

*Voices of Change:
Teaching Leadership Through the Study of Thomas Jefferson*

Description of the Unit: This is a unit designed to teach students about the importance of leadership and promoting positive change in politics and society. The students will examine what it means to be a “good leader” through the study of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, third president of the United States, founder of the University of Virginia, and advocate of religious freedom. Of course, these are just a few of his achievements. However, Thomas Jefferson was also a man of contradictions: a slave owner who promoted the idea of liberty and equality, a strict constructionist who purchased the Louisiana territory without an amendment to the Constitution, and a man who died with a large amount of personal debt yet managed to retire the national debt. Although he was a man of contradictions, his achievements classify him as one of America’s most accomplished leaders. Through the study of his life, students will be able to identify the qualities of a good leader, and recognize that good leaders are imperfect human beings who should not be placed on too high a pedestal that their imperfections skew our judgments of some of their greatest contributions to politics and society. As a result of their study of Thomas Jefferson, students will be instructed to pick an influential individual of their choice to study, write a college-level research paper, and gain a wealth of knowledge about the qualities/ characteristics of human beings who have made a difference.

Description of Students and Setting: The students who will benefit from this lesson belong to the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. They are participants in the Senior Seminar class, which is held during the regular school day. The AVID program is designed to help students who meet certain qualifications gain access to four-year universities upon graduation from high school. Most of the students meet one of the following criteria: first generation to attend college, first in family to attend college, low socioeconomic status, and a generally belonging to a minority group. The goal of the program is to support these students throughout high school, ensure they remain eligible to attend a four-year university, take them to visit different colleges, teach them study and organizational skills, and offer them tutoring for rigorous classes in which they are enrolled. In addition to the college preparation component, there is also a leadership curriculum. The theme for the last few years has been “leadership in global society.” The goal is to teach students how to be leaders in their schools and communities.

Purpose/Big Idea of the Unit: Why do my students need to learn this?

The purpose of this unit is for students to understand the importance of being a good leader, and and/or role model for others. In addition, the lesson is intended to

demonstrate to students the fact that leaders are everyday people with human imperfections. Ultimately, this lesson is an opportunity for students to learn about Thomas Jefferson, and apply their learning to the study of a leader of their choice.

Expected outcomes of learning objectives: What do I want my students to know and be able to do as a result of this unit?

Students should be able to:

- Identify the qualities/characteristics that make a good leader.
- List some of the greatest and most influential leaders of the United States and the world, and identify the characteristics that made/make them good leaders.
- Describe Thomas Jefferson's greatest lifetime accomplishments, and how/why he was successful.
- Analyze primary and secondary source documents written by/about Thomas Jefferson, and a leader of their choice.
- Use primary and secondary sources to write a college-level research paper.
- Identify appropriate sources on the Internet and in print, and cite those sources using the MLA style.

Instructional resources: The following resources will be used to implement this unit in the AVID classroom:

- Cornell Notes
- Primary source documents
- Secondary source documents
- Power Point presentations
- Teacher-generated handouts
- Video Clips from *United Streaming*

Description of the Instructional Process:

Day 1 -

- Anticipatory Set:

The unit will be opened with the anticipatory set (see Anticipatory Set - A Situational Analysis instructions)

- During this activity, have students break into groups of 3-4 participants. Each group will be given a situation to analyze. The situations are geared towards issues/problems that high school students have to deal with. They are very simple (i.e. You are a member of the Associated Student Body (ASB) and you have to organize the junior prom). The students are then asked to answer questions that force them to consider how a good leader would deal with their specific situation.
 - Allow 10-15 minutes for the students to answer the five questions. Have each group present their situation and possible solutions to the class.
- Hand out the *Voices of Change: An Analysis of Positive Leadership Practices Amongst Various Individuals Throughout History* assignment prompt.
- Make sure to include the "World Leaders" list on the backside of the handout. This page lists approximately 45-50 pre-approved leaders that the students can

choose to study. Spend approximately 15-20 minutes reviewing the purpose, logistics, sources, and grading with regards to the research paper. Answer any questions, comments, or concerns.

- Power Point Presentation #1

- Explain to your class that you will be providing them with an example of someone who is considered to have been a very influential and positive leader in American society, Thomas Jefferson.
- Have your students take notes on the presentation.
- Begin the Power Point presentation. The second slide asks students to brainstorm 5-10 characteristics of a good leader with a seat partner. Give them 3-5 minutes to complete this task. Once they have done so, compile a list of adjectives as a class.
- The third slide asks the students to define the word "leadership." Have them complete this task with the same seat partner. Give them approximately three minutes to complete this task. When they are finished, ask volunteers to share their definitions, and compile a list on the board.
- The fourth slide includes a dictionary definition. As a class, compare the dictionary definition with the definitions provided by the students. There are also pictures of various leaders from history. Take a few minutes to ask the students to identify who they see on the slide, and the contributions these people have made to society.

- Homework

- Have students research the leaders they are interested in studying. Have them pick their top two choices and bring the list with them to class the next day. Their list should include a paragraph indicating why they would like to study each of the two choices.
- In addition, the students need to research at least two possible books that they could read for each of their choices. They should indicate the name and author of each of the books.

