

8th grade Civics: Presidents Project

Introduction:

Presidents impact the eras they govern in. Each of their decisions both at home in the United States (Domestic Affairs) and away in other countries (Foreign Affairs) impact the wider world. All presidents face challenges and successes in their domestic and foreign affairs. Your job will research these successes and failures so that you can begin to get a sense of how our past leaders' actions have an impact on our country today.

Performance Indicators:

1c (CIVICS). I can describe how presidents make important decisions at the national level.

3e (HISTORICAL INQUIRY). I can explain and evaluate the contributions, challenges, and influences of a historically significant person.

4d (CRITICAL THINKING). I can use evidence from sources to strengthen my claims.

Your Task:

You are a historian and you work at a presidential library. **You are tasked with designing a Google Site for student visitors to explore, where you showcase your president's triumphs and outline the greatest challenges of their presidency.** You will work to analyze and clearly explain the influence of a president on the US and the world.

Each person will research the president's response to a significant decision in **Domestic Affairs** (issues in the United States) **and one in Foreign Affairs** (issues involving other countries). When you research each issue, you want to focus on...

- **What was the cause or background?** i.e. what led the president to do what he did?
- **What was it - what did the president do?** i.e. explain the law, action, order, or decision to someone who doesn't know
- **How did the president's actions influence the US?** i.e. did the president's action affect the US and world positively—or did it flop? How do you know?

Required content pieces:

1. *Summary of key events in **Domestic Affairs***
2. *Summary of key events in **Foreign Affairs***
3. *A **popular culture** section – **what was cool? Movies, TV, music, games, style***
4. *A **header section** with title, picture of your president and the years they served.*
5. *A picture for each section of the website of your president as well as pictures for your **pop culture** section.*
6. *A MLA formatted **Works Cited** page.*
7. *****Exceeding option:** rate your president on a scale of 1-5 (five being the highest) based on your research. Complete a 3-5 sentence paragraph on why you rated the president like that.*

TO MEET PROFICIENCY:

- Information is supported with evidence and organized into logical sections on your site.
- You cite at least 3 different, reliable sources of information from the library LibGuide.
- The vast majority of the writing on your site is in your own words. Direct quotes are allowed if properly punctuated and cited—especially if they are the exact words of the president, used for emphasis.
- All sources used to gather information for your website are cited in MLA style, both in-text and on a Works Cited page. (*This includes information that is paraphrased AND information that is directly quoted from a source. Copying and pasting information from any source without quoting/citing it is plagiarism and will affect your final assessment.)

TO EXCEED PROFICIENCY, YOU MUST ALSO...

EVALUATE YOUR PRESIDENT: Once you complete your site, create one additional section. In this “OVERALL RATING” section, you will synthesize what you’ve learned and evaluate the president’s foreign and domestic policies.

Include:

- ☐ An overall rating of 1-5 stars of the president’s DOMESTIC policies
- ☐ An overall rating of 1-5 stars for the president’s FOREIGN policies
- ☐ A 5+ sentence paragraph justifying your rating with specific examples, research, and reasoning.

FINAL LEARNING ACTIVITY:

- To share each other’s work, we will do a project scavenger hunt. Give your teacher two questions about your President that can be answered within your google site. As an added bonus, point out any easter eggs that might be there.

PRESIDENTS TO CHOOSE FROM (number of *'s equals difficulty + (additional [Scaffolding](#))

Theodore Roosevelt ***

Franklin Roosevelt **

John F. Kennedy***

Lyndon Johnson **

Richard Nixon ***

Ronald Reagan **

George HW. Bush ***

George W. Bush **

Barack Obama ****

Checklist for Project:

Research notes pages:

- ☐ Presidential Background (include political party, personal info, etc.)
- ☐ Domestic Affairs Success/Failure (*for exceeding include a separate success/failure)
- ☐ Foreign Affairs Success/Failure (*for exceeding include a separate success/failure)

Website:

- ☐ Background page*
- ☐ Domestic Affairs success and failure page
- ☐ Foreign Affairs success and failure page
- ☐ Pop culture page
- ☐ Images (at least two per page- six total minimum)
- ☐ Works Cited Page
- ☐ (*for exceeding - include overall rating and evaluation of presidency on this page)

PRESIDENT NAME:

Category: ☐ Background

Who? Who is the President's family		
What? What major events happened/ jobs did they hold before becoming president?		
When? When were they born? What are other critical dates in their lives?		
Where? Where were they born? Where did they go to school? Where did other major events in their life happen?		

