The Project (for Teachers)

For all printable project handouts, please visit our project web page: http://blogs.hightechhigh.org/staffclasstothepast/

# of students involved: 2 classes of 28 8th graders (56 students)

**Step 1:** First, we conducted two Socratic Seminars (one in each class). The question our seminar centered around was: *What are the 14 most significant events in U.S. history?*

Before the Socratic Seminar, each student researched what he/she considered to be the three *most significant events* in U.S. history. Their completed handout using our Habits of Mind (focusing on significance, perspective, evidence, connections and supposition) as a guide was required as their ticket into the Socratic Seminar. The handout was called ‘MajorEventsSPECS’ and can be found linked to our *Staff Class to the Past* project page online. Also linked to the online project page are the Socratic Seminar Handouts: ‘Socratic Seminar – Expectations for ALL’, ‘Inner Circle Response Prompts’ and ‘Socratic Seminar Feedback’ (if you choose to do an inner circle and outer circle format including student feedback to participants).

**Step 2:** In our classes, we combined the list of 14 Major Events decided on in our two separate Socratic Seminars to create a list of 15 Major Events in U.S. History (one event reserved for a teacher/academic coach example) we agreed on as a team. The list of 15 Major Events in U.S. History we decided on can be found in the ‘MostSignificantEventsVocab’ handout on our web page.

**Step 3:** Students formed groups of four based on their interest in researching specific events from our list of 15 events. Students received points for answering questions correctly from the U.S. History
Citizenship Test. The points they gained gave them an advantage over students with less points when it came to choosing their event from our list. Once we formed our groups of four around each event, each group defined their chosen event for the class in two sentences or less. Those definitions can be found in our ‘MostSignificantEventsVocabDefined’. The **Columbus Rediscovers America** group divided in two: **Columbus Rediscovers America** and a new **Jamestown** group.

**STEP 4:** Together, students researched the 5 W’s (Who, What, When, Where, Why) and the Habits of Mind/ S.P.E.C.S. (significance, perspective, evidence, connections and speculation) of their chosen events.

Handouts: ‘MajorEventsSPECS’ and ‘SPECStopersonalevent’ (Before students completed their SPECS about their major event in U.S. History, they practiced and received feedback on applying SPECS to a major events in their personal lives in their ‘SPECStopersonalevent’ handout.)

**STEP 5 (2 Weeks):** Students chose a title for the book and begin discussed their chosen audience. An updated handout for the project was given to students including: requirements, a calendar, as well as examples of the fact sheet and time-traveling vignettes each group will be writing:

The Project Handout: ‘Staff Class 2 the Past Project Handouts’
PhotoShop Tutorial: ‘Placing Yourself in History With PhotoShop’

**STEP 6:** Students created individual timelines with all of the chosen events in chronological order. Also, each group created a set of questions they thought everyone should know about their events to build a study guide for a Major Events Celebration of Knowledge (aka test).
STAFF CLASS TO THE PAST Questions

COLUMBUS “REDISCOVERS” AMERICA
• Where did Columbus first think he landed when he “discovered” America?
• What tribe of Native Americans did Columbus first meet?
• What year did Columbus set out on his first mission to find the “New World”?

JAMESTOWN
• Who was the first Native American to speak to the settlers of Jamestown?
• What did the Jamestown settlers farm to make money?
• Who saved John Smith?

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
• Who wrote the bulk of the Declaration of Independence?
• During what war was the Declaration of Independence written?
• Who was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence?

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR
• What year did the Mexican-American War start and end?
• Name two states that the United States gained/bought from Mexico as a result of the Mexican-American War?
• What was the name of the treaty that ended the Mexican-American War?

THE CIVIL WAR
• What were the two sides in the U.S. Civil War?
• When did the Civil War start and end?
• Who was president of the United States (well, not so united) during the Civil War?

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
• What were the years of the first Industrial Revolution in the United States?
• What was one of the major inventions during the Industrial Revolution?
• What impact did the Industrial Revolution have on where people lived?

WORLD WAR I
• Who was assassinated on June 28, 1914, an event which triggered the start of World War I?
• When did World War I start and end?

THE GREAT DEPRESSION
• Who was the president for the start and during most of the Great Depression?
• What event started the Great Depression?
• What year did the Great Depression start and end?

**World War II**
• Which country was attacked by atomic bombs in World War II? (Extra credit: Name the two cities.)
• Who was the major Axis Powers/ German dictator during World War II?
• What years did World War II take place?

**The Cold War**
• What were the opposing sides in the Cold War?
• How long did the Cold War last?
• What were two conflicts that fell under the umbrella of the Cold War?

**The Vietnam War**
• What years did the Vietnam War take place?
• What were the two sides in the Vietnam War conflict?
• Who “won” this war?

**Apollo 11**
• When was the Apollo 11 mission launched that put the first man on the moon?
• Who was the president during the Apollo 11 mission?
• Name at least two of the astronauts on the Apollo 11 mission:

**Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” Speech**
• Where did Martin Luther King, Jr. give his “I Have a Dream” speech?
• When did Martin Luther King, Jr. give his “I Have a Dream” speech?
• What was Martin Luther King, Jr.’s goal? What movement was he a part of?

**September 11th Terrorist Attacks**
• Name one of the targets that a plane hit on September 11, 2001?
• Who was the leader of Al-Qaeda who planned the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks?

**BP Oil Spill**
• Where did the BP Oil Spill take place? (In what body of water?)
• How many people were killed as a direct result of the BP Oil Spill?
• What year did the BP Oil Spill take place?

**Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Act**
• What was the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Act (describe what it said)?
• When did DADT pass and when was it repealed?