

Capstone Inquiry Collaborative Planning Template

Grade Level: 10

Teacher/Team: Keegan Long & Michele Matulevicz

Content area(s): American History

Lesson(s)/Unit(s) of Study: American Presidents (End of Year Final)

Timeline: 2-3 Weeks

**All student data and reflection results included in this lesson plan are fictional examples created for illustrative and planning purposes only. This unit was not implemented due to time constraints and other job responsibilities. Due to these conditions, no student samples were able to be obtained.*

State Content Standards/Benchmarks/Indicators:

SS 12.1.1.a: Analyze and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of citizens and elected officials in a democratic society.

SS 12.1.2.c: Evaluate how government policies and actions impact individuals and groups in society.

SS 12.4.1.a: Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources to make informed conclusions.

SS 12.1.4.b: Communicate and defend a point of view using evidence from multiple sources.

AASL Standards Shared Foundations

(Using the [AASL Standards Framework for Learners](#), type shared foundation, domain, and competency in rectangles below, e.g., I.A.1.)

Domains

	I. Inquire	II. Include	III. Collaborate	IV. Curate	V. Explore	VI. Engage
A. Think	I. A.1	II. A.2		IV. A.2; A.3	V. A.1	VI. A.2; A.3
B. Create	I. B.1; B.2	II. B.2; B.3	III. B.2	IV. B.1; B.2; B.3	V. B.1	VI. B.2
C. Share	I. C.1; C.4	II. C.1; C.2	III. C.2	IV. C.1; C.2		VI. C.1
D. Grow	I. D.4	II. D.2	III. D.1	IV. D.2	V. D.2	VI. D.1; D.2

Description of Pre-Assessment:

Presidential Leadership Activity- Students are given a list of 1-12 presidents and are tasked with ranking them from most effective to least effective. The classroom will then compare results with other peers and examine the rankings.

Results of Pre-Assessment:

Top choices (most frequent):

- Abraham Lincoln — 4 students
- George Washington — 3 students
- Franklin D. Roosevelt — 2 students
- Barack Obama — 2 students
- Ronald Reagan — 1 student

Bottom choices (most frequent):

- Richard Nixon — 3 students
- Donald Trump — 3 students
- James Buchanan — 2 students
- Warren G. Harding — 2 students
- Herbert Hoover — 2 students

Learning Activities/Projects:	Materials/Resources Needed:	Person(s) Responsible:
1. Introduce the unit/final theme: <i>"How have U.S. Presidents shaped the nation?"</i> Explain final goal (presidential debate) and how students will represent a specific president. Hand out rubric for students to reference throughout the project.	Project Rubric, Project Overview Slide Show, Sample Student Project	Classroom Teacher
2. Assign students to a U.S. President ensuring coverage across historical eras.	List of U.S. Presidents and students assigned to each	Classroom Teacher
3. Teach students how to locate and evaluate credible sources. Demonstrate use of library databases (e.g., Britanica,	Student Laptops, Library databases, Source Evaluation Worksheet (Print or Digital)	Librarian

NebraskaAccess, Google Scholar) and how to take notes effectively. Also have preselected books for students to use for their research. 4. Students independently research their assigned president during classroom time. They must gather biographical information, key policies, historical context, and lasting impact. Students create an outline summarizing their president's major accomplishments, challenges, and policy stances. 5. Pair students for debates (e.g., Lincoln vs. FDR). Review debate format (opening statements, rebuttals, closing). Students craft argument scripts, rebuttal points, and anticipate counterarguments using evidence from their research. Students finalize their outlines to use during their debates. Students prepare notecards for speeches. 6. Students participate in structured debates in front of peers. After debates, classroom peers cast votes on the candidate who they would vote for based on the debate.	Research Outline Template/Worksheet, Library Databases, Student Laptops Debate Pairing List; Notecards Timer/Stopwatch, Microsoft Form for Class Voting, Student Laptops, Google Classroom for Assignment & Reflection Submission	Teacher and Librarian (Shared Supervision) Classroom Teacher Classroom Teacher & Librarian (Moderators)
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Description of Post-Assessment: After debates, students submit a one page reflection on how they thought their debate went, what they would do differently, and their overall thoughts on the research process.

Results of Post-Assessment:

Overall, student responses spoke mostly of strong engagement, personal growth, and an increased confidence related to the skills involved in research and public speaking. Most students reported feeling more confident in their ability to present and defend arguments after participating in the debate. Several students mentioned that the experience helped them better understand the roles that come with presidential leadership and overall decision-making. Several students reflected that representing a president they didn't necessarily agree with challenged them to think critically and view history from new perspectives.

Comments/Evaluation of the Unit: See Reflection Section Below

Capstone Inquiry Project AASL Standards Checklist Template

Class: American History				
Project: President Debates (End of Year Final)				
Skills/Tasks:	Locate and evaluate credible primary and secondary sources	Synthesize information into coherent arguments	Develop persuasive arguments using evidence	Reflect on research and debate performance
AASL Standards Addressed:	I. B.1; C.1 II. B.2 IV. A.2; A.3 V. A.1 VI. A.3	I. B.3; C.4 II. B.3 VI. C.1	I. A.1; B.1; C.4 II. A.2; B.3, C.1; C.2; D.2 III. C.2; D.1 VI. C.1; D.1	I. D.4 IV. B.3 V. B.1; D.2 VI. D.2

List of Print Resources:

<u>Author</u>	<u>Citation</u>
Michael Beschloss	Beschloss, M. R. (2018). <i>Presidents of war</i> . Crown.
William A. DeGregorio	DeGregorio, W. A. (2023). <i>The complete book of U.S. presidents</i> (9th ed.). Crestline Books.
George Sullivan	Sullivan, G. (2020). <i>Scholastic book of presidents</i> (2020 ed.). Scholastic Inc.
Franklin Taylor	Taylor, F. (2020). <i>Presidents of the United States of America: The history of every U.S. president from George Washington to Donald Trump</i> . History Publishing Group.
National Geographic	National Geographic. (2020). <i>Our country's presidents: A complete encyclopedia of the U.S. presidency</i> (9th ed.). National Geographic Kids.
Dylanna Press	Dylanna Press. (2022). <i>A kid's guide to U.S. presidents: Fascinating facts about each president</i> (Updated through 2020 Election). Dylanna Publishing, Inc.

