Social Studies

American Political Figures – 3-in-3 Mini-Research Project

Hello, political scientists!

Your task, should you choose to accept it (actually, forget I said that: you have no choice!), is to become an expert on an American political figure who has had an impact on the U.S. election, and then to share your knowledge with the class.

The big focus here is on communication: what can you do to share your ideas with clarity, orally and visually.

Big Idea #2: how does sharing your learning about this person help us all understand the upcoming election better? Think Wu Mei: by closely examining the part, we learn about the whole.

Your research will delve into the following areas:

1. Who is this person? What position do/did they hold in government? What party do/did they represent?

2. What contribution(s) have they made to American politics or history?

    - What are they best known for?

    - What do/did they stand for most passionately?

3. What have they done that is considered controversial?

4. How has their past affected their beliefs and values as a politician?

    - Did their place of birth have an effect on their political beliefs?

    - Did their education—what they studied, where they studied—have an effect on their political beliefs?

    - Does religion play a role in their lives and in shaping their views?

    - What was their job before entering into politics? Did this effect their political beliefs?

    - Did other early events shape their political views?

    How, specifically, did these things help shape their political career?

5. What is their oratory (speaking) style? How would you describe it? What makes them distinctive (stand out)? You will need to find and watch some video footage in order to explore this.

- How do they use their voice?

- How do they use their hands and bodies?

- How do they use language?

- How do they share their ideas?

For each of these aspects, do you consider their choices effective or ineffective? Why?

6. How are they or their legacy important to the upcoming election? What connections can you make between your figure and their ideas, ideals, policy decisions, and advocacy to the battle for the presidency and the House and the Senate?

You will give a short presentation to share your findings.

This needs to be **no longer than three minute**s.

Your presentation needs to contain **three slides** presented in Powerpoint or Google Slides.

- These images will hopefully aid in clarifying our understanding of this person and/or draw attention to Big Ideas that you want to linger within us (think Brené Brown's TEDTalk)

- These images can be pictures, charts, tables, drawings – whatever you think would be most effective

- **Beware of having too much text or too many images on any one slide** – an effective slide increases our understanding of what you are saying; it doesn't compete with your orally delivery, but it also doesn't just repeat what you arep saying

- Keep **clarity of communication** firmly in mind as you design your slides; i.e. avoid light colored text on a light background; consider size of text and images, etc.

This is a play on the "Ignite Talks" presentation style. Visit **http://www.ignitetalks.io/** to see examples and to gain inspiration.

Focus on *how*: how does your figure connect to the election? How were their political beliefs formed? How do they help us understand the issues at play in this election?

You will be assessed on your content and on your oral language skills – see assessment sheet and oral language rubric for details.

CHECKLIST

Research—Where to Look—Some Combination of the Following:

- ☐ PBS NewsHour
- ☐ Wikipedia
- ☐ New York Times—if you see an article that might be helpful, ask Prof. G.B. to print it out
- ☐ NPR
- ☐ Washington Week
- ☐ The Guardian
- ☐ New Yorker
- ☐ Washington Post
- ☐ CNN
- ☐ Social media accounts
- ☐ Fox News
- ☐ MSNBC
- ☐ Democracy Now!
- ☐ CBC
- ☐ BBC
- ☐ Other sites of your choice—but ask: how do I know this is a legitimate source?

Research—What to Look For

- ☐ Political party
- ☐ Place of birth
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Family (if relevant to an understanding of their political impact)
- ☐ Career before entering politics
- ☐ Geographic area(s) represented while in government
- ☐ Important policy decisions and advocacy
- ☐ Contributions to American history
- ☐ Controversial aspects of legacy
- ☐ Go through each of the above and generate ideas: how did/do these things influence my figure's political beliefs? What do they stand for? Why?
- ☐ Oratory style
- ☐ Connections to current election cycle – directly or indirectly; explicit and/or implicit

Preparing for Presentation

- [ ] Reread project outline
- [ ] Write draft of script – focusing on the criteria
- [ ] Remember that the purpose of the project is to help peers understand the present election better: edit script with that thought in mind
- [ ] Incorporate vocabulary specific to this content area (judiciary, incumbent, etc.)
- [ ] Find or create three images that will help heighten understanding of material
- [ ] Read draft aloud and listen for errors and areas that can be strengthened
- [ ] Time script
- [ ] Write final draft of script
- [ ] Create slides with images
- [ ] Save slides onto USB stick
- [ ] Practice delivering presentation
- [ ] Make adjustments to script and images
- [ ] Practice delivering presentation
  Check for:
  - volume
  - eye contact
  - clarity
  - confidence (through practice and use of the breath)
  - realness (do you sound like you? You are enough)
- [ ] Practice delivering presentation
- [ ] Make last adjustments to script (think about clarity and focus)
- [ ] Make last adjustments to slides, asking, "Is this clear?"
- [ ] Make sure USB stick works
- [ ] Practice delivering presentation
- [ ] Deliver presentation
- [ ] Hand in script
- [ ] Do something nice for yourself