

American History Songwriting Extended Project

Mr. Wolff, 2011 - 12

4-Step Extended Project Overview and Summary

Overview:

The Extended Project is a year-long progression of scaffolded activities in which students use a variety of assessed primary source-driven mini-projects, activities, and presentations that clearly demonstrate student progress and mastery of higher-order thinking skills, such as synthesis, analysis, evaluation, and creation. The goal: to build academic milestones that culminate with the “Multimedia Group Song,” and a sense of mastery and success on the AP U.S. History Exam.

Most students enter this class with a need to refine their writing and critical thinking skills. With practice, this year-long process enables them to heighten their analytical skills, while connecting primary sources to deeper historical questions. Students become experts, learning to make inferences, draw conclusions, and create —becoming historians.

The Extended Project:

Step 1: “A Musical Introduction”

As a class, we begin each unit using my song-based curriculum. These songs include supporting material, such as lyrics, historical context, multimedia presentations, and supporting primary sources, and correspond to every major period of American history. In the initial weeks of the first semester, before assigning the first project, I model for the students what they will be doing by using an original song from the first American history unit of the year, “The First Americans,” which they then will emulate and build-upon throughout the year.

Step 2: “Next Verse” (1 Quiz Grade)

After discussing my songwriting process, and modeling it in class, it is now the students’ turn to create the “next verse” of my song. This first project is a document-based, lyric-writing song project, that will be assigned throughout the year as an end-of-unit review tool, and as a transitional preview into the next unit.

Step 3: “Create a DBQ and Written Response” (1 Test Grade)

As a scaffolding extension of the “Next Verse” project, I assign the DBQ activity quarterly, so that students may build upon their work. Students create a DBQ, based on their “Next Verse” topic, and then gradually acquire the skills necessary to write an effective essay, while they gain a deeper understanding of how primary sources are connected to deeper issues in American history.

Step 4: “Multimedia Group Song” (2 Test Grades)

In this final stage of the year-long project, students are able to demonstrate and reinforce the skills they have learned throughout the year by using primary sources to write an original song of an assigned, major historical period, and to design a multimedia presentation.

To see final student project samples, go to: <http://www.singinghistory.com/samples.html>.

Step 1—"A Musical Introduction"

Objective:

To teach Unit One, and to model the songwriting process and Extended Project for students.

Materials:

- Wolff, Tom. *Songs of American History*. 2007. 2-CD set.
- Wolff, Tom. *Songs of American History Lyrics and Historical Context* booklet. 2007. Print.
- Additional Example of historical song—Warren Zevon's "Vera Cruz"

The Lesson:

- Read historical background located below the lyrics in the booklet
- Discuss major themes and concepts addressed in historical background
- Play Unit One song, "The First Americans"; students view multimedia historical images with lyrics overlaid
- Play the song again, pausing after each phrase, to determine students' comprehension of the lyrics' historical significance. Have students critically analyze song, using questions such as:
 - From whose perspective is the song written?
 - In which time period does the song take place?
 - Who are the major characters described in the song?
 - What historical events are portrayed in the song?
 - What major ideas are missing from the song?

Step 2: "Next Verse" (1 Quiz Grade)

Objective:

In this extension activity, students learn to analyze primary sources, and to use them to create the "next verse" of my song. This project begins the scaffolding of skills necessary to complete the final project. We begin by transitioning from the end of the Revolutionary Period to the ratification of *The Constitution*.

Materials:

- College Board AP PARTS Primary Source Analysis Handout
- Primary Source Packet containing (5) documents
- "American Revolution" original song w/ lyrics sheet
- *United States History: Preparing for the Advanced Placement Examination*, (83-100)

The Lesson:

- In preparation for this lesson, students will have read the assigned pages from your textbook regarding the steps leading to the ratification of the United States *Constitution*.
- As a class, stand and sing along as I perform "American Revolution" with the multimedia presentation—lyrics and primary sources—scrolling on the whiteboard
- In groups of (5), each group member analyzes (1) of the (5) primary sources—dealing with the time period from 1783 - 1788, from the *Treaty of Paris* through the ratification of *The Constitution*—provided by Mr. Wolff, and will use them to complete the **AP PARTS Primary Source Analysis Worksheet** (see student sample). **Each group member** will submit his / her completed AP PARTS handout to my ANGEL Drop Box.
- Choose (1) group member to be the **Group Leader**, who will submit (3) components to my ANGEL Drop Box:
 - Group leader's individual "Next Verse" AP PARTS Primary Source Analysis Worksheet
 - Group's **Brainstorm Potential Lyrics List** (see student sample)
 - Group's **"Next Verse" Final Lyrics** (see student sample)

- Using information gleaned from the primary sources, all group members will work together to brainstorm a list of concepts, ideas, names, places, etc., which can be used to compose your “next verse.”
- Using the same melody and verse structure as the song “American Revolution,” craft your next verse.
- Format for your “Next Verse”:
 - Following is the final verse of the American Revolution song; emulate this stanza as your group writes its (3) assigned stanzas:
 - *And when they surrendered their armies at Yorktown/
Those shots heard ‘round the world turned the world upside-down/
And the Treaty of Paris gave the new United States/
Land west to the Mississippi and up north to the Great Lakes.*
- Groups will create at least (3) four-line stanzas (12 lines total), to submit to my ANGEL Drop Box.
- Groups will present their songs in class; groups may either videotape themselves singing, or perform lives in class.

