

Teacher Project Pack

Presidential Portraits

Overview

George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are two of the most famous U.S. presidents. This project helps students to learn about these presidents while also using objective and subjective techniques to analyze primary source images and to contemplate how presidents are portrayed.

To complete this project, students will . . .

- learn facts about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.
- identify various types of primary sources.
- compare and contrast facts about Washington and Lincoln.
- use objective and subjective techniques to analyze historic images.
- create their personal autobiographies.
- discuss how presidents are portrayed and arrange and pose for their own “presidential” portraits.

Objectives

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

- identify various types of primary sources.
- describe as well as compare and contrast facts about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.
- analyze historic images using objective and subjective techniques.
- discuss how presidents are portrayed and convey their own views of what is presidential.

Standards

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

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.

26B Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts.

27D Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society, and everyday life.

Guidelines

Review background information: Students will need basic understanding of primary sources to complete this project. For ideas on how to present this information, please review the Primary Sources [online learning module](#).

Prepare materials for implementation: You will need copies of the primary source images of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln; the image analysis worksheet; the president fact sheets; the compare-and-contrast Venn diagram; and the student fact sheet.

Be flexible with implementation: Consider having students work individually, in pairs, or in groups.

Allow for sufficient time to implement: Working independently and collaboratively, students will need approximately five 40-minute class sessions to complete the project and approximately 60 minutes outside of class to complete this project.

Directions

Session 1

1. Explain what primary sources are and have the students brainstorm a list of primary sources. This list can be written on the blackboard or on a sheet of poster paper, which can then be posted on the wall.
2. Explain to students that they will be reading text and reviewing several primary sources to learn more about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.
3. Divide the class into two groups—half will study information about George Washington and the other half will study information about Abraham Lincoln.
4. Put students into small groups (approximately four students). Give each student one section of the biographical materials about the assigned president (the student who is assigned the introduction section will act as group secretary). Have each student read aloud his/her text to the group.

Homework Assignment After Session 1

Ask students to fill out as much information on the president fact sheet worksheet as they can utilizing their assigned biographical section.

Session 2

1. Have the group secretary fill out the group president fact sheet with input from all group members.
2. Pair together one Washington group with one Lincoln group and have these groups fill out the compare and contrast Venn diagram.
3. Share the results in a class discussion.

Homework Assignment After Session 2

Have each student fill out an autobiography fact sheet.

Session 3

1. Explain to students that they will be analyzing images of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln both objectively – describing only what they see – and subjectively – describing what they think and feel – to draw their own conclusions about the presidents.
2. Give each group an image analysis worksheet and distribute the appropriate presidential portraits.

Washington: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96522247/>

Lincoln: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.ndlpcoop/ichicdn.n007078>

3. Direct student groups to complete the image analysis worksheets for their assigned president.
4. As a class, discuss how the images reinforced or changed their views of the presidents.
5. Ask students to brainstorm how they would like to be depicted in their own “presidential” portraits. Remind them to consider the clothes they would wear, the objects that would surround them, and the poses they would take.
6. Set a day when students will pose for their presidential portraits, making sure they wear the appropriate clothing and bring in the objects with which they want to pose.

Homework Assignment After Session 3

Have each student select the clothes and objects with which they want to pose and bring them to school on presidential portrait day.

Session 4

1. Work in groups or as a class to take a digital presidential portrait of each student. (If digital cameras are not available, you may take film pictures or have students draw their portraits.)

Session 5

1. Once pictures have been printed out or are available for viewing on a computer, put students in pairs.
2. Direct each student to review the other's fact sheet, then complete an image analysis worksheet of his/her partner's portrait.
3. Ask the pairs to share their portraits and analyses with the class.