

Teacher Project Pack

American Memory & Me Birthday Project

Overview

Students are naturally looking for connections between themselves and what they are learning. This project connects students to historical events that happened on their birthdays, helping them to recognize that each person is part of and contributes to the ongoing American memory.

To complete this project, students will . . .

- visit the Library of Congress website to learn about events that happened on their birthdays.
- complete a worksheet to help summarize the interesting information that they discovered.
- fill in an online newspaper template to report on the connection between history and their own futures.

Objectives

Upon completing this project, students will be able to . . .

- identify one or more historical events that took place on the same date as their birthdays.
- describe the Library of Congress website and the primary sources found there.
- create a newspaper page to illustrate that events in the American memory are unfolding everyday.
- appreciate that they are part of our nation's collective history known as the American memory.

Standards

This project meets the following Illinois learning standards and goals for grades 6-8 in Language Arts and Social Science.

5A Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas.

5B Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.

5C Apply acquired information, concepts, and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

16A Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.

16D Understand United States social history.

Guidelines

Review background information: Students will need basic understanding of primary sources (see Primary Sources online learning module) to complete this project.

Prepare materials for implementation: Each student will need a personal photo that can be saved or scanned into the computer; consider getting all student photos at one time early in the year.

Be flexible with implementation: Each student completes the project on or near his/her individual birthday; students with birthdays in the same month complete the project at the same time; or all students complete the project at the same time.

Allow for sufficient time to implement: Working independently both online and offline, students will need two 30-40 minute sessions to complete the project.

Directions

Session 1: Complete Parts I and Part II of the American Memory & Me Student Worksheet

1. Point students to the American Memory Initiative website and have them click the **Today in History link** found at <http://www.barat-tps.org/studentCorner-americanMemory.php>.
2. Direct students to use the drop-down menu to **select your birthday** (month and day), then click the **Go** button.
3. Tell students to review the information and browse the American Memory site by clicking the links on the page (remember to use your web browser's **Back** button to return to the main Today in History page).
4. Direct students to answer the questions in Part I and Part II of the **American Memory & Me Student Worksheet** (<http://www.barat-tps.org/pdf/american-memory/am-wksht.pdf>).

Session 2: Complete the Newspaper section of the American Memory & Me Student Worksheet

1. Click the **Everyday History** link (<http://www.barat-tps.org/ppt/americanmemory/student/newspapertemplate.ppt>) to access the newspaper template from the American Memory Initiative website. **Save a copy of the template** to the school network or print it out.
2. Assist students to **paste the historical pictures** that they saved from the Today in History page into the appropriate section of the Everyday History template.
3. Direct students to **edit their stories**, if necessary, from Part I of the American Memory & Me Student Worksheet.
4. Assist students to **paste their edited stories** into the appropriate section of the Everyday History template.

5. Assist students to **paste their personal photos** into the appropriate section of the Everyday History template.
6. Direct students to **edit their stories**, if necessary, from Part II of the American Memory & Me Student Worksheet.
7. Assist students to **paste their edited stories** into the appropriate section of the Everyday History template.

Extension Activities

Mapping the American Memory

1. Post a large [United States map](#) on the classroom wall.
2. Place the student's newspapers on the wall in close proximity to the map. Alternatively, you can print the primary sources directly from the Library of Congress to post with the map.
3. Connect the newspapers with the appropriate locations on the map by colored yarn. The color will be determined by the time period in history (be sure to place a color key by the map). For example:
1600 – 1700 = red 1700 – 1800 = yellow 1800 – 1900 = blue
1900 – present = green

Timeline of the American Memory

1. Print and post the [timeline](#) in your classroom (cut to fit around doors, cabinets, etc.).
2. Post each student's newspaper at the appropriate place on the timeline. Alternatively, you can print the primary sources directly from the Library of Congress to post with the timeline. (Remember, to save on wall space, attach the papers to the ceiling directly above the proper places on the timeline.)
3. Have students give oral presentations of what they have learned.