

Lesson Plan: President Theodore Roosevelt

This lesson was developed by Maine Historical Society for the Seashore Trolley Museum as a companion curriculum for Teddy Roosevelt, Millie, and the Elegant Ride by Jean. M. Flahive (2019). The lesson corresponds with themes and topics covered in Chapters 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 19, 26, 27.

Objectives:

- Students will practice historical research skills.
- Students will be able to explain the role and duties of the President of the United States.
- Students will consider what qualities and skills would make a person a good candidate for President of the United States.
- Students will be able to describe the work and accomplishments of Theodore Roosevelt.

Essential Questions:

1. What are the duties of the President of the United States?
2. What qualities and skills would make a person a good candidate for President of the United States?
3. What were some of Theodore Roosevelt's accomplishments as President of the United States?

Materials:

- computers with internet access for teacher and student use for research
- pen/pencil
- copies of **President Theodore Roosevelt Poster Rubric** (see below)
- copy (or copies) of *Teddy Roosevelt, Millie, and the Elegant Ride* by Jean Flahive – might be useful for students to have copies on hand, but not imperative for the completion of the activities in this lesson

Timeframe:

Will vary depending on length of class period, class size, etc.; 1-2 /class periods recommended.

Procedure:

1. Ask students, ***What do you already know about office of the President of the United States? What does the job involve? What powers does the resident have? How long is the term of the***

President of the United States? Record their answers, and when students are done brainstorming, fill in any missing pieces and clear up any misconceptions as needed.

Make sure that students understand that the president:

- a. is the head of state and head of government of the United States of America.
- b. directs the executive branch of the federal government (making sure that federal laws are carried out and enforced).
- c. is the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces.

The president's main duties include:

- a. setting foreign policy and making treaties with foreign countries
- b. appointing foreign ambassadors
- c. appointing federal judges and Supreme Court Justices.

The powers of President are **checked and balanced by the other two branches of the government**: the **Legislature** (Congress) and the **Judiciary**. For example, the President is Commander in Chief of the armed forces, but Congress has the power to declare war. Make sure that students also understand the role and power of the President have grown and expanded over time and some of this was because of actions that Presidents like Roosevelt took. One term of the President of the United States is 4 years and an individual can serve 2 terms, but for many years serving only 2 terms was a tradition and not the law.

2. Knowing what the job and responsibilities are of the President, now ask students **What qualities do you think would make a person a good candidate for President?** Record their answers.

3. Ask students to do a similar brainstorming activity for Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt; **What do you already know about Teddy Roosevelt?** Ask students to consider what they've learned about Roosevelt from *Teddy Roosevelt*, *Millie*, and *the Elegant Ride*. Record their answers, and when students are done brainstorming, fill in any missing pieces and clear up any misconceptions as needed. Make sure that students understand that Roosevelt:

- a. served as the 26th President of the United States from 1901-1909
- b. increased government regulation and safety standards, regulated big businesses and broke up monopolies (companies that controlled an entire industry), and supported labor laws for the working class
- c. set aside large tracts of land for conservation as national forests, parks, and monuments
- d. worked to make the U.S. a world power through imperialism and the building of a powerful navy, and believed the U.S. had the responsibility of protecting other countries in the Western Hemisphere

Some other "fun facts" students may find interesting about Roosevelt:

- a. He was first president to start calling the White House the White House.
- b. He was the first president to ride in a car while in office.
- c. At 42 he was – and still is – the youngest person to ever take office as president.

- d. Before he was president he served in the New York legislature, as New York City Police Commissioner, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Governor of New York.
- e. He was a Lieutenant Colonel in the 1st U. S. Volunteer Cavalry during the Spanish-American War.
- f. He was William McKinley's Vice President (1901) and became president when McKinley was assassinated.
- g. John Flammang Schrank shot Roosevelt while the later was campaigning in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on October 14, 1912. The bullet lodged in Roosevelt's chest after passing through an eyeglass case and a 50-page speech in his pocket. Roosevelt continued speaking to crowds for an hour-and-a-half before seeking medical attention, exclaiming "...it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose."

3. Explain to students that they are doing to work in teams and dig a little deeper into Roosevelt's story and consider about the question, ***Was Theodore Roosevelt a good president? Why or why not?***

4. Assign students to one of the following **research teams to examine different aspects of Roosevelt's work as president**. If your class size is such that having only 3 groups would mean more than 6 students in each group, simply double up on assignments as needed (ex. 2 Foreign Policy groups, 1 Regulation, 1 Conservation group) or divide the groups further (ex. Have a Foreign Policy group 1, group 2, group 3: group 1 focuses on Big Stick diplomacy, group 2 on Latin America, etc.)

