Primary Source Exercise: Power and Liberty

According to *The Federalist*, the Constitution did not betray the Revolution. On the contrary, it fulfilled radical aspirations for greater political freedom by creating a strong central government necessary to ensure the nation’s survival and preserve rights.

I – Divide into two groups and respond, one group in agreement and the other group in disagreement, to the above statement. Start by discussing what the statement actually means. Follow this with a conversation about your reasons for agreement or disagreement and consider the strengths and weaknesses of your position. In doing this, use the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Federalist excerpts, and Bill of Rights.

II - Write out the main points of your argument in preparation for discussion and assign these to particular group members.

II – Debate the validity of *The Federalist* defense, Group 1 arguing that the Constitution did not betray the Revolution and Group 2 arguing that it did. Begin the debate with an introduction by one representative from each group, followed by statements and responses from all group members, based on what you prepared and citing the appropriate primary sources.

IV – Discuss and rework this exercise for various grade levels, attending to language, direction, structure, and purpose.