

Step Back in Time

Lesson Description

Students choose historical figures from a unit of study and step into the roles of the figures to write speeches that would have been delivered during the historical time periods. The speeches are recorded and shared with others.

Content Standard

Students understand that specific individuals had great impacts on history.

Technology Skill

Students evaluate strategies used by speakers in oral presentations and apply those strategies in digital recordings.

Materials

- digital-audio-recording device or microphone for computer
- computer with software for editing audio recordings
- Internet connection for access to sample speeches
- resource materials (books and Internet sources)



Teacher Preparation

1. This project is meant to supplement a unit of historical study. This is an individual assignment. Students might choose such famous historical figures as Julius Caesar, Confucius, Socrates, Moctezuma, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Phillis Wheatley, Rosa Parks, Abigail Adams, Pocahontas, or Christopher Columbus.
2. Specific research will be required for students to successfully “step into” the roles of the figures. Make sure to discuss plagiarism with your students before they begin doing their research.
3. Find sample speeches for students to listen to prior to making the assignment. Sample speeches may be found online at sites like the following: *The History Channel*, *The National Archives*, and *The Library of Congress*.
4. Speechmakers are very enthusiastic, and typically their passion is expressed through their voices. It is important for the students to take on the roles of the historical figures and feel their passion as they convey the messages of the speeches.



Procedure

1. As a class, listen to sample speeches through time, and evaluate the strategies the speakers used to engage their audiences.
2. Assist students in selecting historical figures to “give” the speeches they will be writing.
3. Students should begin by researching speeches that would have been delivered during the historical time periods you have studied.

Procedure *(cont.)*

4. Then, they need to research and write speeches similar to those their historical figures would have given. The speeches should include specific facts of information that support the views and ideals of the figures they are representing. They can read speeches by the figures, but what they write should be in their own words.
5. Have the students rehearse their speeches, making sure to step into the roles of the historical figures. Students should practice recording their speeches and then listen to the recordings to make sure that their voices are passionate and engaging. Through repeated recording and listening, students will refine their speeches and adjust their speaking techniques accordingly.
6. Complete final recordings, and save them once the students are convinced that passion is evident in their voices.
7. Share the evaluation rubric (page 181) with the students so that they know how they will be assessed on this activity.
8. Decide if you want to post your recordings online as podcasts. If you do, refer to pages 7–9 for directions on how to proceed. Students could also create websites that have information about their historical figures and a link to their digital recordings.



Extension Idea

Students can explore the help menu of the audio-recording software and find ways to modify how voices sound on the recordings. Through the use of voice enhancements on the audio-recording software, they can change their voices to better reflect the tones of their historical figures.



Student Directions

1. First, select an interesting historical figure. You will be writing and performing a speech that this person might have given.
2. Research speeches that were delivered during the time period your historical figure was alive. Step into the role of your historical figure. Think about issues and ideals that were most important to this figure at that particular time.
3. Write a speech that would have been delivered at that time.
4. Limit your speech's length to no more than three minutes.
5. Practice the speech. Use the audio-recording software to record and listen to your rehearsals. Continue recording until you are completely satisfied that your speech exhibits the passion, message, and enthusiasm of your historical figure.
6. Perform, and then save a final recording of your speech.

Assessment Rubric

Strong (3 points)	Student steps into the role of the historical figure to convey a clear speech that would have been delivered in the respective time period. Facts are relevant and accurate to the time period.	Student uses the recording technology to rehearse recordings, evaluate voice quality, and continue to record until an exemplary final recording is achieved.	Student uses strong volume, enthusiasm, and tone to create an effective recording. There is passion in the voice of the speaker.
Effective (2 points)	Student steps into the role of the historical figure to convey a speech that would have been delivered in the respective time period. Most facts are relevant and accurate to the time period.	Student attempts to use the technology to rehearse, evaluate voice quality, and continue to record until a satisfactory final recording is achieved.	Student uses adequate volume, enthusiasm, and tone to create the recording. Limited passion is conveyed.
Emerging (1 point)	Student attempts to step into the role of the historical figure. Message is unclear. Facts contain misconceptions.	Student attempts to rehearse and record a successful final copy but has difficulty with the recording technology.	Student lacks the volume, enthusiasm, and tone to make the recording effective.
Not Yet (0 points)	Either there is no recording, or it is not recorded as a speech.	Student does not rehearse, or no final recording is achieved.	The recording is incomprehensible.
Self Score			
Teacher Score			
Total Score			
Comments			