

Accomplishments of Thomas Jefferson

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Research Project

Duration

3-5 days

Objectives

Overview

As an introduction to Thomas Jefferson, students will discover the many new ideas and innovations attributed to him. Using primary sources, internet reseach, and the Thomas Jefferson Encyclopdedia, students will choose one event to research and present. Students will make connections between past and present ideas and begin to see how much of a "Modern Man" Thomas Jefferson was.

Prior Knowledge

As an introductory activity, students do not need knowledge about Thomas Jefferson. They do need a knowledge of and access to basic computer technology.

State Standards

Oregon Social Studies Standards:

SS.08.SA.02 Acquire and organize materials from primary and secondary sources.

SS.08.HS.06 Understand how individuals, issues, and events changed or significantly influenced the course of U.S. history post-American Revolution through 1900.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Through group inquiry and research, students will gain an overview of Thomas Jefferson and his many accomplishments and innovations.

Students will research one area to become an expert and share with classmates.

This activity will act as an overview. Teacher can choose topics for follow-up teaching.

Technology Connections/outcomes

Students will make connections to science, politics, art, and technology.

Additional Learning Outcomes

Students will produce a one page visual to demonstrate knowledge of their topic. Teacher will sew together page protectors in the form of a quilt in which pictures will be displayed. The "Quilt" can display different topics during the year. Students will orally explain their topic.

Students will write a comparative essay about the historic Jefferson and what Jefferson might look like today.

Essential Questions

How many "jobs" did Thomas Jefferson have during his lifetime?

What did he enjoy doing the most?

Are there any people you know today who would compare to Thomas Jefferson in the kinds of things he did?

What was his greatest accomplishment?

Procedures

1. *1-2 periods*

1. Students will use the Thomas Jefferson Foundation [websites](#). Students should begin by going to the [Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia](#) (high school reading level) or [the Monticello Classroom](#) (middle and elementary school reading levels). Students can also use other google searches to create their lists.

2. In pairs, students should make a list of as many accomplishments and innovations as they can find which are attributed to Thomas Jefferson. They should include political achievements, scientific innovations, and personal interests.

3. The class will then brainstorm a classroom list. Individual topics will be assigned to students. Try to get a wide variety of topics covering all facets of Jefferson's life, with students picking their own topics as much as possible. The goal is to cover major ideas.

2. *2-3 days, some done outside of class*

4. Students will research their topic, using primary sources where possible to gain an understanding. They will produce a one page visual which represents their topic. It will include a title, picture (drawn or copied), text when necessary to explain what is not obvious. Pictures should be in color.

3. *2 days*

5. Students will present their findings to the class. The teacher will display visuals in the form of a quilt. The quilt is made from sewing together page protectors with papers slipped inside. The finished quilt can be displayed in school.

4.

6. After a classroom discussion about ideas presented by class, students will write an essay comparing the 18th Century Thomas Jefferson to what he might look like today. What are the modern issues facing us which he might address in the fields of politics, science, horticulture? What might he be interested in. While ideas are subjective, students should show an understanding of Thomas Jefferson through the support they present about their ideas.

Technology Needs

Students need access to computers.

Students need access to the [Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia](#).

Assessment

Homework

Some research and creating visual can be done as homework if there is not enough time in class.

Assessment

Students will be assessed through their oral presentation to class about their topic and the quality of the visual.

After a classroom discussion about ideas presented by class, students will write an essay comparing the 18th Century Thomas Jefferson to what he might look like today. What are the modern issues facing us which he might address in the fields of politics, science, horticulture? What might he be interested in. While ideas are subjective, students should show an understanding of Thomas Jefferson through the support they present about their ideas.

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

Students with special academic needs can work in pairs in initial brainstorming. Requirements for visual can be set according to abilities. Choosing an appropriate topic is also important.

Accommodations – Advanced Learners

TAG students can extend this lesson by doing more indepth research. They also can choose more than one topic.