Day 2 -

- Continue with Power Point presentation #1 - This focuses on the life and accomplishments of Thomas Jefferson. (Approximately 20 minutes)
 - Review slides five through eleven. This will provide your students with an overview of why Thomas Jefferson was such an influential leader, and why he is being used as the model for their research project.
 - Answer any questions your students may have throughout the presentation and at the end. This portion of the presentation is intended to portray Jefferson's accomplishments throughout the course of his life. His contradictions will be examined in Presentation #2.
- Introduce primary source documents - what are they and how should they be used? (Approximately 15-20 minutes)
 - Give the students the teacher-generated handout entitled *Primary Source Documents - FAQ's*

- Review and discuss the questions posed in the handout.
- Allow students 7-10 minutes to complete the activity at the end of the handout asking them to distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Review the correct answers after the allotted time and answer any questions that may arise.
- Homework: Have students bring an example of a primary source to class the next day. Let them know they will be asked to spend 1-3 minutes sharing their source with the class, and explaining why it is considered a primary source.
- Culminating Activity: The point of this activity is for students to learn how to analyze primary sources. These particular documents are very straightforward and will serve as a good introduction to the process of primary source analysis. (May have to be finished for homework, and discussed in class at the beginning of the next day).
 - Have the class break 4-6 groups. You may choose to create same gender or mixed-gender groups. It might be interesting to have all-male and all-female groups examine each of the following letters, and allow them to discuss their findings.
 - After groups have been formed, give each students Thomas Jefferson's letter to his young daughter entitled *Advice to a Young Daughter*, November 28, 1783, and *Education of a Future Son-In-Law*, August 27, 1786
 - Instruct students that the purpose of examining the two letters is to determine what Thomas Jefferson thought about the education of young men versus the education of young women, and what their findings reveal about the time period in which Jefferson lived.
 - Instruct students to annotate the text of their documents as they read. They may choose to read the letters individually or as a group.
 - Have each group answer the following questions:
 - What do you notice about the length of each of the letters?
 - What subjects does Thomas Jefferson expect his daughter to study?
 - What subjects does Thomas Jefferson instruct his son-in-law to study?
 - Based on your analysis of these two letters, what can you conclude about Jefferson's beliefs about how women and men should be educated?
 - What can you conclude about the expectations of males and females in the late 1700s?
 - Most likely, the groups will not finish their analysis in class. Have them finish the activity for homework, and be ready to discuss with their groups at the next class meeting.

Day 3 -

- Each student was supposed to bring an example of a primary source to share with the class. This is meant to be a very informal sharing session. (Allow for approximately 20 minutes to complete this activity).
 - If possible, move the students desks into a large circle, and have each student share their example of a primary source.

- Hopefully, this will raise questions as to what is truly considered a primary source, and what is actually a secondary source. This would be the perfect time to discuss the differences.
- After the presentations, have the students break into their primary source analysis groups.
 - Give them approximately 10 minutes to discuss what they learned from each of the letters, and have them compare their answers to the questions.
 - Inform each group that they will be expected to present their findings to the class.
 - After each group has shared their discussion with the class, reiterate the importance of primary source documents to your students and explain how these letters could be used in writing a research paper.
- Begin Power Point presentation #2 (Approximately 30 minutes)
 - This presentation consists solely of famous Jefferson quotes on politics, religion and slavery. The purpose of this presentation is to reveal some of Jefferson's greatest accomplishments; however, it also provides the presenter with an opportunity to reveal some of Jefferson's most difficult contradictions. The result of this lecture should be a discussion focused on how Jefferson managed to serve as a positive leader in American society despite his contradictions. The presentation will address the following:
 - Strict constructionist who doubled the size of the United States without amendment to the Constitution
 - Retired the national debt, but died with large amounts of personal debt
 - Slave owner who spoke against the institution of slavery
 - The presentation will also address Jefferson's beliefs on freedom of religion, and struggles to differentiate reason from religious tradition
 - Give students the *Thomas Jefferson Presentation #2 Lecture Guide* to complete during and upon completion of the presentation.
 - Discuss their answers (this may have to take place during the next class session)

Day 4 -

- Assign students their specific leaders (try to ensure that each student studies a different leader - pick one of their two preferences)
- Give students 5-7 days to obtain a book about their leader
- In order to sum up the study of Thomas Jefferson, show students a film clip/video that sums up some of the most important topics. If you have access to *United Streaming.com*, a video database, there are a variety of Jefferson film clips and full-length videos that contain teaching guides.

Day 5 -

- Refine research paper criteria and discuss questions/concerns about the research paper project
- Give students the *How Do I Write a Research Paper?* Handout
- Review and answer any questions about the research process

* Teaching students how to write a research paper is a long and arduous process. It will ultimately take much longer than a week or two of instruction. In fact, for the purposes of the AVID class, it will be a project that spans several months. The previous lessons are intended to introduce the leadership topic through the study of Thomas Jefferson, and should only take approximately one week of instruction. How the actual research paper portion (thesis statement, body, conclusion, and citations) is taught is up to the individual teacher.