Note to Teachers: The (3) “next verses” created by students may discuss:

- The impact geographic boundaries created by the Treaty of Paris had on the newly independent colonies
- The impact geographic boundaries had on Westward Expansion and Native American relations
- The effectiveness of government under the Articles of Confederation
- Events or circumstances leading to the genesis of the U.S. Constitution

“Next Verse” Group Project Rubric—(1) Quiz Grade

Task Graded:	Exemplary 4 Points	Adequate 3 Points	Minimal: 2 Points	Attempted: 1 Point	Points Rec’d:
	—Has <i>excelled</i> in all aspects of this project: Primary Sources: —Mastery of document analysis Historical Fact List: —Abundant quantity and accuracy of historical facts, with in-depth context “Next Verse” Lyrics —Superior format and historical significance	—Has done <i>good</i> work in all aspects of this project: Primary Sources: —Accurate analysis of documents Historical Fact List: —Several historical facts, and has included relevant context “Next Verse” Lyrics —Good format and overall historical significance	—Has done <i>some</i> work on this project: Primary Sources: —Minimal analysis of documents Historical Fact List: —Some historical facts, and some relevant context “Next Verse” Lyrics: —Loose format / some historical significance	— <i>Little to no</i> work on all aspects of this project:	
AP PARTS Primary Source Analysis Handout	4	3	2	1	
Brainstorm Fact List	4	3	2	1	
(3) “Next Verses” Written by Group	4	3	2	1	
Total Points and Comments:					Total Points: ____ / 12

The Sources:

Jefferson, Thomas. “Letter to James Madison.” 20 December 1787. Print. *Teaching American History.org*. 26 October 2010.
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=306>

Madison, James. “The Utility of the Union As a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection.” *Daily Advertiser*. *The Federalist No. 10*. 22 November 1787. Letter. *Constitution.org*. Web. 10 October 2010.

<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

Minghoma of Christhautha, et al. "We Are Told That the Americans Have 13 Councils Compos'd of Chiefs and Warriors: The Chickasaws Send a Message of Conciliation to Congress." 28 July 1783. Letter. *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*. Web. 3 December 2010. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7441/>.

Shays, Daniel. "Daniel Shays to the Selectmen of South Hadley to Stand Ready." Letter. *Hampshire Gazette*. 15 November 1786. *Springfield Technical Community College*. Web. 29 November 2010. http://shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/shaysapp/artifact.do?shortName=gazette_ds15nov86

United States Congress. "The Northwest Ordinance of 1787: An Ordinance for Ascertaining the Mode of Deploying of Lands in the Western Territory." 1787. Print. *Library of Congress: American Memory*. Web. 11 October 2010. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=bdsdccc&fileName=13201/bdsdccc13201.db&recNum=0&itemLink=r?ammem/bdsdccc:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28bdsdccc13201%29%29%23132010001&linkText=1>

Step 3: "Create a DBQ and Written Response" (1 Test Grade)

Objective:

Students create a DBQ, based on their "Next Verse" topic, and will use this to write an effective essay, while gaining a deeper understanding of how primary sources are connected to deeper issues in American history.

Materials:

Some Suggested Links for American History Primary Documents:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/default.asp>

<http://www.smithsoniansource.org/tea/viewdetails.aspx>

<http://theomahaproject.org/> (click on "Teaching Modules for Documents")

<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/>

The Lesson:

- Brainstorm and create a list of significant historical events from your assigned time period.
- Pick **one specific issue from your assigned time period**, and **create 3 - 4 historical questions** related to that issue.
- Explain why these questions are important in fostering a better understanding of this historical period.
- Narrow your questions and **pick one to be your DBQ**, which should sound like a thesis statement: not too general, yet not too specific, so it is left open to multiple interpretations by the student who would provide a written response to your chosen DBQ.
- Select eight (8) primary documents / sources that (1) illustrate some aspect of the issue, (2) add insight or outside information to the issue, and (3) encourage multiple interpretations in answering the DBQ.
- Correctly cite the source of the documents: *Use Chicago style citations URL-
<http://citationmachine.net/index2.php?start=&reqstyleid=10&newstyle=10&stylebox=10>
- The documents which you select should include, but are not limited to: one visual source (photo, map, etc.) one printed material source (newspaper article, etc.), one personal document (diary entry, personal correspondence, receipts, etc.), one political document (a bill, a law, etc.), or public records (census, government records, etc.). You shall not use more than three (3) of the same type of document.
- The documents must be directly related to the question, and able to be used in some way to answer the question, just as you would on an AP Exam DBQ. The selected documents do not include all the information needed to answer the question—the DBQ responder is required to provide outside information.

****Think of your chosen primary documents as clues for the responder who is answering the DBQ.****

To Be Submitted--Typed / MLA Format:

1. Students submit DBQ in the traditional AP U.S. DBQ format. Use their analytical jargon as well in your prompt. (*Ex: Assess the validity of the statement...; To what extent...; