

Notes/Reflections:

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Historical Figures • Tableau • Perspective •



Explore the life of Thomas Jefferson using theatrical techniques!

To help students begin to personalize the life of Thomas Jefferson, we need to allow them the opportunity to actively imagine some of the events of his life.

Essential Question: How can students utilize theatrical skills to increase comprehension of historical figures?

Process

- Explain that when the teacher says, “Go!” the students will become something. When the teacher says, “Stop!” they must freeze. The teacher may use the tambour as a sound cue as well.
- Next, give the students two more directions: “Go!” means to walk normally around the room in the drama area, by yourself, without talking. “Stop!” means to freeze like a statue. Now practice, “Go!... 1...2...3... Stop!” You can breathe and blink but every muscle in your body should be focused on staying completely still. Show me with your body a frozen picture of how you look when you feel happy. Go!... 1...2...3... Stop!

Show Me With Your Body

- Using Go/Stop, show me how you feel:
 - Happy, sad, mad, bored, embarrassed, scared, tired, confused, etc.
 - Opposites: Tall, short, wide, thin, heavy, light (as in light as a feather), prickly, smooth, etc.

Thomas Jefferson Tableaux

Now, I am going to read you a book. As I read each page I would like you to make a tableau of something you hear.

- Read page 5 (“A Great American”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss and make a list of some things that Thomas Jefferson did.
 - Show me being Thomas Jefferson
 - Look for: farming, hunting, fishing, reading, studying, playing violin, dancing
- Read page 6 (“Young Thomas Jefferson”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Show picture and discuss things that he used and how they worked
 - Discuss events in his young life
 - Father died
 - Went to college
 - Became a lawyer
 - Became upset about British Colonial laws
- Read Page 9 (“Before America was a Country”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss what it meant that the King decided the laws
 - Discuss how the colonists felt
 - Show me
- Read page 10 (“Representing Virginia”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss that he was a good writer but not an excellent speaker
 - Discuss representing
 - Show me Thomas Jefferson writing an article.
 - Show picture of Monticello. Discuss that he designed it, had it built, and that it still stands today.
- Read page 11 (“The Colonies Want Freedom”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss the representatives coming together
 - Discuss the American Revolution
 - Discuss the writing of the Declaration of Independence
 - Show the picture on page 12
 - Ask the students to recreate the picture in groups of 3

Materials

- *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang

Vocabulary

Theater

Dramatic literature or its performance; drama

Classroom Tips

This lesson can be delivered all at once or over a few days. It may also be used as part of a project that represents each of the actions shown, i.e. copying a portion of the Declaration of Independence onto parchment paper.

- Read page 12 (“Writing the Declaration of Independence”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss John Adams, a friend of Thomas Jefferson
 - Show John Adams asking Thomas Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence
 - Show me Thomas Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence
 - Show me the idea of all of us being equal
- Read page 17 (“The Road to Independence”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss how everyone voted to accept the Declaration on July 4, 1776
 - Show me copying the writing onto parchment paper
 - Show me reading the document out loud at your town meeting.
- Read page 18 (“New Laws for Virginia”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss the role of a Governor
 - Free public schools
 - Making laws
 - Show me going to public school
 - Show me serving as Governor
- Read page 21 (“The Third President of the United States”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss the role of the President vs. the role of the Vice President
 - Show me being a Vice President
 - Show me being a President
- Read page 23 (“A Man of Great Ideas”) of *The Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia* by Kathy Furgang.
 - Discuss Monticello
 - Show me playing with your family
 - Discuss that he and John Adams died on the same day
 - Show me Thomas Jefferson dying
 - Do you think he had a peaceful death? Do you think he was proud of his life?

Assessment

Teachers should use an observation assessment for this particular activity. The teacher may watch for involvement, engagement, effort, and comprehension.

Georgia Performance Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 1

SS1H1: The student will read about and describe the life of historical figures in American history.

- Identify the contributions made by these figures: Benjamin Franklin (inventor/author/ statesman), Thomas Jefferson (Declaration of Independence), Meriwether Lewis and William Clark with Sacagawea (exploration), Harriet Tubman (Underground Railroad), Theodore Roosevelt (National Parks and the environment), George Washington Carver (science).
- Describe how everyday life of these historical figures is similar to and different from everyday life in the present (food, clothing, homes, transportation, communication, recreation).

SS1CG1: The student will describe how the historical figures in SS1H1a display positive character traits of fairness, respect for others, respect for the environment, conservation, courage, equality, tolerance, perseverance, and commitment.

THEATRE

GRADE 1

TAES1.3: Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments

TAES1.7: Integrating various art forms, other content areas, and life experiences to create theatre

National Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES

NSS-USH.K-4.3: The history of the United States: Democratic principles and values and the people from many cultures who contributed to its cultural, economic, and political heritage

- Understands how democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols

THEATER ARTS

Standard 2: Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations