

Analyzing World Historical Figures

Analyzing History

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	120 minutes
Course	World 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 analyze historical figures and make connections about their places in history. Students research a world historical figure of their choice and examine their impact and 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 share everything they know about world historical figures.

Explore

Students select historical figures to research and describe things they know about the person and want to learn about the person.

Explain

Students research their historical figures.

Extend

Students create posters about their historical figures.

Evaluate

Students read and comment on their peers' posters and reflect on what they learned during the lesson.

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.

Attachments

- Historical Figure List—Analyzing World Historical Figures.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Rubric—Analyzing World Historical Figures.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing World Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing World Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing World Historical Figures.docx
- Historical Figure Profile Template—Analyzing World Historical Figures.pdf
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing World Historical Figures - Spanish.docx
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing World Historical Figures - Spanish.pdf
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing World Historical Figures.docx
- KWHL Chart—Analyzing World Historical Figures.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Analyzing World Historical Figures.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- KWHL Chart handout (attached; one per student)
- Historical Figure List document (attached)
- Historical Figure Profile Template handout (attached; one per student)
- Historical Figure Profile Rubric document (attached)
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons, or other colored writing utensils
- Pens or pencils
- Posters
- Student devices with internet access (optional)
- Large sticky paper easel pad (optional)

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached Lesson Slides to guide the lesson. Begin with **slide 2** and share with students that they are analyzing historical figures. Review **slides 3–4** to introduce the essential question and learning objectives.

Display **slide 5** and introduce the Tell Me Everything strategy to students. Have students take out a blank sheet of paper and write the name of every world historical figure they can think of. Allow students 1 minute to complete the activity.

Display **slide 6** and have students continue the activity by recording everything they know about the people included on their lists. Then, invite students to discuss their lists with a partner.

Show **slide 7** and ask students if the people listed on the slide, Desmond Tutu and Augustus, were on their lists. If students say no, ask them why not. Repeat the process for **slide 8**, sharing the images of Catherine the Great and Shaka Zulu.

Share that there are many famous figures who played important roles in world history, and students will become experts on *one* famous world historical figure during this lesson.

20 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Historical Figure Selection

In this phase, each student will select a single historical figure to learn more about. Use the attached **Historical Figure List** document to have students select a person, or engage students in a brainstorming session to build a class list.

After finalizing your chosen list, consider cutting apart the names in the Historical Figure List or writing names on individual slips of paper. These slips can be shuffled in a container and students can draw names at random. You may also consider assigning students individual figures or allowing students to select their figures. Consider editing **slide 9** with your instructions for how students will select a figure.

Display **slide 9** and have students select a historical figure using your chosen method.

Display **slide 10** and share the KWHL Graphic Organizer strategy. Give each student one copy of the attached **KWHL Chart** and have each student write the name of their historical figure at the top of the chart. Share that students should complete the chart as they learn more about their figures.

Ask students to first complete the “K” column with everything they know about their historical figures. Allow 3–5 minutes for them to complete the column.

Show **slide 11** and ask students to complete the “W” column with everything they want to know about their historical figures. Allow 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 figures. These could be questions 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 the "W" column. Tell students that this column should serve as a plan for how they are going to research their historical figures.

40 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Historical Figure Research Resources

In this phase of the lesson, students should research their historical figures. You may consider having students consult their history books, visit the school library, or use online resources.

If students are using online research, you may consider directing them to sites including Teaching History, the Smithsonian Learning Lab, and Encyclopedia Britannica. If students are able to, consider encouraging them to visit their local library to conduct research outside of class time.

Display **slide 13** and have students begin their research using their KWHL Charts to guide them. As students research, have them take quality notes about their findings and record where they found the information. Encourage them to include information about their figures related to the following topics:

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

30 minutes

Extend

Optional Profile Materials

In this phase of the lesson, students complete historical figures profiles. These can be completed on the handout, a blank sheet of paper, or on a large sticky paper easel pad. Completing it on the sticky paper easel pad adds less permanence to the project, but makes a convenient Gallery Walk display.

Consider which method you would prefer students to use prior to this phase of the lesson.

Give each student one copy of the attached **Historical Figure Profile Template** handout or a piece of paper depending on the method you chose.

Display **slide 14** to share the guidelines for the project. Have students use the their research to add information about their historical figures related to the following topics:

- Quote: Which quote best reflects the historical figure? If students find multiple quotes attributed to their figure, have them select one they find particularly interesting or meaningful.
- Fast Facts: What are five key pieces of information about the historical figure? Have students use brief bullet points to write these.
- Historical Importance: Why is the historical figure important in the scope of history? Have students write 1–2 sentences explaining why their figure is important.
- Six-Word Memoir: Have students use the Six-Word Memoir strategy to sum up their figures' historical importance in only six words.
- BFF: If time travel were possible, which other historical figure(s) would get along well with this historical figure? Why would they be friends?
- Worst Enemy: Who would the historical figure despise most in all of history? Why would they not get along?
- Image: What does this historical figure look like? Have students draw a picture in the oval.
- Symbols: Based on their research, what four symbols would students associate with their figures? Have students draw these symbols in the small square boxes.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Ask students to post their projects on the wall. Give each student several sticky notes and have them grab a pen or pencil.

Display **slide 15**. Conduct a Gallery Walk so students can view their peers' work. As students move around the room to view the projects, encourage them to use their sticky notes to provide feedback or praise for their peers' projects.

Once students have returned to their own projects, have them review the feedback they received and make any changes.

Display **slide 16**. Have students return to their KWHL Charts and complete the "L" column with what learned about their historical figures during the lesson.

Have students turn in their KWHL charts and research notes. Consider providing formative feedback about their research techniques and offer suggestions about how they could improve their techniques for the next project.

Consider using the attached **Historical Figure Profile Rubric** document to assist with grading students' projects.

Resources

- Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). https://www.britannica.com/
- 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
- National History Education Clearinghouse. (n.d.). *Teaching history.* https://teachinghistory.org/
- Smithsonian Office of Educational Technology. (n.d.). *Smithsonian learning lab.* https://learninglab.si.edu/