- a. **Foreign Policy** ("Big Stick" diplomacy, Latin America & the Panama Canal, Russo-Japanese War)
- b. **Regulation** (Square Deal, trust busting, food and drugs)
- c. **Conservation** (Forest Service, National Parks, Antiquities Act)

Each team will **create a poster describing Roosevelt's work on their topic**. Explain that the posters will be displayed in a classroom museum that their classmates will visit to try and determine if they think Roosevelt was a good president. Explain that the posters should focus on text and information, but that if they want to include images they may. Direct students to the **Rubric** (see below) for how their work on the poster will be assessed.

5. As appropriate/possible, arrange for students to visit their school library/learning commons to conduct research. You might also help students get started by accessing some of the website recommended in the **Additional Recommended Resources** section below.

6. When **posters are complete, display them around the classroom**. Give each student a set of post-it notes (enough that they can leave one note on each poster) and ask them to explore the classroom museum. Instruct students to **leave comments using the post-it notes** about the information on each poster and whether they think the work Roosevelt did was positive or negative. This can be as simple as "+" or "-" symbols.

7. **Conclusion/Exit ticket:** After students have been able to explore the museum, ask them to write down their answer to the question ***Was Theodore Roosevelt a goodpPresident? Why or why not?***. The answer can be short (bullet points) but must include at least one explanation as to why or why not.

Extension Activities:

1. Put students in pairs to debate the statement “Theodore Roosevelt was a good president.” with one student taking the “pro” stance and the other the “con” stance. Ask each pair to pick two aspects of Roosevelt’s presidency to debate (ex. foreign policy and regulation; the Panama Canal and Russo-Japan War) to keep their arguments focused. Explain that in a debate you need to both defend your position, but also (1) try to anticipate how your opponent will try to poke holes in your argument (how will you back up your claims?) and (2) think about how you can poke holes in your opponent’s argument.

Additional Recommended Resources:

Scholastic

[The 6 Online Research Skills Your Students Need](#)

Theodore Roosevelt Center:

[Learn About TR](#)

Humanities Texas:

[Theodore Roosevelt](#)

Khan Academy:

[Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt](#)

Library of Congress:

[Theodore Roosevelt: His Life and Times on Film](#)

National Park Service

[Sagamore Hill National Historic Site](#)

President Theodore Roosevelt Poster Rubric

Standard	4 – exceeds standard	3 – standard met	2 – approaching standard	1 – does not yet meet standard
Research	Successfully used recommended sources to find accurate and appropriate information and navigates research easily without assistance.	Successfully used recommended sources as needed to find accurate and appropriate information.	Occasionally used most of the appropriate resources to find information.	Did not utilize any appropriate sources to find information.
Content	Information is accurate and clearly relates to the main topic and includes many supporting details and/or examples.	Information is accurate and relates to the main topic, supported with at least 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information is mostly accurate and mostly relates to the main topic. Few details and/or examples are given.	Information is inaccurate and/or has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Poster Organization and Text	The poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is easy to read and informative.	The poster is attractive in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is easy to read and informative.	The poster is acceptable but may need some improvement in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is mostly easy to read and informative.	The poster needs significant improvement in terms of design, layout, neatness, mechanics, spelling/grammar. It is difficult to read and/or is not informative.
Sources/Bibliography	An accurate list is kept of all the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster.	An accurate list is kept of almost all the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster.	A partial list is kept of most the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster.	List of all the sources used for the information and graphics in the brochure/poster is missing or mostly incomplete.

total: _____

[Maine Learning Results for Social Studies \(2019\):](#)

Social Studies, Grades 6-8 – Civics & Government: Students draw on concepts from civics and government to understand political systems, power, authority, governance, civic ideals and practices, and the role of citizens in the community, Maine, the United States, and the world.

- **Civics & Government 1:** Students understand the basic ideals, purposes, principles, structures, and processes of constitutional government in Maine and the United States as well as examples of other forms of government in the world by: **(F1)** Explaining that the study of government includes the structures and functions of government and the political and civic activity of citizens. **(F2)** Describing the structures and processes of United States government and government of the State of Maine and how these are framed by the United States Constitution, the Maine Constitution, and other primary sources. **(F3)** Explaining the concepts of federalism and checks and balances and the role these concepts play in the governments of the United States and Maine as framed by the United States Constitution, the Maine Constitution and other primary sources. **(D3)** Analyze examples of democratic ideals and constitutional principles that include the rule of law, legitimate power, and common good.

Social Studies, Grades 6-8 – History: Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

- **History 1:** Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world by: **(F1)** Explaining that history includes the study of past human experience based on available evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources; and explaining how history can help one better understand and make informed decisions about the present and future. **(F2)** Identifying major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world. **(D1)** Analyzing interpretations of historical events that are based on different perspectives and evidence from primary and secondary sources. **(D2)** Analyzing major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world. **(D3)** Explaining the history of democratic ideals and constitutional principles and their importance in the history of the United States and the world.

[Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies » Grade 6-8:](#)

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.