

# Economics and US History

## Historical Impact Bracket Challenge

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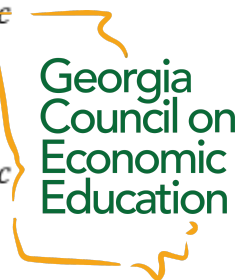
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# Historical Impact Bracket Challenge

## LESSON DESCRIPTION/OVERVIEW

This activity uses a highly adaptive strategy to engage students in critical thinking in a fun, interactive way. Students will conduct research, create arguments, and debate other students in a tournament-style bracket to see who wins the Historical Impact Bracket Challenge. It can be utilized as a review activity, a culminating activity, a summative assessment, or a fun way to verbally hash out the writing process, just to name a few. This strategy can be completed over consecutive days, or done one piece at a time over several weeks. Students will need a breadth of knowledge of the topic, whether through direct instruction or independent research, to get the most out of the activity. The goal of the strategy is to have students think critically to answer the following highly flexible question: Which person/document/etc. has had the most impact on the world we live in today?

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- Which person/document/law/etc. has had the most impact on the world we live in today?

## CONCEPTS

- Varies based on which content is selected by the teacher.

## GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- Varies based on which content is selected by the teacher.

## TIME REQUIRED

This lesson will take approximately 250 minutes if completing all activities during class time. It is, however, highly adaptable and can be done using less class time depending on your approach. Complete Procedures 1-5 on Day One, Procedures 6-7 on Day Two, Procedures 8-9 on Days Two and Three, Procedures 10-12 on Day Four, and Procedure

13 on Day Five (optional closure discussion). Procedures do not need to be completed over consecutive days.

## MATERIALS

- Handout 1: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Research: One copy for each student
- Activity 1: Historical Impact Bracket: One copy for each student
- Handout 2: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Voting Analysis: One copy for each student
- One device (smartphone, Chromebook, etc.) for each student (optional)
- Internet access for research: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/>,  
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?flash=false&page=milestone>

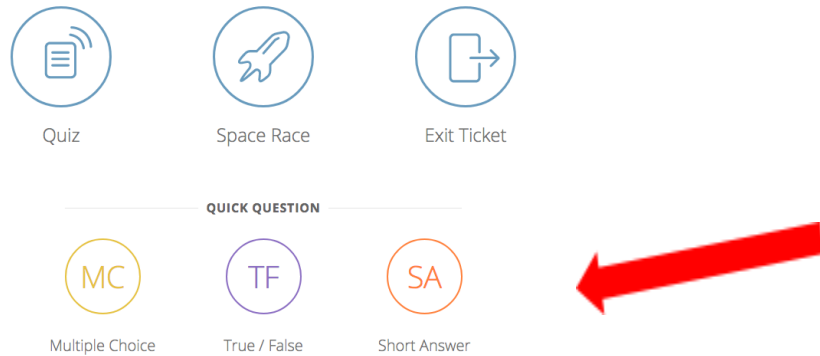
**PROCEDURES**

1. Choosing a topic. Before introducing the activity to the class, choose a topic that you want your students to explore. The possibilities are endless, but here is a list of ideas:

Which historical document has had the most impact on our world today?
Which person from United States History has had the most impact on the world we live in today?
Which person from the Progressive Era (or any other time period) has had the most impact on the world we live in today?
Which American invention has had the most impact on the world we live in today?
Which American document has had the most impact on the world we live in today?
Which American President has had the most impact on the world we live in today?
Which economist has had the most impact on the world we live in today?
What event in United States History has had the most impact on American society?
Which law has had the most impact on the world we live in today?

2. Selecting the participants. After introducing the topic of debate, have students brainstorm and come up with a list of the people/documents/etc. that need to be included in the competition. This can be a fun part of the activity, but to save time you could easily create the list ahead of time. If you choose to create the list yourself, move to the next step. The number of people/documents/etc. you need on your list will depend on how many students you have in your class. If you have 28 students, you could compile a list of 28, or 14 if you want them to work in pairs.
3. Seeding the tournament. Once the list is created it is time to seed the tournament. In the sports world, seeding a tournament is often as simple as looking at each team’s win-loss record. Teams with better records are given a higher seed and are considered the favorites to win over lower seeded teams. Seeding the Historical Impact Bracket Challenge will be a bit tougher, since none of the people/inventions/etc. have a win-loss record. Having students vote on seeding is a good way to gauge students’ predispositions and prior knowledge. Again, if you choose to save time by seeding the

tournament yourself, move to the next step. A quick way to have the students seed the tournament based on their prior knowledge is to use [www.socrative.com](http://www.socrative.com). On the teacher side of the Socrative platform, create a short answer question from the Quick Question section.



Have each student input one item from the list as an answer to the short answer question. Once all “answers” have been submitted, click the button in Socrative that says “Start Vote.” Instruct each student to select the item on the list he or she feels should be the number one seed, or the favorite to win the competition. Whichever item receives the most votes becomes the number one seed; the item with the second-most votes becomes the second seed, and so on. It is likely that many items on the list will not receive any votes in the first round, so you will need to repeat the process until all items have been seeded. While the students’ collective prior knowledge might give some a higher seed, good research and a carefully-crafted argument can lead to an “upset,” as a lower seed defeats a higher seed.

4. Holding a draft. Hold a draft to assign students an item to research. This is the step where students will get to choose which person/invention/etc. he or she will research and debate on behalf of. Once again, to save time you may choose to assign these on your own and you can move to the next step. Use a random name picker (click [THIS LINK](#)) to randomly select students to draft their person/item. This site allows you to copy and paste your class roster onto a spinning wheel that will randomly determine which student gets first pick, second pick, and so on. Students are free to select the highest seed or select a person/document/etc. that they are interested in.

5. Preparing to debate. Distribute one copy of **Handout 1: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Research** to each student. Students will use the guided prompts to research the impact of their person or item. The Library of Congress' Digital Collections (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/>) is a good place to start for in depth research. The Library of Congress also offers a Teacher's Guide to using primary sources (<https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/student-discovery-sets/>). Class time can be devoted to this or students may conduct their research as a homework assignment. Completing the guided prompts should prepare each student for his or her debate. If class time is not allocated for this step of the process, expect some students to come to their debate unprepared. During the research phase, students should prepare to make a 2-3 minute oral presentation during their debate backed by claims, evidence, and arguments.
6. Explaining critical thinking. Provide students with an example of the critical thinking you want them to engage in as they complete **Handout 1: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Research**. For instance, if the topic was the most influential person in United States History, and a student was arguing on behalf of Andrew Carnegie, he or she should definitely talk about the impact of Carnegie on the steel industry but may also highlight his impact as a philanthropist. However, stress to your students the importance of including secondary and tertiary effects as well. As an example – Carnegie was an early pioneer in vertical integration, which led to greater efficiency in the steel industry. This led to cheaper steel and helped usher in a major expansion in the railroad industry, thus linking markets and ushering in dramatic economic growth throughout the United States. Linking markets allowed more people to move further away from population centers and allowed regional economies to flourish on a national level. Students could also discuss how Carnegie's cheap steel changed the landscape of urban areas, as skyscrapers were erected; or a student could highlight the fact that modern corporations use Carnegie's blueprint for minimizing production costs to bring consumers cheaper products, which improves the standard of living for people across the globe.

7. Creating the bracket. Distribute one copy of **Activity 1: Historical Impact Bracket** to each student. The bracket that is provided is for a 32 team tournament. If you have less than 32 teams in your class, simply cross off the lowest seeded teams. For instance, if you only have 28 students in your class, cross off teams 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32. This would effectively give seeds 1-5 a bye into the second round. You may fill in the brackets for your students before making copies, or have students fill them in themselves. You can customize your own brackets for free by visiting [www.freebracketgenerator.com](http://www.freebracketgenerator.com). You can also create an online bracket at <https://www.polltab.com/bracket-poll>. This will allow you to create your own bracket and have students vote digitally on each debate. The digital bracket will update after voting, but this option requires more time and planning on your part.
8. Round one debates. Distribute one copy of **Handout 2: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Voting Analysis**. Complete round one of the tournament. For each matchup, allow each debater a short amount of time (2-3 minutes) to make his or her case as to why their person/invention/etc. has had the most impact. You may want to provide additional time for them to engage each other directly, or allow other students to ask questions. At the conclusion of each matchup, have the class vote on the winner through a method that is comfortable for you (hand raising, Socrative.com, Poll Anywhere, etc.). Whichever person/document/etc. wins will move on to the next round. Whichever person/invention/etc. loses is eliminated from the competition. After each debate, every student will use **Handout 2: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Voting Analysis** to detail which side they voted for and explain why. The seeds are listed for the first round, but students will have to fill this section in for subsequent rounds based on who won the first round matchup. By having students not just vote, but also explain why they voted the way they did, there is a much better chance that they will stay engaged even if they are eliminated from the tournament. In addition, having to justify their vote may prevent students from simply voting for their friends. If you choose to assign a grade for this activity, stress to students that their grade will be determined by a combination of

their research and analysis evidenced by their completion of **Handout 2: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Voting Analysis**, not by whether or not they win their debate.

9. Complete the tournament. Repeat the procedures from Step 8 for each subsequent round. As the competition intensifies, encourage students to dive deeper into their analysis and make even more connections to the impact of their person/document/etc. Allow students to use comparative analysis to compare and contrast the impact of their person/document/etc. with that of their opponent's. As debaters progress through the bracket, they are in danger of becoming repetitive, so encourage them to bring something new each round. Giving students time between rounds for additional research will lead to better debates. For each round of voting, winners advance and the losers are eliminated. After the final championship debate, crown the winner of the Historical Impact Bracket Challenge. Have students complete the Final Analysis section of **Handout 2: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Voting Analysis**.

## CLOSURE

13. Facilitate a class discussion with your students. After having gone through several days of learning about the lasting impacts of people/documents/etc., have the students discuss what impacts present-day individuals might have in the coming decades and beyond. If you focused on the impact of people, you could discuss the impact that people like Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, or Donald Trump may have on the future. If you focused on the impact of inventions, you could ask students to predict the impact of emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles, 3D printing, or biometric sensors. Part of the scope of economics is using economic reasoning to predict future outcomes and behavior. Challenge your students to use the reasoning they used in this activity to connect the past to the present to extrapolate the future from the present. Here is an example of possible questions you could ask students about autonomous vehicles and possible student answers:

*A) What are some of the possible impacts that autonomous vehicles will have on the world we live in?*

- decreased demand for gasoline/decreased carbon emissions*
- increased productivity (people can work, sleep, etc. while a passenger)*
- people may choose to live further away from work*
- no gas stations means less trucks on the road; once charging stations are built, energy source does not have to be delivered*
- decreased traffic accidents/fatalities*
- end of the radio industry?*
- less car ownership*

*B) What incentives will businesses have to adopt autonomous vehicles?*

- lower cost (no human driver to pay)*
- greater productivity (driverless trucks can stay on the road 24/7)*
- lower insurance costs (humans are responsible for 90% of accidents)*
- competition (shipping companies who don't adopt autonomous vehicles will not be able to compete with those that do)*

**Handout #1: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Research**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

I am arguing that \_\_\_\_\_ had a lasting impact on \_\_\_\_\_.

**Immediate/Contemporary Effects – include evidence to back up your claims**

1.

2.

3.



