

Analyzing Early American Figures (8th Grade)

Analyzing History

Chelsee Wilson
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Grade Level	8th Grade	**Time Frame**	2–3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	120 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

Do people make history, or does history make people?

Summary

History courses are filled with people who have "made" history. In this lesson, students will analyze historical figures and make connections about their places in history. Students will research an early American historical figure of their choice and examine their impact during their historical period, as well as their relationship to other historical figures. This lesson can be used in any history course, but it is best suited to introduce key historical figures at the beginning of a unit or to review key historical figures at the end of a semester.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Tell Me Everything activity about early American historical figures.

Explore

Students randomly choose a name and begin completing a KWHL chart about the historical figure they choose.

Explain

Students research their historical figure to finish the KWHL chart.

Extend

Students create a poster project related to their historical figure.

Evaluate

Students participate in a Gallery Walk, revisit their KWHL chart, and submit their posters and KWHL charts.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages
IDT403: Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices PK-12)

4A: Students will comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize textual sources to acquire and refine knowledge in the social studies.
5A: Students will summarize and paraphrase, integrate evidence, and cite sources to create written products, research projects, and presentations for multiple purposes related to social studies content.
5B: Students will engage in authentic inquiry to acquire, refine, and share knowledge through written presentations related to social studies.

Attachments

- Historical Figure Project-TEMPLATE—Analyzing Early American Figures - Spanish.pdf
- Historical Figure Project-TEMPLATE—Analyzing Early American Figures.docx
- Historical Figure Project-TEMPLATE—Analyzing Early American Figures.pdf
- Historical Figures - Project Rubric—Analyzing Early American Figures.docx
- Historical Figures - Project Rubric—Analyzing Early American Figures.pdf
- Historical Figures Cards—Analyzing Early American Figures.docx
- Historical Figures Cards—Analyzing Early American Figures.pdf
- Historical Figures Project Example—Analyzing Early American Figures.pdf
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing Early American Figures - Spanish.docx
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing Early American Figures - Spanish.pdf
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing Early American Figures.docx
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing Early American Figures.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Analyzing Early American Figures.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- KWHL Chart (attached; one per student)
- Historical Figures Cards (attached)
- Historical Figures Project Template (attached; one per student)
- Historical Figures Project Example (attached; one per student)
- Historical Figures Project Rubric (attached)
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons, pens, pencils, etc.
- Sticky notes

20 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to introduce the lesson. Display the title of the lesson on **slide 2**, then introduce students to the essential question and learning objective on **slides 3** and **4**. Display **slide 5**. Ask students to get out a piece of paper to participate in a Tell Me Everything activity. Instruct the students to write down the name of every famous early American historical figure they can think of. Start the 1-minute timer on the slide.

Once time is up, display **slide 6**. Instruct students that they will write down everything that they know about the people they included in their list. Start the 1-minute timer on the slide. After the timer is up, invite students to discuss their lists with a partner and the class.

Display **slides 7** and **8** and ask students if any of the individuals displayed on the slides were included in their lists. If students say no, ask them why they were not included on their initial lists.

Explain to students that there are a number of famous early American figures who played important roles in history, and it will be the students' job to become experts on ONE early American historical figure.

20 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Selecting Historical Figures

Depending on the class, consider having students select their own historical figure to research from a class-generated list or use the one provided. Feel free to add other historical figures to the list as you see fit. To prepare for the drawing, print out the **Historical Figures Cards** document that is attached to this lesson, and cut out the names you wish to use.

Display **slide 9**. Ask students to draw their historical figures at random by selecting a slip of paper from a container. The individual they select will be the historical figure they will become an expert on. Below is the list of historical figures:

- George Washington
- Thomas Jefferson
- Alexander Hamilton
- Sitting Bull
- Abigail Adams
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Susan B. Anthony
- Frederick Douglass
- Abraham Lincoln
- Thomas Paine
- John Adams
- John Brown
- James Madison
- Andrew Jackson
- Osceola
- Pontiac
- Sojourner Truth
- Harriet Tubman
- Nat Turner
- William Lloyd Garrison
- Dred Scott
- Thaddeus Stevens
- Crispus Attucks
- Pocahontas

Display **slide 10** and pass out the **KWHL Chart** handout to each student. Instruct students to put the name of their historical figure at the top of the page. Introduce students to the KWHL Graphic Organizer instructional strategy.

