



Day 13 Colonization Unit
50 Minutes

Fundamental Orders

Lesson Title

Thomas Hooker and the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut

Grade Range: 4–8

Time: 60–70 minutes

Unit: Puritans, Government, and Early Democracy

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain who Thomas Hooker was and why he left Massachusetts
 - Describe the purpose and key ideas of the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut
 - Identify how the Fundamental Orders expanded participation in government
 - Analyze why the Fundamental Orders are considered an early constitution
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Materials

- PowerPoint: *Thomas Hooker & the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut*
- Article: *The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut* (from your site)
- Super Cloze Series Activity: *Fundamental Orders*
- Differentiated Reading Comprehension:
 - Lexile 750 version

- Lexile 1000 version
 - Student notebooks or organizers
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Lesson Structure Overview

- **PowerPoint & Guided Discussion:** 20 minutes
 - **Article Reading:** 15–20 minutes
 - **Culminating Activities (Super Cloze + Comprehension):** 25–30 minutes
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Part 1: PowerPoint With Teacher Script (20 Minutes)

Slide 1 – Thomas Hooker & the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut

Teacher Script:

“Today we’re learning about Thomas Hooker and a document called the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut. This document is important because it helped shape the idea that government power comes from the people, not from kings or church leaders.”

Slide 2 – Who Was Thomas Hooker?

Teacher Script:

“Thomas Hooker was a Puritan minister who believed strongly in fairness and justice. Like many Puritans, he wanted a godly society, but he also believed that people should have a voice in their government.”

Slide 3 – Thomas Hooker Comes to America

Teacher Script:

“When Hooker arrived in Massachusetts Bay, he became a minister in Newtown. However, he soon disagreed with colony leaders because only church members were allowed to vote. Hooker believed this was unfair.”

Slide 4 – Why Did Thomas Hooker Leave Massachusetts?

Teacher Script:

“Puritan leaders believed only church members should vote. Hooker disagreed. He believed government authority came from the people, not from religious leaders. This disagreement pushed him to leave Massachusetts.”

Slide 5 – Journey to Connecticut

Teacher Script:

“In 1636, Hooker led his followers through the wilderness to the Connecticut River Valley. They founded Hartford and other towns. This move gave Hooker the chance to help create a new kind of government.”

Slide 6 – What Were the Fundamental Orders?

Teacher Script (article connection):

“The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut were written in 1639. As you’ll read in the article, they outlined how the government would work, how leaders would be chosen, and how laws would be made.”

Slide 7 – Key Ideas in the Fundamental Orders

Teacher Script:

“The Orders stated that government power comes from the people. Leaders were elected, elections were regular, and there was no mention of the king. These ideas were revolutionary at the time.”

Slide 8 – Why Were the Fundamental Orders Important?

Teacher Script:

“Many historians consider the Fundamental Orders the first written constitution in America. They limited government power and expanded voting rights. Later American documents were influenced by these ideas.”

Slide 9 – Thomas Hooker’s Legacy

Teacher Script:

“Thomas Hooker is often called the Father of Connecticut. His belief in representative government and popular sovereignty helped lay the groundwork for American democracy.”

Part 2: Article Reading – Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (15–20 Minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/events-of-the-13-colonies/fundamental-orders-of-connecticut>

Teacher Directions:

- Assign students to read the article independently or with partners; have younger students click the “simplify” the article.
- Encourage annotation or highlighting

Guided Reading Focus:

- How voting worked under the Fundamental Orders
- How power was distributed
- How this system differed from Massachusetts Bay

Suggested Teacher Prompts:

- “Underline evidence that shows government power came from the people.”
 - “Circle ideas that sound similar to modern democracy.”
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Part 3: Culminating Activities (25–30 Minutes)

Activity 1: Super Cloze Series – Fundamental Orders

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/13-colonies-literacy-and-comprehension-activities/the-fundamental-orders-of-connecticut-super-cloze-series>

This interactive Cloze Reading Activity is designed to reinforce key historical concepts about the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, through an engaging, differentiated format. Students complete fill-in-the-blank passages using drag-and-drop vocabulary, with features like limited dictionary hints, read-aloud, and three progressive difficulty levels. Built-in scoring, printable reports, and customization options make it ideal for independent practice, centers, or blended learning environments.

Activity 2: Differentiated Reading Comprehension

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/13-colonies-literacy-and-comprehension-activities/the-fundamental-orders-of-connecticut-reading-comprehension>

Lexile 750 (Grades 4–5 / Support)

- Focus: Main ideas, vocabulary, basic cause-and-effect

Lexile 1000 (Grades 6–8 / Extension)

- Focus: Analysis, inference, historical significance
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