

Teaching American History Project

Knowing the Rules and Becoming the Man: George Washington and His Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour In Company and Conversation From Maureen Festi

Grade- 5 (Works best as an introduction to George Washington)

Length of class period- two 45 minute sessions

Inquiry- What is the connection between a young person's adherence to rules of conduct and courteous behavior and his/her later success in life?

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson students will be able to:

- Examine a primary document and make inferences as to who created it; what kind of document it is; and where, when, how, and why it was created.
- Infer connections between the information in a primary document and events on a timeline.
- Determine and defend ways that 18th century rules of civility are still relevant today.

Materials:

- Covered *Timeline of George Washington's Life* to be revealed at end of the lesson
- *Rules of Civility with Transcriptions and Vocabulary*
- *5W's and H Worksheet*

Activities:

Step 1: Prepare lesson:

- Create a timeline for George Washington using the information from *The Timeline of George Washington's Life*. Pictures may be added to the timeline. Cover the entire timeline before the students can see it.
- Print and cut apart the Rules of Civility and Transcriptions so each student has 2 rules and print a vocabulary sheet for each student.
- Print the Rules of Civility Worksheets (one for each group)

Step 2: Divide students into groups of three or four.

- Pass out two rules and a vocabulary sheet for each student. Tell them that they are young historians working in a museum and a document has just come in that they need to examine. They each have a segment of a document.
- Each person is to closely read his/her section of the document/transcription and paraphrase it.
- Students share their sentence and their findings with their group.
- Students read and discuss the meaning of their combined sentences from the document with the whole group. Post the rules for everyone to see in the classroom. *Do not give any information about the document or who wrote it.*

Step 3: Pass out one *5W's and H* worksheet per group and have students work together to infer and record their thoughts about the document. Bring all the groups together to share their inferences. Record findings on a large chart.

Step 4: Give the students the following bits information *without telling them that it is George Washington*.

Who: document was written by a boy who was born 1732 – very strong and athletic, loved being outdoors, loved to hunt, best horseman of his age, at 19 years old was 6'2" and weighed 175 pounds

What: *Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour In Company and Conversation*

When: written around 1744 when the boy was about 12 – 16 years old (sources differ on the exact time) originally created for the French Jesuit College of La Fleche. See Introduction- <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/civility/index.html>

Where: Virginia- could have been on Ferry Farm which is next to Fredericksburg – originally written in France

How: written with a quill pen in one of two of the boy's school exercise books

Why: the person wanted to learn the social skills that would help him become more successful in life

- Slowly uncover each event of Washington's life on the timeline. If students think they know who the person is, ask them to wait until the end to reveal his identity.
- **At each event on the timeline**, ask the students to look at their rules and discuss which ones would help "the person" to be successful at that point in his life.
- At the end of the timeline, finally reveal that it is George Washington.

Assessment:

- Choice of a written explanation of how 3 of the rules are still relevant today using specific examples...or
- Written explanation with specific examples of 3 rules that George Washington would depend on to help him become successful if he suddenly appeared today.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards

- Explain how specific individuals and their ideas and beliefs influenced U.S. history
- Locate and gather information from primary and secondary sources.