President vs. President

Each student will research a past deceased president, review their life, speeches, quotes, term in office, etc., and use it to run for President versus another past President.

Grade Level: 7 - 9th
Subject: Social Studies
Length of Time: About 3-5 Class Periods

Common Core Alignment

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.6-8.7 - Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1.B - Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.2.a - Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.6 - Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

Objectives & Outcomes

The students will research a single president, describe the term in office, plan a mock campaign, and present a persuasive speech to the class convincing “voters” to elect them President.

Materials Needed

Access to Internet, poster board or similar for campaign signs, markers
Prepare ahead of time: A number of index cards matching the number of students in the class, each with a different deceased past president written on it. Teacher’s choice of presidents to use for the lesson. Choose a location for students to post their campaign signs, either in the classroom or halls. Prepare an outline for students to use for their research and speeches.

**Procedure**

**Opening to Lesson**
- Show videos of two current or past speeches from candidates who are running against each other for president.
- Ask students their opinions about the speeches, the candidates, etc.
- Allow for responses and discussion.

**Body of Lesson**

**Modeling**
- Ask students to name some past deceased presidents. Ask who they think would win an election if the some of the past presidents could run for president against each other. For example: Who would win the election if Washington ran against Lincoln? Adams vs. Eisenhower?
- Allow for responses and discussion.
- Ask if they believe the past presidents could handle the current issues in America today.
- Allow for responses and discussion.

**Guided Practice**
- Tell students they will become one of the past deceased presidents. Show students the prepared index cards, each with the name of a different president. They will randomly choose a president to research.
- Place cards in a box or other container. Students choose a president. Collect the index cards.
- Distribute the prepared Research Outline or rubric. Explain to students they will research their chosen president.
- Next, place index cards in box again, this time choose two random cards. The two presidents chosen will “run against each other” in a mock election.
- Tell students, in addition to researching their president, they will prepare a persuasive speech for an election versus the randomly chosen opponent.
- The students will give their 2 to 3 minute speeches, based on their research, using issues from today as well, to the class for a mock election.
- Each student will make one Campaign sign. Signs to be posted in selected area. Every sign should also indicate who the opponent is in the election, or place sign pairs together.
- Allow time for the students to do their research during class, and for homework. Remind students to think about their speeches as they do the research.
- Once the research is completed, the students will then write their speeches, a rough draft, then a final copy.
• Each “candidate” will give their speech; the remaining class members will immediately vote for “president”. (Remind students to base their vote for the President using the speech and its presentation, not the student.)
• It should take no more than ten minutes per “election” speech and voting. Compile voting results after ALL speeches have been given. Announce all winners on the same day with an Election Party during class.

Independent Practice
• Students will do the research independently.

Closing
• Ask students: What do you think would be the toughest part about running for president? How would you handle the difficulties? Would you ever think about running? Why or why not?
• Allow for responses and discussion.

Assessment & Evaluation
Create a test or quiz related to the researched presidents. Students will turn in completed research for assessment. Evaluate speeches using a rubric.

Modification & Differentiation
Instead of using presidential campaigns, use local, state, or other elections. Distinguish between Democrat, Republican, or other parties. Assign each student one of the presidents to research and who they will be running against. Allow students to present their speeches to other grade levels during the “election”, giving access to more voters. Create and conduct impromptu news conferences during the “candidates” research.

Related Lesson Plans

Exploring the West
The lesson will teach the students why there was an expansion to what is now the western half of the United States, as well as the displacement of Native Americans.

History of Hanukkah
Students will read a passage about the history of Hanukkah and “talk to the text” to understand the story better. Students will answer questions individually and then with a partner to understand the text better.

It’s a Wonder - Filled World
Students will learn about the list of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World compiled by
the ancient Greeks.

**Presidential Politics**

Students will research a past president’s opinions, promises and goals discussed prior to their election and compare/contrast them during their years in office.