PRESIDENT NAME:

Category: ☐ Domestic Affairs (Challenge- FOR EXCEED)

Who? List people who played a significant part in the event and what position they hold		
What? Describe the event generally. What happened during this event?		
When? List the date or range of dates this event happened.		
Where? List the main locations where this event occurred		
Why? Why did this event happen? What caused it?		
How? How did the President deal with the event? What actions did the president specifically take to improve the situation		

FOR EXCEEDING Final Presidential Rating for this category (How did your president do?):

_____/5

Rational:

Presidential Research Template

PRESIDENT NAME:

Category: ☒ Domestic Affairs (Success- FOR EXCEED)

Who? List people who played a significant part in the event and what position they hold		
What? Describe the event generally. What happened during this event?		
When? List the date or range of dates this event happened.		
Where? List the main locations where this event occurred		
Why? Why did this event happen? What caused it?		
How? How did the President deal with the event? What actions did the president specifically take to improve the situation		

FOR EXCEEDING Final Presidential Rating for this category (How did your president do?):

_____/5

Rational:

Presidential Research Template

PRESIDENT NAME:

Category: ☐ Foreign Affairs (Challenge FOR EXCEED)

Who? List people who played a significant part in the event and what position they hold		
What? Describe the event generally. What happened during this event?		
When? List the date or range of dates this event happened.		
Where? List the main locations where this event occurred		
Why? Why did this event happen? What caused it?		
How? How did the President deal with the event? What actions did the president specifically take to improve the situation		

FOR EXCEEDING Final Presidential Rating for this category (How did your president do?):

_____/5

Rational:

Presidential Research Template

PRESIDENT NAME:

Category: ☐ Foreign Affairs (Success FOR EXCEEDS)

Who? List people who played a significant part in the event and what position they hold		
What? Describe the event generally. What happened during this event?		
When? List the date or range of dates this event happened.		
Where? List the main locations where this event occurred		
Why? Why did this event happen? What caused it?		
How? How did the President deal with the event? What actions did the president specifically take to improve the situation		

FOR EXCEEDING Final Presidential Rating for this category (How did your president do?):

_____/5

Rational:

Pop Culture

This can be an image gallery!

Who?	
Movies?	
Music?	
Fashion?	
Television?	
Celebrities?	

Presidential Google Site Research Project Rubric

Indicator	10 (Exceeding)	8.5 (Meeting)	7 (Developing)	2 (Beginning)
I can describe how presidents make decisions on the National Level.	☐ Student accurately identifies 1 success and 1 failure of President across both assigned categories. ☐ Student explains 4 important decisions made by President, including necessary background information and details.	☐ Student accurately identifies a domestic and foreign policy issue for each president ☐ Student explains 2 important decisions made by President, including necessary background information and details.		
I can evaluate the contributions, influences, and challenges of a president's term in office.	☐ Student synthesizes information about contributions/ challenges into an overall rating and explanation of the president's actions.	☐ Student explains relevant personal background info about the President ☐ Student explains how the president's actions during each success and failure affected the country and/or the world.		
I can use evidence from reliable sources to strengthen my claims.	☐ Student incorporates evidence from at least 4 or more reliable sources into success and challenge paragraphs. ☐ Student uses and incorporates direct quotes from materials.	☐ Student incorporates evidence from at least 3 reliable sources into success and challenge paragraphs. ☐ Evidence is presented in student's own words; any direct quotes are indicated. ☐ Student cites sources in-text ☐ Student cites sources correct MLA style on Works Cited page		
I can use digital tools to present information to an audience.	☐ Student website is organized into clear pages with multiple sections on them	☐ Student website is organized into clear pages ☐ Design choices are appropriate to the material ☐ All material, including text and images, is clear and easy for viewers to read		