**Secondary**



**Effects**



**Tertiary**

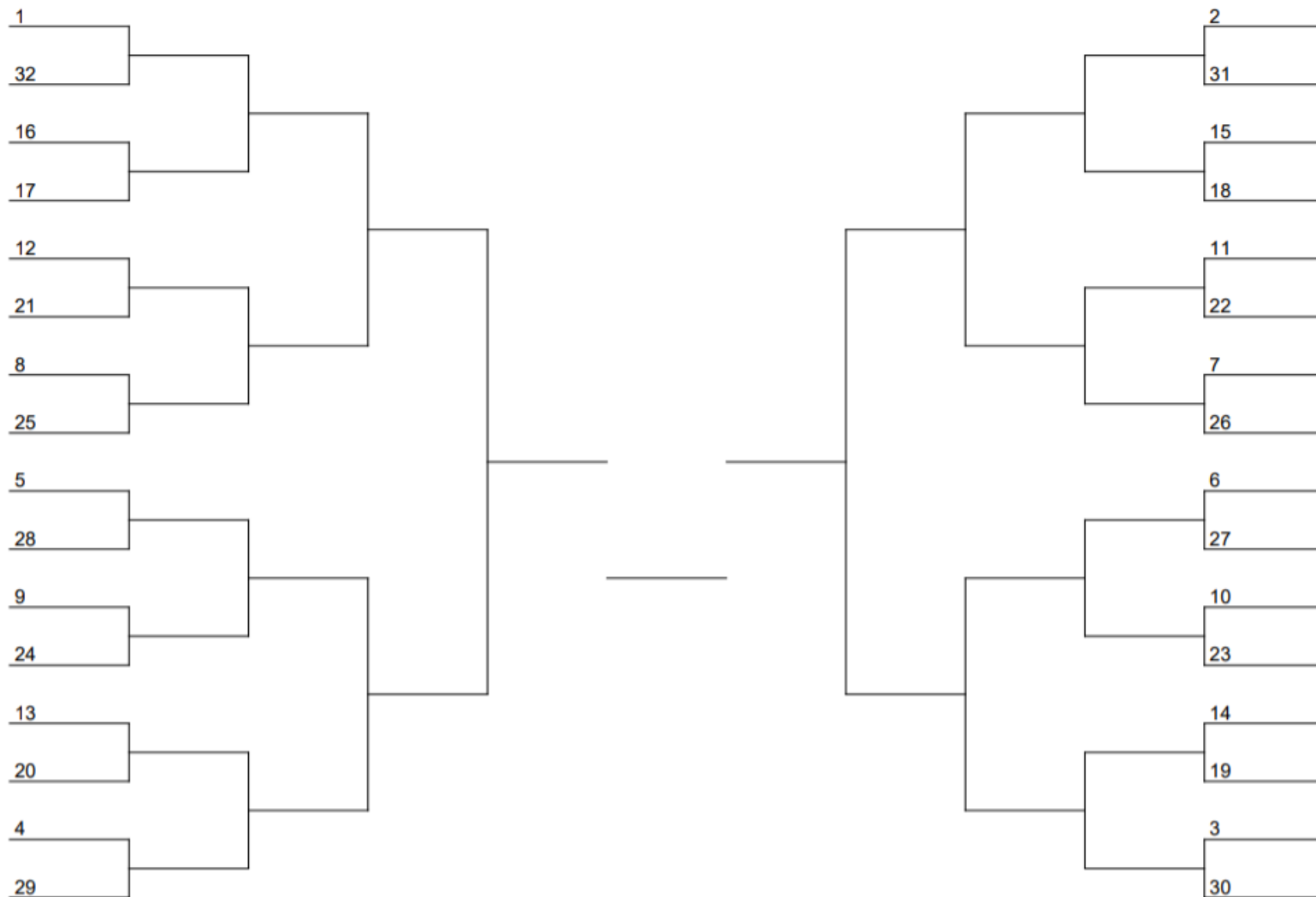


**Effects**



**Activity 1: Historical Impact Bracket**

Historical Impact Bracket Challenge



**Handout #2: Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Voting Analysis**

**ROUND 1:**

1	32	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
2	31	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
3	30	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
4	29	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
5	28	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
6	27	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
7	26	I voted for:

Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
8	25	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
9	24	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
10	23	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
11	22	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
12	21	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
13	20	I voted for:

Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
14	19	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
15	18	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
16	17	I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:

**ROUND 2:**

		I voted for:
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Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:

		I voted for:
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Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:

**ROUND 3:**

		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:

**FINAL FOUR:**

		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:
		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:

**CHAMPIONSHIP:**

		I voted for:
Best Argument:	Best Argument:	Justification for vote:

Historical Impact Bracket Challenge Champion = \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Analysis:** Did the class get it right or wrong? Use the space below to write a short paragraph detailing your position with evidence.