

The Sea was Boisterous that Day- Using Essential Questions to Bridge History

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Challenge

Type of Project (Individual/Group/Both)

Both

Duration

60-90 minutes

Challenge Question

Essential questions (EQ's) can be a tool for connecting the past to the present. In this Challenge, you will be asked to link an image/document from America's revolutionary period (1763-83) and modern US history (1930-present) using an essential question and your answer to that question to bridge the gap in time and place. Think of it as using an EQ to prove a connection between your two resources.

Rationale

This Challenge explores the use of essential questions and resources from the Sea of Liberty collection. Students will work with primary documents and images to identify concrete examples of essential questions presence in daily life, both past and present. The Challenge makes use of the following essential questions:

1. Is war ever justified?
2. What is worth fighting for?
3. Whose story is being told (and is there more than one)?
4. To have security do we need to have protection?
5. When is it acceptable to break the rules?
6. How does the past explain the present?

The Challenge incorporates the use of primary documents, drawing connections across time and place, and creating a final product to summarize their critical thinking.

Notes to Teacher

This Challenge can be used as a short, individual lesson. However, it can also serve as a launch for a more in-depth project such as a research paper or more extensive digital poster/presentation. If students/teachers are not familiar with using essential questions (and furthermore these specific questions), the Challenge might not be the best fit. Prior practice/use of these EQ's will be helpful in a successful delivery of this Challenge.

Steps

1. As a class, bring up two images from Sea of Liberty's Road to Revolution/Revolution period (1763-83) and Creating Modern US (1930-present) collections. Either go to Step 2 or 3 depending on timing, preference, etc.
2. Have students complete a series of prompts for each image: I Observe, I Wonder, I Infer. Share prompts either as a think/pair/share or as a whole class.
3. Have the six EQ's on large cards placed throughout the room. After students have had a chance to examine the images side by side, gain contextual understanding, and ask clarifying questions, ask them to silently go to the question they feel most appropriately connects the two images. Facilitate a discussion if desired.
4. Instruct students to create their own digital poster or word cloud through Sea of Liberty using two images. Image #1 must come from either the Road to Revolution or Revolution period (1763-83) and Image #2 must come from Creating a Modern US (1930-present).
5. Students will work either in partner groups or individually to create their posters or word clouds.
6. Create a showcase of posters/word clouds and if desired, assign students to prepare a short oral presentation of their work, explaining the connection between the two images and how the essential question they chose is present in both images/events.