

The Story of President Truman's Foreign Policy Decisions

Teacher Name: Cheryl Witt **Grade Level(s):** High School **Course:** U.S. History

Description of Activity: Cooperative Learning, Technology Based, and Cross-Curricular

Rationale: About one-third of our student population is in the Visual Art Magnet program. This assignment allows me to tap into their interest as well as help the students who are not auditory learners. In addition, this is another way to re-enforce the material covered through class lectures and discussions as well as for me to assess what my students do know about the particular topics related to the Cold War during the Truman administration.

Required Time Frame: One week for completion of product. However, the students will be spending time prior to this project learning about the Truman administration and its decisions.

From where in the conference did I get the idea for this activity or assignment: Various Museum Displays; Speakers---Gail Halverson, Roger Miller, Michael Benson, Peter Hahn. A number of speakers throughout the week talked about how important it was to use primary source materials such as political cartoons, pictures, and the sort to get students to understand the story---to see the picture. Thus, the idea of creating story boards about topics related to Truman's foreign policy decisions.

Lesson Objectives:

- ◆ The student will understand the foreign policy decisions of the Truman administration.
- ◆ The student will understand the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs.

District, State, or National Performance and Knowledge Standards/Goals/Skills:

State of Kansas Civics-United States History Benchmark 3.2: The student uses a working knowledge and understanding of individuals, groups, ideas, developments, and turning points in the era of the Cold War to analyze the origins of the Cold War.

State of Kansas Civics-United States History Benchmark 3.3: The student uses a working knowledge and understanding of individuals, groups, ideas, developments, and turning points in the era of the Cold War to evaluate the foreign policies of Truman and Eisenhower.

Secondary Materials:

American Anthem: Modern American History. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2007.

Chapter 15.

Berlin Crisis Timeline. Truman Library Summer Teacher Institute Packet.

Primary Sources:

None specific to this activity. However, students may utilize primary sources in their research for completion of the product.

Technology Required: Computer with internet access and Power Point capability.

Description of Activity or Assignment:

This assignment is meant to be a culminating activity for our unit on the Cold War as it relates to foreign affairs.

The students will use information from their textbook and the internet to create a story board over a specific aspect of President Harry S. Truman's foreign policy. The students will divide themselves into groups of three to complete this project. Each group will be assigned a specific topic to research and to create a story board over. The topics include the following: The atomic bomb, the Berlin Airlift Crisis, the Chinese Civil War, the formation of the United Nations, the formation of N.A.T.O., the Korean War, the Marshall Plan, the Potsdam Conference, the recognition of Israel, and the Truman Doctrine. While developing the story boards, the students should make certain that they include the following components: the pictures and words should help explain each event, piece of legislation, or foreign policy decision; the frames should contain any key terms, with definition, relative to the event, piece of legislation, or foreign policy decision; and the pictures and words contained on the frames should help explain the topic's significance to the Cold War era---noting the impact the event, piece of legislation, or decision had on the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

I will set up time (4-5 sessions) with the librarian for the students to do research for their topics. I will also allow the students time during class to complete the story board planners as well as work on the finished products. Once the students complete their story boards, each group will give a short presentation to the class. My goal is that before the students are formally assessed on this material that they will have an opportunity to review the material in another format as well as have some visuals to go along with the written and verbal information that was supplied to them.

Assessment:

Truman's Foreign Policy Story Board Rubric

The story board planner is complete.

5 4 3 2 1 x 4 = _____

The story board is neat and presentable.

5 4 3 2 1 x 2 = _____

The story board includes a title that is creative and thought provoking.

5 4 3 2 1 x 2 = _____

The story board is composed of 10-12 frames on separate sheets of paper or separate slides. Each frame includes both pictures and a minimal amount of words.

5 4 3 2 1 x 2 = _____

The story board is original, creative, and pleasing to the eye. Spaces, shapes, textures, and colors enhance the over-all appearance.

5 4 3 2 1 x 4 = _____

The information within the story board is historically accurate and relevant to the specific topic.

5 4 3 2 1 x 5 = _____

The pictures and words contained on the story board help explain the main ideas of the topic.

5 4 3 2 1 x 5 = _____

The group worked effectively as a team in completing all components of the assignment.

5 4 3 2 1 x 6 = _____

Total Points: _____/150

Comments:

Dear Mr. Truman: Are All Men Created Equal?

Teacher Name: Cheryl Witt **Grade Level(s):** High School **Course:** U.S. History

Description of Activity: Individual Assignment, Cooperative Learning, and Using Primary Source Materials

Rationale:

- ◆ I want my students to be able to understand the difficulties of leadership and how as President of the United States you at times have to make decisions that are not popular with the public.
- ◆ I want my students to understand the impact Harry S. Truman had on the civil rights movement.
- ◆ I want to help students perform better on the State of Kansas Writing Assessment.

Required Time Frame: 1-2 class periods (90 minute block)

From where in the conference did I get the idea for this activity or assignment:

Museum Displays---Role of Government and William Radner Lecture; Speakers---Carole Anderson, Kari Frederickson, and Susan Hartmann; Primary Source Documents---Packet on Desegregation of the Military

Lesson Objectives:

- ◆ The student will understand how Harry S. Truman as President of the United States helped African-Americans in their struggle for civil rights.
- ◆ The student will improve in his/her persuasive writing skills.