List of Digital Resources:

launchpad.classlink.com/boystown

<https://nebraskaccess.nebraska.gov/>

<https://www.britannica.com/>

Reflection:

Planning:

In planning this lesson, my primary goal was to create an engaging and unique experience that brought both the skills of historical research while allowing students the ability to practice real life communication skills. I wanted students to do more than just memorizing historical facts and instead think critically and be able to apply and use those skills immediately. During the planning process, I focused on collaboration between the classroom history teacher and myself playing the role as the school librarian. Overall, I really enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with another teacher on a possible future lesson that could really be taught. I am a big supporter of the idea that two minds are better than one. The ability to put our different levels of skills in different areas allowed us to create a rich and engaging unit for our students to take part in.

Teaching:

Even though I was unable to teach this unit, I believe the idea of strong student engagement rather than fact memorization that is usually portrayed in history classes is very strong and relevant all throughout this lesson. By focusing on research instruction from the library with classroom debate, students learn how to find the answers themselves instead of just being handed down everything. This way the information that the students learned throughout this unit stay with them for many years to come, including the life skills they were also forced to practice.

One of the biggest teaching aspects I enjoyed most throughout this lesson is the collaboration aspect with the school librarian. I feel like in today's teaching world there are too many instances where teachers are left alone or departments are in their own little worlds. Having two professional staff not only support but generate ideas in how to make the lesson more engaging and even fun for the students was a great experience, because in the end, that's what we really want to deliver to the students.

In conclusion, if I had the opportunity to teach this lesson, I think it would remind me why I love being in education and working across multiple schools. Helping students is really about sparking curiosity, guiding exploration, and empowering

students to think for themselves and even take charge. This experience would cover all those areas and more and likely be both challenging and fulfilling. In the end, creating this lesson reminded me that effective teaching happens when students are active participants in their own learning journey.

Differentiated Materials:

If I were to teach this Presidential Debate lesson, I would be intentional in designing and implementing materials that support the variety of diverse needs of my students. For students at different levels across my classrooms, I would provide different levels of research guides and scaffolds that break down complex tasks into manageable steps. For example, visual learners would benefit more from graphic organizers and infographics, including things like presidential timelines, while auditory learners could engage with short video biographies, audio books, or even recorded speeches. For multilingual learners, I would include language support for these students such as vocabulary lists, sentence starters for debate responses, the ability to change lexile reading levels for article readings, and opportunities to rehearse arguments in small groups before presenting to the class. In conclusion, I believe that having these differentiated materials would not only support academic success but also support the variety of different students and their learning styles. By planning intentionally, this lesson would support a classroom culture where every learner feels valued, capable, and empowered.

Assessment of Student Learning:

Overall, even though this lesson was not able to be given, I would expect students to perform very well in creating their outlines and reflection papers. I could see the biggest areas of struggle being debate delivery and argument strength as I feel my school in particular many of our students are lacking these real life skills.

Student Rubric

<u>Category</u>	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>
Research & Source Quality	Student uses credible and relevant primary and secondary sources. Demonstrates depth of research and correct citations.	/10
Historical Context	Student demonstrates knowledge of the president's era, policies, and leadership challenges.	/10
Argument Strength	Student uses evidence effectively to build and defend an argument during debate.	/15
Debate Delivery	Student speaks confidently, maintains eye contact, and uses tone effectively.	/15
Student Outline	Outline clearly presents president's key policies, challenges, and legacy.	/10
Reflection Paper	Student paper reflects on debate performance, learning, and research process. Paper is at least 2-3 paragraphs.	/20

Presidential Debate Project – Student Outline Worksheet

Name: _____

President Assigned: _____

Part 1: Background

Full Name & Years in Office:	
Political Party:	
Vice President:	
Major Events During Presidency:	
Key Accomplishments:	
Major Challenges Faced:	
Leadership Style or Traits:	

Part 2: Historical Context

Prompt:

What was happening in the United States and the world during this president's time in office?

How did these events shape their decisions and leadership?

Notes:

Part 3: Policy Highlights

Domestic:

- Economy:
- Education:
- Civil Rights:
- Health Care:
- National Defense:

Foreign:

- Economy:
- Education:
- Civil Rights:
- Health Care:
- National Defense:

Part 4: Debate Preparation

A. Opening Statement

Summarize who your president is, their biggest achievements, and why they were an effective leader.

B. Main Arguments

Argument #1	Supporting Evidence (Facts, Quotes, Data)

Argument #2	Supporting Evidence (Facts, Quotes, Data)

Argument #3	Supporting Evidence (Facts, Quotes, Data)

C. Closing Statement

Summarize why your president's leadership had a lasting and positive impact on the nation.

Part 5: Source List

List all the books, databases, or websites you used for your research (MLA or APA format).

- 1.