



Promote The Vote 2008: Who Will You Choose?



Presented by:
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Unit Plan

Author	
First and Last Name	Jana Craig Hare, Amber Rowland and Kari Stubbs
School Name	ALTEC – University of Kansas
School District	ALTEC – University of Kansas
School City, State	Lawrence, KS
Classroom Information	
Subject Area	
Social Studies, Language Arts	
Grade Level(s)	Keywords/Tags:
5 th Grade	engagement, authentic, student-centered, integration, collaboration
Unit Overview	
Unit Title	
Promote the Vote 2008: Who Will You Choose?	
Unit Summary	
<p>This model lesson focuses on Social Studies and Language Arts standards while presenting a “real-world” issue. After discussing the current Presidential candidates, students will explore and discuss priorities they feel are important in a President. Students will rank these priorities using Visual Ranking, a free online tool. After viewing the group results, students will review these priorities as related to each candidate. They will also collaborate with others using the Ask ePals widget and SchoolBlogs. When they have gathered all their information, they will use PersuadeStar to compose a persuasive essay or outline for a multimedia presentation to present their choice for President, hoping to persuade others to vote for this person. This lesson enhances students’ ability to apply higher order thinking skills as well as promotes authentic engagement.</p>	
Building the Foundation	
Standards	
Social Studies: NSS-C.5-8.3 Principles of Democracy: How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?	
Writing: 1.4 The student writes persuasive text using the writing process.	
ISTE NETS-S: 2. Communication and Collaboration 3. Research and Information Fluency 4. Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving & Decision Making 6. Technology Operations and Concepts	

Habits of Learning Taxonomy	
Analysis Evaluation Positive Attitudes and Perceptions about Learning Meaningful Use of Knowledge Productive Habits of Mind Thinking Flexibly Questioning and Posing Problems Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations Thinking Interdependently	
Learning Objectives	
The learner will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the current election issues and candidates for President • Review & rank campaign priorities (in order of their preference) • Compare their priority rankings with the group • Connect with election experts • Discuss and determine how they should be evaluated using PBL Checklist • Develop a persuasive essay and/or presentation using proper word choice, ideas and content, organization, capitalization, conventions and fluency • Peer critique finished products to analyze proper use of writing process • Explain their position and attempt to convince the audience 	
Curriculum-Framing Questions	Essential Question
	Who will you choose?
	Unit Questions
	What is democracy?
	What are the branches of the government?
	What do each of the parties represent?
	Content Questions
Who can run for president?	
How do the current presidential candidates compare on qualifications and issues?	
Student Assessment Plan	
Assessment Summary	
<p>Assessment activities for the project encourage student participation. The concept of the student-centered classroom will be stressed and that students have a role in developing assessment methods for their projects. Participants will use ALTEC's PBL Checklist to introduce, facilitate and assess student products. The class will create their own checklist for the Promote the Vote Unit to be used with either a Persuasive Essay or Presentation. Initially, PBL Checklists will be used by students to determine the criteria on which they will be assessed. Discussions between peers using ePals SchoolBlogs will help students clarify, define and develop concepts and skills necessary for proper writing technique at their grade level. Once a PBL Checklist is developed, students will use it to continuously check their work to be sure they are including the required elements. Finally, students post their Persuasive Essay on SchoolBlogs and will use the checklists they developed to conduct informative peer reviews of final products.</p>	

Assessment Timeline		
Before Project Work Begins	While Students Work on Projects	After Project Work Ends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KWL activity to review what we Know about the elections and Presidential Candidates and what we would like to Learn</i> • <i>Students create a PBL checklist for an essay or multimedia project.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KWL activity to update new information on what we would like to learn about the elections and Presidential Candidates</i> • <i>Students refer to their PBL checklist.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>KWL activity to restate what we have learned about the elections and Presidential Candidates</i> • <i>Peer critique using PBL checklist and SchoolBlogs.</i>
Unit Details		
Assignment Name		
Promote the Vote 2008: Who Will You Choose?		
Approximate Time Needed		
10-12 class sessions (approx. 2 weeks), approximately 50 minutes per class		
Prerequisite Skills		
<p>Ability to delineate opinion verses fact.</p> <p>Find and evaluate evidence to support claim.</p> <p>Use MS Office (Word, Publisher, PowerPoint), Internet browser & possibly Movie-making software.</p> <p>Use technology equipment (computer, digital camera, digital video camera, scanner, etc.)</p>		
Procedures		
<p>Day 1 (Introduction):</p> <p>Students will discuss the current Presidential candidates and cast their vote using Individual Response Systems.</p> <p>After viewing the voting results, students will explore campaign priorities and the impact of these priorities. After a healthy discussion, students will rank these priorities using the Visual Ranking Tool from Intel® Education according to their personal preference. The class will then review these priorities and show the individual group and whole-class rankings. (www.intel.com/education/tools)</p> <p>Day 2 (Exploration/Fact Finding):</p> <p>After reviewing the group rankings, students will explore these priorities as related to each candidate using links created in TrackStar. (http://trackstar.4teachers.org Track #355356)</p> <p>In groups of two (or table groups), students will create questions about the election or candidates that they could post on the blog. Students should be reminded to periodically check back on their blog postings for comments and responses.</p> <p>Days 3-8 (Making the Case):</p> <p>Students will access ALTEC's PBL Checklist to create their own checklist for the Promote the Vote Unit to be used with either a Persuasive Essay or Presentation. The PBL Checklist will be used initially by students to determine the criteria on which they will be assessed. Once the PBL Checklist is developed, students will use it to continuously check their work to be sure they are including the required elements. (http://pblchecklist.4teachers.org/)</p> <p>After researching Presidential Candidates, decide which candidate you will support and write a persuasive essay arguing your points. Students will first review the parts of a persuasive essay in class. Then, they will use the Analyzer Essay (see example below) to practice putting the persuasive essay paragraphs in order. Finally, students will use the Planner to plan out their essay. For students continuing with the Persuasive Essay, use the Writer Tool to begin writing the Persuasive Essay from the Planner. If students are creating a Multimedia presentation, they should use the Planner tool to plan their presentation then create it using the software application/media of their choice. (http://persuadestar.4teachers.org/)</p>		

Days 9-10 (Culminating Activities):
Review types of products that might be developed.

Students will post their persuasive essay, multimedia project, etc. on their SchoolBlog for peer feedback.

Students will use the checklists they developed to conduct informative peer reviews of final products before the final presentations.

As a final culminating activity, students will use the “clickers” to re-vote for their candidate. Data will be reviewed to determine if the group changed their opinion on any of the candidates based on the knowledge gained during the activity.

Analyzer Essay

Writing Essays Is Fun!

Writing an essay can be a difficult and daunting task. At the same time, essay writing can be a confidence builder, and can even be fun! There are three reasons why essay writing is fun. First, it gives one the opportunity to be creative. Second, it allows one to share his or her ideas with others. And finally, it provides an excellent opportunity for healthy debate.

First of all, essay writing provides one with an excellent opportunity to be creative. Whether one chooses to create a work of fiction, an expository essay or a persuasive essay, there are limitless opportunities to express oneself. Will I use humor to get my point across? Or, will I instead choose to use allegory or even a didactic method in my writing? Writing is, in a sense, like painting a picture. The only difference is a painter uses pigment and the writer uses words.

Secondly, essay writing allows one to share his or her ideas with others. When doing research for an essay, the student has the potential to become an expert on his or her topic. Through essay writing one can now share his or her wealth of knowledge with fellow students and even the teacher.

Finally, essay writing, particularly persuasive essay writing, provides an excellent opportunity for healthy debate. Once others have had the opportunity to read an essay, they may find that they disagree with certain details or opinions expressed by the author. The author and reader can then both defend their positions in the friendly art of debate. After all, who doesn't enjoy arguing passionately for what they believe in?

In conclusion, essay writing is a very enjoyable experience. One just has to look at writing from a more creative perspective. Writing can be an extremely creative experience in that the writer is literally painting a picture with words. Composing essays allows one to share ideas, thoughts, and philosophies with others. And, essay writing has the potential to stimulate thought and friendly debate.

Practice Writing (For your future quick reference)

Teacher ID: jana@altec.org

Password: xxxxx

Project Name: Promote the Vote 2008: Who will you choose?

Assignment Code: J3VYMZ1

Extension Activities

Online Collaboration:

- Students will access a series of articles and online discussions available at www.epals.com regarding this issue.
- Participating teachers will join ePals.com and find a partner classroom to work with and set up monitored ePals SchoolMail accounts for their students as well as an ePals SchoolBlog to be shared jointly with the partner classroom. Teachers will put their students into groups, with groups being comprised of students from both geographical locations. Using an ePals SchoolBlog, they will post their comments, research and learning as they prepare to complete a multi-media persuasive presentation. Each group will create one persuasive presentation combining the work of student members from each geographical location. Each group will post their presentation online for students within both classes to comment upon. Both presentations and comments will be graded.

Accommodations for Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will work in small, heterogeneous groups. This will provide additional support for students who struggle. • Students will be provided with choices for their individual product comparison as well as their preferred method of presentation. This will allow students to use the materials that interest them and are at their ability level, yet still be able to participate equally in the project. • Group rules will be established and frequent checkpoints will be made to ensure students stay focused and on track with the project. • Step by step instructions will be provided for the product comparison project as well as common software applications. • Academic support from specialists will be provided, such as tutoring, previewing and reviewing assignments, help with editing, etc.
English Language Learner:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will work in small, heterogeneous groups. This will provide additional support for students who are learning English to practice the language in informal environments for real purposes. • Activities involving uncommon vocabulary will be modified. • An English translation dictionary or a handheld electronic translation device will be provided. • Students can bring their special knowledge of another culture into the classroom. Academic support from specialists will be provided, including translation, tutoring, previewing and reviewing assignments, help with editing, etc.
Gifted Student:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because this unit is built on student choices, all students may select more challenging arguments and presentation modes for their final product (ie. web page, movie, performance, song, etc.) • Students will be encouraged to study related topics of interest, or evaluate more than one planet during the project period

Materials and Resources Required For Unit

Printed Materials:	Social Studies Textbooks & Election Materials
Supplies:	none
Technology - Hardware	Computer, Internet Access, Scanners, Digital Video Cameras
Technology - Software	Internet Browser, PersuadeStar, TrackStar, PBL Checklists, Intel Visual Ranking Tool, ePals School Blogs, Movie Making Software, Desktop Publishing Software
Internet Resources:	TrackStar: http://trackstar.4teachers.org PBL Checklist: http://pblchecklist.4teachers.org/ PersuadeStar: http://persuadestar.4teachers.org/ ePals: http://www.epals.com Intel® Thinking Tools: http://www.intel.com/education/tools
Other Resources:	Video Conferences with Election Officials & Candidates