

Dinner Party at Monticello: A Performance Project

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Description of Project:

Students will use primary and secondary sources to research and perform assigned historical roles of key players of early American history in a fictional dinner party held at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. This culminating project will assess student understanding of a unit on Early American history from the creation of the Constitution to the end of Jefferson's administration. This unit follows the theme of "the role of government" by looking at multiple competing views of what the new federal governments' powers and responsibilities should be.

Over the course of my studies with this Institute a key understanding I have taken away from the experience is the uncertainty of the political world Jefferson inhabited. There were differing perspectives of how the government should operate and what its role would be. Furthermore, the key players in this ongoing debate were uncertain whether this government would even continue to exist very long because of, or in spite of, their efforts. This project will give students a chance to participate in this debate and will force them to argue differing political perspectives.

Description of Students and Setting:

This lesson is designed for a 10th grade advanced or college prep level U.S. History course of 22-25 students. The lesson will take three 55-minute classes.

Purpose:

Students will contemplate and examine historical perspectives on the role of government. Since this debate continues today as it did in the earliest days of the American federal government, and our students are tomorrow's participants in the American democratic process, students will think about this in both a historical and modern context. In order to responsibly participate in their own government they will need to practice articulating their own ideas of what the role of government should be. Engaging students in a study of the conflict between Federalist and Democratic-Republican ideas can help students to identify their own political beliefs without the burden of modern political labels. This activity will encourage students to be free thinkers who weigh ideas based on their own merits rather than what political party platform the ideas represent.

Desired Outcomes/ Learning Objectives:

Students Will Be Able To:

- Identify and define political philosophies of multiple historical figures from the early 1800's
- Read and analyze primary source documents
- Evaluate multiple historical perspectives on the role of government
- Research biographical information on various historical figures
- Debate the role of government from assigned perspectives

Process:

Day 1:

1. Introduce and explain project assignment and rubric to students using handout “Dinner Party at Monticello.”
2. Assign roles and instruct them to research their historical figures for role playing at the dinner party. This dinner party will operate similar to a Socratic Seminar activity in which students are given a series of questions to prepare for and self direct their conversation. During the dinner party partners will be able to confer. Note: Students should be in differentiated pairs so that stronger students are placed with weaker ones.
3. Distribute “Document Analysis” worksheet. Instruct students that during this session they will use the worksheet and work with their partners to analyze the primary source document relating to their assigned historical figure.
4. Take the class to a computer lab where they will be able to access the Internet to prepare for their performance.
5. Once students have completed the “Document Analysis” worksheet in the computer lab, instruct them to read the secondary source provided for their historical figure and complete the “Getting to Know Yourself” worksheet using the information provided. Students may also look for additional information on their historical figure with online encyclopedias and/or academic databases to which they have access. They will continue this worksheet during the next class.
6. In the last five minutes of class instruct the students to log out of their computers, pack up their materials, and spend the rest of the class introducing themselves to each other as their assigned historical figure, being sure to share the most interesting biographical/ philosophical information they learned during the class period.

Day 2:

1. Class will meet in the computer lab. Display the following Do Now: “Resume work on ‘Getting to Know Yourself’ worksheet with partner.”
2. Instruct students to create a placemat to help them during the dinner party discussion. Provide students with a template to guide their work. I recommend using the following google drawings template so that students can collaborate on the placemat online with their partner:
<https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/1LWOIEBhLO7t1RgrwbT6jYhLRpsc6vj5SZHFGE NVe7hw/edit?usp=sharing>. Some students may prefer to create their placemat by hand with pens and markers; encourage them to be creative.
3. Instruct students to finish their placemats for homework and to come to class dressed as their historical figure.

Day 3:

1. Set up two circles comprised of 10-12 desks each: one inside of the other.
2. Allow students five minutes to get into their costumes before beginning the dinner party.
3. Invite the group “Dinner Party #1” to the inner circle for the first round of discussion. Remind the students to stay in character when responding to the questions and each other’s comments. Authenticity is important, but they must maintain a respectful and inclusive environment for learning at all times when discussing topics of race and religion.
4. Have group “Dinner Party #2” sit in the outer circle behind their partner. Remind them that they are to offer support to their partner when needed and that they are to actively listen to the discussion.
5. As moderator, it is the teacher’s job to start the discussion by asking one of the questions from the “Getting to Know Yourself” worksheet. Each student should respond to the question directly or to a comment another student makes during the discussion of that question. In the first round ask half of the assigned questions in no particular order. Reserve the other questions for the second dinner party. The teacher may also use his or her discretion and allow the student playing Jefferson to act as the moderator as long as it is clear that they should also be answering their own questions.
6. Have the first dinner party switch seats with the second dinner party, and repeat the process with the remaining questions.

Dinner Party at Monticello: A Performance Project

Thomas Jefferson has invited you to a dinner party at his Monticello home on _____. He will provide the food and drink*; you, however, must earn your meal by providing him interesting conversation and a friendly exchange of ideas. You are receiving this invitation because you are an important friend, foe, or colleague of Mister Jefferson during your lifetime. Because this is a fictional dinner party, you will be able to sit down with other historical figures of the era regardless of time or geography.

Preparation: You will have two days in the computer lab to...