Next, ask students to fill in the "K" column with everything they know about their historical figure. Allow 3–5 minutes of writing time.

Display **slide 11**. Ask students to fill in the "W" column with everything they want to know about their historical figure. Give students an additional 3–5 minutes for this part of the activity.

Teacher's Note: Identifying Knowledge Gaps

Consider asking students to use the "K" column as a way to generate questions or identify knowledge gaps regarding their historical figure, such as, "What do I need to know about my historical figure?" or "What facts about my historical figure do I want to know?"

Display **slide 12**. Ask students to fill in the "H" column with ideas about how they might find the information they listed in their "W" column. Tell students that this will serve as an action plan as they research their historical figures.

30 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 13**. Using their KWHL Charts (specifically the "W" and "H" columns) as a reference, students will now consult their history books and/or appropriate online resources to find the information they identified in the "W" column. As students research, ask them to take appropriate notes about their findings and write down where they found the information. In their notes, students might include the following information relating to their historical figures:

- Notable accomplishments
- Education
- Connections to other historical figures
- Interests or hobbies
- Contributions to their field
- Interesting facts

Teacher's Note: Historical Figure Research Resources

If students are doing their research online, some sites you might suggest include the National Archives, the Smithsonian Learning Lab, Oklahoma Social Studies Framework, Reading Like a Historian, and Encyclopedia Britannica. If students have access and time, consider encouraging them to visit their local library for research outside of class.

Optional Tech Integration "twist"

If students have access to technology, consider allowing them to find and curate their research digitally using a tool like Weje.io. (Unhide and use **slide 14**.)

30 minutes

Extend

Give each student a sheet of white paper, or pass out copies of the attached **Historical Figures Project Template**.

Display **slide 15**. Students will fill in the required information that they found during their research and draw in any images and symbols that they associate with their historical figures. Hang a copy of the **Historical Figures Project Example** to help guide the students.

- Quote: Which quote would best reflect the historical figure? If the assigned historical figure has many quotes attributed to them, suggest to students that they select one of those.
- Fast Facts: What are the key pieces of information about the historical figure? Students should highlight five things in short bullets.
- Historical Importance: Why is the figure important in the scope of history? Students should write a quick sentence or two explaining why their historical figure is important.
- Six-Word Memoir: Instead of having students write a long biography of their historical figure, have students create concise "memoirs" of their figures that sum up their historical importance.
- Historical Homie (BFF): If time travel were available, which other historical figure would this historical figure get along with the best? Why would they be friends?
- Historical Hater (Worst Enemy): Who would the historical figure despise most in all of history? Why would they not get along?
- Image: What does the historical figure look like? Students should draw a picture of the historical figure.
- Symbols: Based on the student's research of the figure, what four symbols would they associate with them? Students should draw these four symbols.

Optional Tech Integration "twist"

If students have access to technology, consider letting them create a digital project about their figure using Sutori. While it does require an account, it is free. (Unhide and use **slide 16**.)

20 minutes

Evaluate

Ask students to post their projects on the wall to prepare for a Gallery Walk activity where they will view the projects of their peers. Give students some sticky notes and have them grab a pen or pencil.

Display **slide 17**. As they move around the room to view the projects, encourage students to use sticky notes to provide feedback or praise for other students' projects.

Teacher's Note: Optional Sutori Integration

If students used Sutori to create their projects, students can comment digitally on each portion of the presentation. (Unhide and use **slide 18**.)

Once students have rotated back to their own projects, give them time to review the feedback and make any changes that they see fit.

Display **slide 19**. Have students return to their KWHL Charts and fill out the "L" column with what they have learned about their historical figures.

Have students turn in their KWHL charts and research notes. Consider providing formative feedback about their research techniques and providing suggestions that can aid them in their next research project. Use the attached **Historical Figures Project Rubric** to grade student's projects.

Resources

- Effinger, S., & Widdicombe, L. (2008, February 25). Say it all in six words. Ms. Effie's Lifesavers. https://mseffie.com/assignments/six_words/six_words.html
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk/Carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). KWHL graphic organizer. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/127
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Six-word memoirs. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/75
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Tell me everything. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/107
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sutori. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2172