian Creole, Spanish). Provide sentence stems such as 'One cause was ___ because the reading says ___.' Pair students for oral rehearsal before writing. Allow annotations in the home language.
- **IEP:** Provide the Support handout with a pre-filled timeline, chunked reading (one act per box), bolded key terms, and sentence starters. Offer extended time and a graphic organizer with fewer blanks. Read directions aloud.
- **Advanced:** Use the Challenge handout. Students identify each author's position, purpose, and possible bias, then evaluate which source gives stronger evidence for a claim about Enlightenment ideals. Students must address a counterclaim.

- **Struggling:** Use the Support handout with a completed timeline and guided questions. Students highlight one cause and one consequence in the reading before writing. Teacher checks the claim sentence before the exit ticket.

9. Assessment Plan

Formative: Observation during Explore and Discuss; comparison organizer checked for author, date, claim, and evidence; peer share using sentence stems.

Summative: Exit ticket scored with the rubric: one accurate cause, one accurate consequence, and evidence cited with author and date.

10. Assessment

Explain one cause and one consequence of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804). Support each with evidence from the reading or a source. Name the author and date of any source you use.

Success Criteria:

- Names one accurate cause of the Haitian Revolution (for example, the brutal system of slavery and the influence of Enlightenment and French Revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality).
- Names one accurate consequence of the Haitian Revolution (for example, the 1794 French abolition of slavery in its colonies or the 1804 independence of Haiti under Dessalines).
- Cites specific evidence from the reading or a source and identifies the author and date.
- Writes a clear claim connecting the cause or consequence to Enlightenment ideals or their limits.

Section 2: Global Context

In 1791, the French colony of Saint-Domingue produced roughly 40 percent of the world's sugar and more than half of its coffee, generating enormous wealth for France. That wealth rested on the labor of about 500,000 enslaved Africans — a population nearly ten times the size of the colony's white settler community. When the French Revolution declared that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights" in 1789, enslaved people in Saint-Domingue heard a promise that did not include them. In August 1791, an uprising began that would burn plantations and challenge three empires. Within three years, France abolished slavery in its colonies (1794); within eleven years, Haiti declared independence (1804). Students will examine two brief historical sources — one from a French revolutionary decree and one from a letter attributed to Toussaint Louverture — to compare perspectives and build an evidence-based claim. The lesson's problem: How did Enlightenment ideals and the French Revolution both inspire and contradict the Haitian Revolution, and what were its causes and consequences?

Hook: If a revolution declares that all men are born free and equal, but enslaves half a million people to produce its sugar, whose revolution is it — and who gets to decide?

Section 3: Differentiated Packets

Packet A

Word Bank: Timeline, Cause, Consequence, Enlightenment, Independence, Abolition, Uprising, Leadership

Question 1. The Haitian Revolution had key events between 1791 and 1804. Arrange these four events in chronological order: (A) Toussaint Louverture is captured, (B) Haiti declares independence, (C) enslaved people uprising begins, (D) France abolishes slavery.

- The earliest event happened in _____.
- The second event to occur was _____, which happened in _____.
- The third event was _____, which took place in _____.
- The final event was _____, which occurred in _____.

Answer: Chronological order: (C) enslaved people uprising begins—1791; (D) France abolishes slavery—1794; (A) Toussaint Louverture is captured—1802; (B) Haiti declares independence—1804. Work shown: Students should place 1791 first (the uprising), then 1794 (abolition), then 1802 (capture), then 1804 (independence).

Common error: Students may reverse the order of the abolition (1794) and Toussaint's capture (1802). Remind students that abolition occurred after the uprising but before Toussaint's capture. The independence declaration happened last, in 1804.

Question 2. Study this claim: 'The Haitian Revolution was caused by Enlightenment ideas about human rights and equality.' List two specific causes from the time period 1791–1804 that support this claim.

- The first cause related to Enlightenment ideals was _____.
- Evidence for this cause includes _____.
- The second cause related to Enlightenment ideals was _____.
- Evidence for this cause includes _____.

Answer: Possible causes (students should list any two): (1) Enslaved Africans and mixed-race people in Saint-Domingue were denied rights and treated as property, which contradicted Enlightenment ideas about human dignity and freedom. (2) The French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man inspired colonists and enslaved people to demand equality and liberty. (3) The brutality of the slave system created unbearable suffering that motivated people to fight for independence and freedom. (4) Toussaint Louverture and other leaders used Enlightenment language about 'liberty' and 'equality' to organize and inspire the rebellion. Students should identify two causes and briefly note why each relates to Enlightenment thought.

Common error: Students may confuse 'consequence' with 'cause.' Remind them: a CAUSE is why something happened (before), and a CONSEQUENCE is what happened as a result (after). They should list reasons the revolution started, not results of it.

Question 3. Between 1791 and 1804, the population and power structure of Haiti changed dramatically. In 1791, enslaved Africans made up about 90 % of the population but had no legal rights. By 1804, formerly enslaved people and their descendants governed an independent nation. Name one consequence of the Haitian Revolution shown by this change.

- The change in power means that _____ gained control over _____.
- This is a consequence because it shows _____ happened as a result of the revolution.
- Before 1791, _____ were not allowed to lead or make decisions.
- After 1804, _____ could govern themselves and choose their own leaders.

Answer: One consequence of the Haitian Revolution: Formerly enslaved and oppressed people gained political power and the ability to govern themselves. Work shown: Students should identify that enslaved people (approximately 90 % of the population in 1791) went from having no legal rights and no power to becoming the leaders and decision-makers of an independent nation by 1804. This shift from powerlessness to self-governance is a direct consequence of the revolution's success.

Common error: Students may list a cause instead of a consequence. A consequence shows what resulted FROM the revolution. The gain of power and independence IS a consequence. If they write 'slavery was abolished,' remind them that while true, the question asks specifically about the change in population power structure, which shows that formerly enslaved people became leaders.

Question 4. Toussaint Louverture was a leader during the Haitian Revolution. He was captured by French forces in 1802 and died in prison in France. Yet the revolution continued under Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who declared independence in 1804. Identify what this sequence of events shows about the cause of the Haitian Revolution.

- The fact that the revolution continued after Toussaint was captured shows that _____.
- This means the cause of the revolution was not simply _____, but rather _____.
- The people's desire for _____ was strong enough to keep fighting even when their leader was gone.
- This demonstrates that the revolution was driven by _____ rather than loyalty to one person.

Answer: The continuation of the revolution after Toussaint's capture shows that the cause was not simply one leader's ambition, but rather the people's deep desire for freedom and independence. Work shown: If the revolution had been about Toussaint alone, it would have ended or weakened significantly when he was captured. Instead, Dessalines and the people continued fighting and achieved independence in 1804. This demonstrates that the underlying causes—the struggle against slavery, the hunger for liberty, and the demand for equality (Enlightenment ideals)—were more powerful than any single person.

Common error: Students may think that Toussaint's capture was the main cause of the revolution ending, or they may believe the revolution was only about him. Clarify that his capture temporarily weakened organization, but the deeper causes (oppression, desire for freedom, Enlightenment ideals) motivated others to continue. This shows that causes run deeper than individual leaders.

Packet B

Question 1. During the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), the enslaved population of Saint-Domingue grew from approximately 500,000 people in 1790 to a newly independent nation of roughly 375,000 by 1804. Using this numerical change, explain what this demographic shift suggests about the human cost of the revolution and the struggle for independence.

Answer: The population decreased by approximately 125,000 people over 14 years (500,000 − 375,000 = 125,000). This represents a loss of about 25% of the population ($\frac{125,000}{500,000} = 0.25$or 25%). This dramatic demographic decline suggests that the Haitian Revolution involved significant loss of life through warfare, disease, and the violence of liberation. Despite achieving independence, the human toll was severe, indicating that the struggle for freedom came at an enormous cost to the Haitian people. The survival of 375,000 people and the establishment of an independent nation represent both a victory for enslaved peoples and a profound tragedy in terms of lives lost.

Common error: Students may subtract incorrectly or fail to contextualize the raw number loss. Some may not recognize that 375,000 represents a surviving population that founded a free nation, which is historically significant. Emphasize that demographic data reveals historical suffering and resilience simultaneously.

Question 2. The French National Convention abolished slavery throughout the French colonies in 1794. However, Napoleon reversed this decree in 1801, leading to Toussaint Louverture's capture in 1802 and renewed fighting under Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Compare the timeline of these political reversals and explain why the sequence of abolition, reversion, and final independence matters for understanding the causes of Haiti's 1804 independence declaration.

Answer: Timeline sequence: 1794 (abolition) → 1801 (Napoleon's reversal) → 1802 (Louverture captured) → 1804 (independence declared). The reversal in 1801 shows that legal freedom granted from France was fragile and subject to metropolitan political change. When Napoleon attempted to restore slavery and control Haiti through force, capturing Louverture, the Haitian leadership under Dessalines was compelled to declare full independence as the only guarantee of freedom. The direct cause of 1804 independence was therefore not merely a desire for self-governance, but a response to France's betrayal of the 1794 abolition decree and military invasion. This sequence demonstrates that Haiti's independence was driven by the need to protect hard-won freedom from external reversal, not simply by Enlightenment ideals of liberty alone.

Common error: Students may treat 1794 abolition as permanent or may conflate French Revolutionary ideals with French imperial policy under Napoleon. Clarify that revolutionary governments changed, and that Haiti's leaders had to act to protect freedom. Some students may focus only on the ideological cause rather than the concrete political and military threat.

Question 3. Analyze the following passage from the Haitian Declaration of Independence (January 1, 1804): 'We have assured to ourselves and to our posterity liberty, without which man is a monster.' How does this statement reflect both Enlightenment philosophy and the specific historical experience of formerly enslaved people in Haiti? Support your analysis with one specific reference to the events between 1791 and 1804.

Answer: The phrase 'liberty, without which man is a monster' echoes Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau who argued that freedom is essential to human dignity and moral development. However, for Haitians, this was not an abstract philosophical claim but a concrete historical truth grounded in lived experience. Between 1791 and 1804, enslaved Haitians fought continuously for freedom, and when France attempted to restore slavery in 1801 after the 1794 abolition, they demonstrated that liberty was literally a matter of survival and humanity. The declaration uses Enlightenment language but applies it urgently to a population that had suffered under a system treating them as non-human property. The reference to 'our posterity' shows that Haitian leaders sought to guarantee future generations could not be re-enslaved, making independence a protection against dehumanization. Thus, Enlightenment ideals provided the moral vocabulary, but Haiti's specific trauma and resistance gave those ideals their most powerful and concrete meaning.

Common error: Students may treat Enlightenment ideas as if they automatically led to Haitian independence, ignoring the agency and resistance of enslaved Haitians themselves. Others may quote the phrase without explaining why it has urgency for formerly enslaved people. Emphasize that universal philosophical principles gained their force through particular historical struggles, and that Haitian revolutionaries reinterpreted European philosophy through their own experience.

Question 4. The 1791 uprising in Saint-Domingue occurred just two years after the storming of the Bastille in France (1789). Explain how the French Revolution's declaration of universal rights and principles of liberty may have influenced enslaved Haitians to launch their own revolution, while also describing what made the Haitian case fundamentally different from the French Revolution.

Answer: The French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) proclaimed universal principles of liberty, equality, and human rights. News of these ideals spread through the Atlantic world, including to Saint-Domingue, where enslaved and free people of color could claim that they too were entitled to rights and freedom. This provided both intellectual justification and inspiration for the 1791 uprising led by enslaved people demanding immediate emancipation and autonomy. However, the Haitian Revolution was fundamentally different because it was a revolution by enslaved people against slavery itself, not merely a change in government. While the French Revolution aimed to replace aristocratic privilege with bourgeois rights, the Haitian Revolution targeted the entire system of racial slavery and colonial exploitation. Enlightenment ideas provided the language, but Haitian revolutionaries expanded those ideas to challenge slavery, a practice that the French Revolution's leaders were reluctant to abolish until 1794 and that Napoleon later tried to restore. Therefore, Haiti's revolution was more radical: it was a liberation movement of enslaved peoples, not simply a political restructuring.

Common error: Students may assume the French Revolution automatically led to abolition and Haitian independence, underestimating the lag time and resistance to emancipation. Some may conflate the two revolutions as parallel movements without noting how slavery made Haiti's case distinct and more urgent. Emphasize that ideas are necessary but not sufficient; specific conditions of enslavement and colonial resistance made Haiti's revolution uniquely revolutionary.

Packet C

Question 1. Analyze the relationship between Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality and the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution in 1791. (a) Identify one specific Enlightenment principle that directly influenced the revolutionaries' claims. (b) Explain how the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) created a contradiction for enslaved people in French colonies. (c) Using evidence from both the French and Haitian contexts, evaluate whether Enlightenment thinkers themselves fully supported the abolition of slavery.

Answer: (a) One key Enlightenment principle was the idea that all humans possess natural rights to liberty and equality, articulated by philosophers like Rousseau and Montesquieu. Haitian revolutionaries, including free people of color and enslaved Africans, invoked this principle to justify their rebellion against colonial bondage. (b) The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen proclaimed universal human rights, yet the French National Assembly initially excluded enslaved people from these protections. This contradiction meant that although France proclaimed revolutionary ideals at home, it maintained slavery in its colonies, motivating colonists and enslaved people in Haiti to take independence into their own hands. (c) Many Enlightenment philosophers, including Voltaire and even Rousseau, did not consistently oppose slavery or call for its immediate abolition. While they championed reason and natural rights, they often viewed these ideals as applying primarily to European societies. The Haitian Revolution ultimately went further than European Enlightenment thinkers by translating abstract ideals into concrete liberation for all people, regardless of race or origin. This shows that Haitian revolutionaries synthesized European thought but transcended its limitations through their own struggle.

An exemplary response recognizes the contradiction between stated Enlightenment values and colonial practice, cites specific philosophical concepts (natural rights, liberty, equality), acknowledges the limited scope of European thinkers' commitments to abolition, and argues that Haitians extended Enlightenment ideals beyond their original intent. Students should avoid overstating how progressive European philosophers were on slavery; the historical record shows most were silent or compromising on the issue.

Question 2. Examine the strategic and ideological significance of Toussaint Louverture's leadership (1791–1802) compared to the later independence achieved under Jean-Jacques Dessalines (1804). (a) What specific decisions or military strategies did Toussaint employ to consolidate power and attempt to keep Haiti within the French sphere while eliminating slavery? (b) Why did Dessalines shift toward full independence rather than reformed slavery under French rule? (c) Propose what Toussaint might have achieved if Napoleon had not sent the 1802 military expedition, and justify your proposal using one consequence that actually occurred after 1804.

Answer: (a) Toussaint Louverture negotiated with the French Republic to abolish slavery in Haiti (aligned with French abolition in 1794), established military alliances with Spanish and British forces when advantageous, and systematized agriculture under a labor system that nominally freed but still controlled formerly enslaved people. He promoted himself as a loyal general of France while consolidating power and eliminating rivals, including the Mulatto general Rigaud during the War of the South (1799–1800). His strategy was to preserve French sovereignty nominally while exercising autonomy in practice. (b) Dessalines recognized that Toussaint's approach had failed: Napoleon's 1802 expedition to restore slavery and French colonial authority forced the issue. Dessalines understood that compromise would not satisfy French imperial ambitions and that true freedom required complete independence. The French attempted to restore slavery in Guadeloupe and Martinique, showing that negotiation within the French empire was no longer viable. (c) If Napoleon had not invaded, Toussaint might have been able to maintain Haiti as an autonomous region within the French Republic, exporting sugar and coffee while keeping slavery abolished. However, this counterfactual is undermined by the actual consequence: the very invasion itself proved that France would not tolerate Black autonomy or the abolition of slavery indefinitely. Dessalines' declaration of independence in 1804 established Haiti as the first Black republic and the first successful slave revolution, a status that would have been impossible under continued French rule, even under Toussaint's negotiated arrangement. Therefore, Toussaint's pragmatism, though strategically sound at the time, could not have delivered the independence and security that Dessalines achieved.

An exemplary response distinguishes Toussaint's collaborative and pragmatic approach from Dessalines' revolutionary break with France, recognizes the role of Napoleon's invasion in forcing the choice, and acknowledges trade-offs in both strategies. Students should avoid oversimplifying Toussaint as weak or ineffective; his achievements were substantial but constrained by geopolitical reality. The counterfactual should be grounded in evidence of French intent (e.g., the restoration of slavery in other Caribbean colonies) rather than pure speculation.

Question 3. Evaluate the counterargument that the Haitian Revolution was primarily a slave rebellion and therefore distinct from the ideological movements of the French Revolution. (a) Identify one way in which this counterargument has merit based on the social composition and immediate goals of each revolution. (b) Explain how the Haitian Revolution was also ideologically continuous with French Revolutionary principles, despite its different social base. (c) Propose a synthesis: design a historical framework that accounts for both the unique character of the Haitian struggle and its relationship to Enlightenment and Revolutionary thought. Label your framework clearly and defend it with at least two pieces of evidence.

Answer: (a) The counterargument has merit because the French Revolution (1789–1799) was led primarily by the bourgeoisie, intellectuals, and some nobles seeking to dismantle feudalism and establish constitutional monarchy or republicanism, whereas the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) was led by and for formerly enslaved people seeking personal freedom and survival. The immediate goals differed: France sought political representation and property reform; Haiti sought emancipation and self-determination. The French Revolution targeted the ancien régime's aristocratic privileges; the Haitian Revolution targeted the racial slavery system itself, a category of oppression unknown in metropolitan France. (b) However, Haitian revolutionaries explicitly invoked French Revolutionary rhetoric, including the Declaration of the Rights of Man and declarations of universal human rights. The constitutions written by Haitian leaders borrowed republican and democratic language from the French model. The abolition of slavery in Haiti (1794 under French decree, consolidated after 1791 by the rebels themselves) was justified using Enlightenment arguments about natural liberty and human dignity. Toussaint Louverture and Dessalines framed their struggle as an extension of Revolutionary principles to all humans, not a rejection of them. (c) A synthetic framework: The Haitian Revolution was a Radical Democratic Extension of the French Revolution. This framework recognizes that while the French Revolution initiated modern democracy and human rights discourse, it did so incompletely—preserving slavery and excluding non-propertied people from full citizenship. Haitian revolutionaries took French Revolutionary principles (liberty, equality, fraternity) and radicalized them by demanding their universal application regardless of race or prior status. Evidence 1: The Haitian Constitution of 1801, written under Toussaint, explicitly modeled itself on French constitutional structures while adding articles abolishing slavery unconditionally (Teacher paraphrase: Article 2 stated that slavery was abolished in perpetuity, and all people born on the island were free). Evidence 2: Dessalines' Declaration of Independence (1804) cited the failure of France to honor Revolutionary values, positioning Haiti not as a rejection of Enlightenment thought but as its true fulfillment. This framework avoids false dichotomies: the Haitian Revolution was both distinct in its radical scope and continuous with Revolutionary ideology.

An exemplary response acknowledges the validity of the counterargument before complicating it, recognizes that ideological continuity and social distinctiveness are not mutually exclusive, and proposes a framework that integrates both dimensions. Students should use precise historical language (e.g., 'radical democratic extension' rather than vague terms like 'similar'). The framework should be explicitly labeled and defended with concrete textual or institutional evidence, not just assertions. Avoid presenting either revolution as simply derivative of the other; the goal is synthesis, not subsumption.

Question 4. Construct a brief historical argument (150–200 words) that answers the question: To what extent was the independence of Haiti in 1804 a consequence of the French Revolution, and to what extent was it a reaction against it? Support your argument with evidence from at least two turning points in the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), and address one limitation of your interpretation.

Answer: The independence of Haiti in 1804 was both a consequence of and a reaction against the French Revolution. As a consequence: the Revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality inspired the initial 1791 uprising and motivated leaders like Toussaint Louverture to abolish slavery within a French framework. The French National Assembly's 1794 decree abolishing slavery in all colonies was a direct fruit of Revolutionary debate, and Haitian revolutionaries cited this decree to legitimize their struggle. Without the French Revolution's destabilization of monarchy and its rhetoric of universal rights, the organized rebellion would have faced even greater ideological and military obstacles. As a reaction: Napoleon's 1802 invasion to restore slavery revealed that France would not extend Revolutionary rights to Black colonists, betraying the universalism it proclaimed. Dessalines therefore rejected French authority entirely, declaring that Haiti could achieve true Revolutionary principles only through independence from France itself. The 1804 Constitution and Declaration of Independence explicitly invoked Revolutionary language while condemning France for abandoning them. Thus, Haiti's independence completed what the French Revolution began but could not finish within its own colonial system. Limitation: This argument emphasizes ideological and military factors but underweights the autonomous agency and long struggle of Haitian rebels, which predated consistent French Revolutionary support and drove outcomes as much as external ideas did.

An exemplary response maintains a nuanced analytical balance (both/and rather than either/or), cites specific dates and decrees, integrates evidence from multiple turning points, and explicitly identifies a limitation in the interpretation. The response should demonstrate that the student understands contingency: Haiti's independence was not inevitable, nor was it simply determined by external ideological currents. The word count should fall within the stated range; students should practice academic concision. Avoid inflammatory language; focus on historical causation and evidence.

Section 4: Teacher Toolkit

3-Point Mastery Rubric

3 — Complete Mastery: The response explains one valid cause and one valid consequence of the Haitian Revolution and supports each with specific evidence from the readings or documents. It accurately distinguishes at least two key events (1791 uprising, 1794 French abolition, 1802 capture of Louverture, 1804 independence under Dessalines) and connects the explanation to Enlightenment or French Revolutionary ideals.

2 — Partial Understanding: The response explains a cause and a consequence but supports only one of them with document evidence, or the evidence is vague. It shows some accurate knowledge of the timeline but may confuse or omit one key event or the link to Enlightenment ideals.

1 — Needs Significant Support: The response names a cause or consequence but does not explain it or provide usable evidence from the documents. It shows limited accuracy about the sequence of events and does not connect the revolution to Enlightenment or French Revolutionary ideals.

Common Misconceptions

The revolution was a single spontaneous event

Students think: Students think the Haitian Revolution happened all at once in 1791 and was over quickly.

Why: Textbook summaries compress a 13-year struggle into one date, so students lose the sequence from uprising to abolition to independence.

Fix: Have students build and annotate the class timeline in pairs, placing the 1791 uprising, 1794 abolition, 1802 capture of Louverture, and 1804 independence, then write one sentence on what changed between each pair of dates.

France ended slavery out of pure goodwill

Students think: Students believe the 1794 French abolition was a gift granted by generous French leaders with no pressure from enslaved people.

Why: Students underestimate how enslaved people's resistance and the 1791 uprising created the political pressure behind the 1794 decree.

Fix: Use the two documents to compare perspectives, asking students to cite evidence of who acted and who responded, then discuss in the Discuss phase how cause and consequence can run in both directions.

Enlightenment ideals automatically included everyone

Students think: Students assume Enlightenment ideas about liberty and equality were applied equally to enslaved Africans without conflict.

Why: Students read ideals as universal in practice rather than as contested claims that enslaved people had to seize and reinterpret.

Fix: Have students underline liberty and equality language in the documents and then write a sentence stem explaining how the revolutionaries used those ideals to challenge their exclusion, citing one document.

Implementation Notes

- Setup: Before class, print the three neutral-titled packets (Version A: Core Analysis, Version B: Guided Analysis, Version C: Supported Analysis), the timeline handout, and the trilingual vocabulary sheet; post the Aim question on the board and place the two source excerpts with author, date, and URL at each

table group. Assign students to mixed-ability pairs so stronger readers can model document annotation while all students complete the same claim-and-evidence task.

- Pacing: Run the 3-minute Do Now as students enter (a quick write answering what liberty and equality mean to you), then use a 5-minute Launch to unpack the Aim question and preview the timeline. Protect roughly 22 minutes for Explore (reading, annotating, and completing the comparison and claim task), 10 minutes for Discuss (pair share, then whole-class perspective comparison), and the final 4 minutes for the exit ticket; keep a visible timer so the exit ticket is never cut.
- Grouping: Use heterogeneous pairs for the Explore phase and switch to same-version triads during Discuss so students at each support level can rehearse their claim with sentence stems before sharing out. Assign roles of Reader, Evidence Finder, and Reporter, and rotate roles so every student practices citing document evidence aloud.
- Tiered packet flow: All three versions share the same timeline, the same two sources, and the same exit-ticket demand, but Version C adds sentence starters and a partially completed evidence chart, Version B adds guiding questions per document, and Version A asks students to evaluate which document gives stronger evidence. Collect packets at the end of Explore and check that every student has written at least one cited claim before the Discuss phase begins.
- Discussion moves: During Discuss, chart the two documents side by side and ask students to name where the authors agree and disagree, requiring them to point to a specific phrase. Close by returning to the Aim question and having two or three students read their exit-ticket claim aloud so the class hears strong evidence use before submitting.

Extension Activities

- Early finisher task: Students write a short paragraph explaining how the 1804 independence under Dessalines changed the political map of the Atlantic world, citing the timeline and one document. They then draft one additional question they would ask a historian about the 1802 capture of Louverture.
- Cross-curricular connection: In an English or civics class, students compare the language of liberty in the two source excerpts with a short excerpt from the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man, noting who is included and excluded and citing each text.
- Real-world application: Students identify a current example of a group using Enlightenment-style language (liberty, equality, rights) to challenge exclusion, then write a short evidence-based paragraph explaining how the Haitian Revolution's pattern of claim and response compares to that example.