- Complete document analysis worksheet for primary source
- Complete “Getting to Know Yourself” worksheet
- Create your dinner party placemat
- Create a costume for your historical figure or bring in a prop related to your role

Topics of discussion:

- Role of Government
- Enlightenment Ideas
- Slavery
- Foreign Policy
- Religion
- Public Finance

Responsibilities:

- During the Dinner Party, support discussion by responding to questions posed by the designated moderator
- Actively engage in discussion by asking clarifying questions
- Highlight similarities and differences of opinion between yourself and others at the party
- Actively listen as the other dinner party discusses, and support your partner as he or she contributes to that discussion.
- Wear a costume or outfit that shows historical accuracy or aspects of your historical figure’s personality. Be creative!

***For thought only**, in accordance with Massachusetts law you will not be provided with food that does not meet state nutritional guidelines. However, if you would like to bring carrots, celery, or other nutritious vegetables TJ would be filled with felicity.

Dinner Party Roles Sign-up Sheet

Role	Dinner Party #1	Dinner Party #2
Thomas Jefferson		
John Adams		
Abigail Adams		
George Washington		
Alexander Hamilton		
James Madison		
James Monroe		
John Marshall		
Meriwether Lewis		
Benjamin Franklin		
Aaron Burr		
James Calendar		
John Jay		

Dinner Party Resources:

Use the primary and secondary source documents provided to aid you in your preparation.

Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp

Jefferson in Power:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=2981

John Adams Thoughts on Government:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/thoughts-on-government/>

The Presidency of John Adams:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=2977

Abigail Adams "Remember the Ladies":

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/abigail-adams-to-john-adams/>

First Lady Biography: Abigail Adams:

<http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=2>

George Washington Farewell Address 1996:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

Defining the Presidency:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=2972

Alexander Hamilton Federalist 23:

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch9s5.html>

Alexander Hamilton's Financial Program:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=2973

James Madison Federalist #45:

http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_45.html

James Madison Biography:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=5&bioid=13

James Monroe justifies the Removal Policy:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=677

James Monroe Biography:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/jamesmonroe>

John Marshall on Judicial Review:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=209

John Marshall:

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/democracy/robes_marshall.html

The Lewis and Clark Expedition: Extracts from the Journals of William Clark:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1128

Meriwether Lewis Biography:

http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/i_r/lewis.htm

Madison Debates 87 (Franklin Speech):

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/debates_917.asp

Benjamin Franklin Biography:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=5&bioid=8

Burr, Aaron to Joseph Alston:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/19iCGIANa-hNuDbDPVUdeaU7azgke8CPmTcb9rQ7Pmymysza8AXbucaydPhq8pW0K2UGcvQkAE8483yTo/edit?usp=sharing>

Aaron Burr:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/duel/peopleevents/pande01.html>

James Calendar, Richmond Recorder on Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1378

James Calendar Biography:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=5&bioid=4

John Jay Federalist #2:

http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_02.html

A Brief Biography of John Jay:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/jay/biography.html>

Document Analysis Worksheet:

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/document.html>

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Getting to Know Yourself

Name:

Assigned Role:

Thematic Question	Summary of views in bullet point format
<p>What are your views on the role of government? What is the proper role of government in the lives of the people? Do you want an active and energetic federal government or a small and weak government that stays out of the lives of the people?</p>	
<p>What are your views on Enlightenment ideas? Why should/ should not the government take an active role in scientific discovery? What are the potential benefits? What are the potential negative consequences?</p>	
<p>What are your views on Slavery? How should the new federal government address the issue of slavery? Should slavery be outlawed or allowed to remain? Should slavery be able to expand into the western territories?</p>	

<p>What are your views on foreign policy? How should the government respond to Britain and France as they continue to stop American merchant ships and impress sailors? Should the U.S. create an alliance with Britain, France, or any other country? Why or Why not?</p>	
<p>What are your views on religion? What role should the government play in the religious lives of the people? What role should religious organizations play in the government of the people?</p>	
<p>What are your views on finance? Should the federal government create a National bank? Should the federal government maintain a public debt? What are some potential problems and benefits of a National bank/ debt?</p>	

Monticello Dinner Party Rubric

Name:

Exceeds Expectations (A)

- Demonstrates thorough reading/preparation by answering all questions with thoughtful responses and at least two quotations to support ideas
- Exceptional analytical remarks
- Uses evidence analytically (directs peers' attention to a primary source quote, reads/rephrases it, and then explains how it relates to the conversation topic)
- Asks thought-provoking questions to challenge discussion
- Uses non-verbal cues to support/advance conversations (eye-contact, nodding of head, using peer's names)
- Costume reflects the personality of assigned role

Meets Expectations (B)

- Has read the material, is prepared by answering all questions with thoughtful responses and at least one quotations to support ideas
- Relevant remarks
- Uses some evidence, may quote or refer to the text (directs peers' attention to a primary source quote, reads/rephrases it, but does not explain how it relates to the conversation topic – or does so without analysis of quotation).
- Asks good questions
- Occasionally uses non-verbal cues to support/advance conversations (eye-contact, nodding of head, using peer's names)

Approaches Expectations (C)

- Demonstrates some reading/preparation of materials by answering all questions with related responses and at least one related quotation, but seems to have done so with error (i.e. misread, didn't bring notes, etc.)
- Somewhat relevant remarks, may be off topic
- Little references to the reading
- Asks fact-based questions to clarifying own understanding
- Uses non-verbal cues (eye-contact, nodding of head, peer's names) once or twice.

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Does not Meet Expectations (D)

- Has not come prepared (no book or required reading/writing if assigned) by not answering all questions and/or does not include quotation(s).
- Does not participate OR monopolizes discussion
- Shows disrespect; interrupts
- Does not use non-verbal cues (i.e. eyes are “in the book” or solely directed at one person/teacher).

Self-Assessment: I give myself a(n) _____ because...