

Analyzing American Historical Figures

Analyzing History

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Grade Level	11th 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 American historical figure and examine that person's impact during the period in which they lived, 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 American historical figures.

Explore

Students each choose a historical figure and begin completing a KWHL chart about that person.

Explain

Students research their historical figures to finish the KWHL chart.

Extend

Students create posters to profile their historical figure.

Evaluate

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

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices PK-12)

5: Engage in Evidence-Based Writing -Students will apply effective communication skills by developing a variety of evidence-based written products designed for multiple purposes and tasks, in order to demonstrate their understandings of social studies concepts, ideas, and content.
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

- 11th Grade U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- 11th Grade U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- 11th Grade U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures.docx
- 11th Grade U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pdf
- AP U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- AP U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- AP U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures.docx
- AP U.S. History List—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pdf
- Historical Figure Profile Example—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pdf
- Historical Figure Profile Rubric—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Rubric—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- Historical Figure Profile Rubric—Analyzing American Historical Figures.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Rubric—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pdf
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing American Historical Figures.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pdf
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing American Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing American Historical Figures.docx
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Analyzing American Historical Figures.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- KWHL Chart (attached, one per student)
- Historical figures list: 11th Grade U.S. History or AP U.S. History (attached, one copy)
- Hat or other container (optional: for drawing names)
- Historical Figure Profile Template (attached, one per student)
- Historical Figures Profile Rubric (attached, one per student)
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons, pens, pencils, etc.
- Student devices with Internet access (optional)

Engage

Begin by displaying **slide 4**. Ask students to get out a piece of paper to participate in a Tell Me Everything activity. Give students one minute to write down the name of every famous American historical figure they can think of.

After the time is up, display **slide 5**, and give students an additional minute to write down everything that they know about the people in their lists. When the minute is up, invite students to discuss their lists with a partner.

Display **slides 6 and 7**, and ask students if any of these people (slide 6: Madam C. J. Walker and Chief Joseph; slide 7: Andrew Carnegie and Jane Addams) were included in their lists. If students say no, ask them why not.

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

Explore

For the Explore activity, each student will need to select a single historical figure to learn more about. We have attached two lists of historical figures to this lesson: the 11th Grade U.S. History list and the AP U.S. History list. Feel free to use either list and add other historical figures as you see fit. Or, engage students in a brainstorming session to build your own class list. You can choose to cut out the names and have students each draw a historical figure at random from a hat or another container (**slide 8**), or you can allow students to select which historical figure they'd like to research.

Once students have each selected a historical figure, tell them that they will use a KWHL Graphic Organizer to help them as they learn more about their figures.

Display **slide 9**. Pass out copies of the KWHL Chart and have students write the name of their historical figure at the top of the chart.

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 10**. 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 11**. Ask students to fill in the "H" column with ideas about how they might find the information they listed in the "W" column. Tell students that this will serve as an action plan as they research their historical figures.

Explain

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 research the information that they identified in the "W" column.

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, the Oklahoma Council for the Social Studies, Reading Like a Historian, Encyclopedia Britannica, and The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. If students have access and time, consider encouraging them to visit their local library for research outside of class.

Display **slide 12**. As students research, ask them to take quality 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

Optional Tech Integration "twist"

Consider allowing students to find and curate their research digitally using a tool like Weje.io (**slide 13**).

Extend

Give each student a blank sheet of paper, or pass out copies of the attached Historical Figure Profile Template.

Display **slide 14**. 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.

- Quote: Which quote would best reflect the historical figure? If students find that their figures have many quotes attributed to them, suggest that they select one that they find particularly interesting or meaningful.
- Fast Facts: What are five key pieces of information about the historical figure? Students should highlight these using brief bullet points.
- 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 longer biographies of their historical figures, have them create concise "memoirs" of their figures that sum up their historical importance in just six words.
- BFF: If time travel were available, which other historical figure(s) would this historical figure get along with the best? Why would they be friends?
- Worst Enemy: Who would this historical figure despise the most in all of history? Why would the pair not get along?
- Image: What does this historical figure look like? Students should draw a picture in the large oval.
- Symbols: Based on students' research, what four symbols would they most associate with their figures? Students should draw these symbols in the small square boxes.

Optional Tech Integration "twist"

Consider letting students create a digital project about their figure using a tool such as Sutori. Access to Sutori is free but does require an account (**slide 15**).

Evaluate

Ask students to post their projects on the wall to prepare for a Gallery Walk where they will view their peers' work. Give each student several sticky notes, and have them grab a pen or pencil.

Display **slide 16**. As they move around the room to view the projects, encourage students to use their sticky notes to provide feedback or praise for other students' projects.

Teacher's Note: Digital Gallery Walk

If students used Sutori to create their projects, they can comment digitally on each portion of their peers' presentations **(slide 17**).

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

Display **slide 18.** 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. A Historical Figure Profile Rubric is attached, which you can use to assist with grading students' 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/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505a54d
- K20 Center. (n.d.). KWHL Graphic Organizer. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505dd47
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Six-Word Memoirs. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/7b4de59085f566aa097814b8c002b98a
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Tell Me Everything. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/baee4e90c5fa1a7060ca04dd8b001ea4
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sutori. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2172