

Follow me on Twitter!: Thomas Jefferson Tweets the 2nd Continental Congress

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Research Project

Duration

2 (80 minute) class periods

Objectives

Overview

What if Thomas Jefferson had a Twitter account? This lesson plan is targeted for middle-high school students of United States History who are competent in using technology in and out of class. The focus of this lesson is Thomas Jefferson tweeting while he attends the Continental Congress and the lead up to the Declaration of Independence (1775-1776). Middle school students may have to be taught how to use the technology appropriately and responsibly before undertaking this task. This lesson will give students an interactive experience, teach students the historical context of the day, and also allow them to be creative/interpretive while also being historically accurate. The first day, students will set up the accounts and learn the basics and responsibilities of using Twitter, and then also begin their research. They may also begin tweeting on this day. On the second day, the students will continue to research

and also tweet as Thomas Jefferson.

Prior Knowledge

By this time of the year, the students should know the background and other events that are occurring during the years of 1775-1776, and also know that Thomas Jefferson did draft most of the Declaration of Independence. A timeline of Jefferson's life can be found here if needed:

<http://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/timeline-jeffersons-life> (Thomas Jefferson Foundation).

State Standards

History/Social Studies in English Language Arts Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Virginia Standards of Learning

USI.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by

- a) identifying the issues of dissatisfaction that led to the American Revolution;
- b) identifying how political ideas shaped the revolutionary movement in American and led to the Declaration of Independence;
- c) describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry

CE.1 The student will develop the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to

a) examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents

CE.2 The students will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by

b) explaining the significance of the charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will create Twitter accounts as if they are Thomas Jefferson as he arrived at the Continental Congress in 1775. The students will research Thomas Jefferson's life as he attended the Continental Congress from 1775-1776. The tweets will consist of his actions, opinions, and even personal thoughts, all within chronological order.

*** As an addition, this same approach may be used for all delegates to the 2nd Continental Congress for a MOCK Continental Congress where each student portrays a delegate. The students would then interact as delegates via Twitter. Another option would be to have the class broken up into groups of 5 where each student in the group would then represent one of the members of the Committee of 5 responsible for the Declaration of Independence.

Technology Connections/outcomes

The format for this lesson can easily be used for any other historical figure or event. The Thomas Jefferson being at the Continental Congress part is just the variable to the equation. Historical Figure(s)+ Event(s)= Active, engaged, students who will produce great results while using technology and social media. This approach could be used by ELA teachers for characters in novels as well.

Additional Learning Outcomes

The students when complete with this project will come away with a much deeper understanding of Thomas Jefferson while he is at the Continental Congress. Since they will be applying their research in a way that makes them think like Thomas Jefferson, they will be doing much more than memorizing rote facts. When students take on the persona of a historical person, even for just a few hours, they will come away from the experience much more aware and a stronger recognition and understanding of Thomas Jefferson and the role he played in birthing our nation.

Procedures

1.

Begin the lesson by first explaining expectations of student outcomes. Explain to the students the importance of using Twitter responsibly and appropriately.

2.

Then commence with the modeling to students how to set up a Twitter account. An example for a handle from student "John Doe" from TJ Middle School could be @JohnDTJMS, with the actual "Name" being something that is relevant to Thomas Jefferson. It is advisable to let the students have some creativity with this part. The teacher of course will have to show the students how to make an account image and bio.

3.

Provide the students a list with their names so after their account is created, they can write their Twitter handle on the list. It will be difficult to tell which student is which with multiple Thomas Jefferson accounts out there.

4. Next, show the students how to send their first tweet as Thomas Jefferson. Some examples could be:

"Just arrived in Philadelphia! #ThisTownSmells"

"Getting ready to be a delegate but will probably just sit silently. #shy"

"In Philly, but would much rather be in Virginia. #MyOwnCountry"

5.

Now aid the students with their research. Some tools have been included with this lesson, but if there are other documents such as Jefferson letters or other first hand accounts you would like to use, please use those! Not every tweet has to be directly from a primary source! Use the great timelines provided and other articles that give us a great idea of Jefferson during the Continental Congress. The tools provided are great for beginning research and setting students on the right path. For younger students, the teacher may have to show the students how to navigate the sources. If desired, the teacher may also pre-select the resources for their students and have them research those only.

6.

Allow the students to tweet as they research, or they can compile information they want to use and then tweet. The pace of this can be set however the teacher wants.

Materials

Materials Needed

Some of the above materials may not need to be used. Some are parts of other lessons, while others are for ELD students. Any additional articles or readings that the unstructor finds necessary should also be used.

Under Websites above, you will find a link "The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the American Memory website. Click the link and once you arrive at the home page, click 1753-1827 under the Timeline found on the left. This resource is a great timeline that can be used.

WWW.FOUNDERS.ARCHIVES.GOV

Use the above link to find many letters written from Jefferson. The teacher will need to select the ones they wish to use.

Technology Needs

Computer or iPad that connects to a projector

Projector

Internet

Twitter

Assessment

Homework

The instructor will set the requirements they deem necessary for a completed product.

Assessment

The instructor will create their own rubric for grading purposes as they see fit.

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

For those students who may not have internet access, or whos parents/guardians do not want them using Twitter, a paper version or a Word Document version of a Twitter account will be used. However, this will require that student to do significantly less "tweeting," due to the fact they will be handwriting for the paper version.

Accommodations – Advanced Learners

For thos students who want an extra challenge, have them create additional accounts of other delegates and have them converse and interact with each other.