District, State, or National Performance and Knowledge Standards/Goals/Skills:

State of Kansas Civics-Government Benchmark #3: The student understands how the United States Constitution allocates power and responsibility in the government.

State of Kansas United States History Benchmark #2.7: The student uses a working knowledge and understanding of individuals, groups, ideas, developments, and turning points in the era of the Great Depression through World War II in United States history to examine the complexity of race and ethnic relations.

State of Kansas United States History Benchmark # 3.7: The student uses a working knowledge and understanding of individuals, groups, ideas, developments, and turning points in the era of the Cold War to examine the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil rights.

U.S.D. #259 History Benchmark #5.7: The student engages in historical thinking skills by using primary and secondary sources about an event in U.S. History to develop a credible interpretation of the event, evaluating on its meaning.

Secondary Materials: *American Anthem: Modern American History*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2007. Chapter 15, Section 2.

Primary Sources:

Primary Source Materials were primarily found in Truman Library Summer Teacher Institute Packet on Desegregation and Civil Rights.

“These Men Developed the Double V Idea”. Pittsburgh Courier Article, 1942.

Memorandum from the President to his Administrative Assistant, David K. Niles, with attachment to Attorney General Tom C. Clark, regarding Isaac Woodard. Sept. 20, 1946.

Newspaper Article---“Jury Finds Five Men Not Guilty“, *Kansas City Call*. March 7, 1947.
Harry Truman’s Speech to the NAACP. June 29, 1947.

Letter to Harry Truman from Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Dagen. June 15, 1948.

Letter to Harry Truman from Ernie Roberts. Aug. 18, 1948.

Letter to Harry Truman from Robert Winston. 1948.

Letter to Harry Truman from Andrew Evans. June 20, 1949.

Letter to Harry Truman from Mary Ray. March 21, 1952.

Political Cartoon by Ollie Harrington, “Ye Olde Dixie Inn”. *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 2, 1960.

Political Cartoon by Herb Block, “The Bell Ringer”. *The Washington Post*, 1948.

Technology Required: Paper and Pen or Pencil

Description of Activity or Assignment:

My students will have studied the different responsibilities of the executive branch by this period as well as understand what the treatment of African-Americans was like at this point in history. This activity will be utilized with my class’s study of the domestic policies of Harry S. Truman.

Opening Activity: Students will respond to the following quote by Harry S. Truman.

“The President is the representative of the whole nation, and he’s the only lobbyist...the people in his country have...He’s got to understand people.” Harry S. Truman (April 1959 at the William Radner Lecture at Columbia University) Explain what you think Harry Truman meant by this quote and whether you agree with his view on the President’s role as Chief Executive. After students have an opportunity to respond to the quote, the class may discuss it in more detail.

After students have the opportunity to explain their interpretations of the quote have the students respond to the following discussion questions orally.

Discussion Questions:

- A. How does an individual’s up-bringing influence one’s belief about issues?
- B. What was American society like at this time period?
- C. What power does the President of the United States have to help the American people?

- D. Does an effective leader always make decisions that are popular with the public?
Explain your answer. If no, when is it appropriate for a leader to go against popular public opinion?

Explain to the students that they will write a letter to President Truman from the perspective of one of the following individuals---an African-American, a Civil Rights Leader, a "Traditional" White Southerner, a Northern Business Owner, or a United States Congressman---to advise him about what he should do to address the racial problem within the United States. However, they will not write these letters until they have researched some of the issues. These issues will be highlighted through the primary source information they are going to view as well as through prior information that has been covered within the class.

The students should be divided into groups with approximately (4) four students in each group. Each group will be assigned one of the personas noted above and handed a packet of the above referenced primary source documents. Once the students are divided into groups, the members will analyze the primary sources noting as much information as they can ascertain. The documents should be divided equitably among the group members. The students should think about who authored the document or drew the cartoon; what was being discussed or depicted; where did the incident, event, etc. occur; when was the letter or cartoon written as well as noting any other important dates mentioned or referenced; and why was the author writing the president or why did the artist draw the cartoon?

After analyzing the documents, the group members should discuss what these documents tell them about American society in the mid-1900s. What prior information do they possess that would help further explain the material? How would an individual from their group's assigned perspective view the documents?

After the students have completed their document analysis and group discussion, each member will write a letter to President Truman advising him of what they think he should do regarding civil rights in America. The letters should be written from the perspective of a "typical" person from their assigned category.

After completion of the letters, the class should discuss Truman's policies regarding civil rights noting the ones not approved by the 80th Congress.

Basic information that should be instilled in the students:

Truman believed in the power of government to improve the lives of Americans. Truman believed the federal government had a responsibility to safeguard the poor, eliminate discrimination, and take a strong role in housing, education, health care, and employment.

Truman advanced the cause of civil rights more than any President before him.

While President, Truman integrated the armed services and federal civil service, and fought to end racial discrimination in voting, jobs, education, and housing.

