

NEH INSTITUTE
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND HIS LEGACY
MYTHS, SYMBOLS & REALITY

SUBMITTED TO:

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Each time I have taught the topic of George Washington, I have been guided by the mandates of the Ohio State Standards for 8th grade Social Studies. Time constraints did not allow for an insightful presentation of George Washington. The NEH institute opened many doors and has allowed me to consider George Washington's motivations, his background, his mother, his early education, his training as a militia man, a surveyor and his deliberation intention and success to better himself personally, emotionally, and financially to finally emerge as one of our greatest American heroes.

As a teacher, I have to consider how to best reach my students and eighth graders are "tough customers". Many of my students are bright, eager learners but making George Washington relevant and engaging in the classroom has posed some real challenges. The Ohio Social Studies Standards specifically state, "Research shows that learning is enhanced when students make meaningful connections between new information that they are learning and their own experiences. Combining social studies instruction with the study of other disciplines such as art and literature helps to reinforce the learning within each discipline. It also helps the students to develop conceptual frameworks that lead to a more broad understanding of the concept being taught".

Southeastern Ohio has its own rich and varied history, however, our location in Appalachia has made it problematic to visit major cities and/or major historical sites as a viable day field trip. While we do have our local history as the first organized settlement

in the Northwest Territory, our museums are modest in scope and not always open to the public. Field trips are usually cost prohibitive due to the low socio economic status of the area. Therefore, bringing information and creativity to the classroom has been of the utmost importance. Our students should have access to the same knowledge as other students who are more advantageously located. That same compelling motive is why I need to offer the best and most qualified information possible to my students. One way to do this is to engage students in the learning process, in an interactive way.

An aspect of young George Washington's life that fascinated me is The Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior In Company and Conversation. To improve his station in life, George Washington viewed these rules as important tools to present himself in a manner that others could admire and respect. Hopefully, my students will be able to borrow Washington's methods to improve themselves so that they too can be admired and respected on the world stage.

Attached is my plan to foster an attitude of relevance and academic inquiry.

Taken directly from the Grade 8 Academic Content Standards for Ohio

Revolution: Explain the results of important developments of the American

Revolution including:

- a. A declaration of American independence
- b. Character and significance of the military struggle in the North in the early years of the war and the shift of the battle to the South after 1779
- c. Creation of state constitutions
- d. Impacts on women, African-Americans and American Indians

Describe the actions taken to build one country from 13 states including

- a. The precedents established by George Washington, including the cabinet and a two-term presidency

Objective: Given the Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior In Company and Conversation, the students will be able to:

Demonstrate/enact the rules and apply these rules to behavioral rules to follow in today' society in a conversational dialogue format.

Method:

1. The students will be given a list of the 110 Rules of Civility.
2. The students will be allowed to work in pairs and will be directed to choose five

of the Rules of Civility to re-enact and match to the student handbook. They will be required to write a short dialogue explaining the importance of the choices they made by creating interviews with George Washington.

3. Students will be given a direction sheet to follow. See attached.

Evaluation:

Students will be given a rubric based on the areas of the Rule of Civility interpretation, and the skit contents.

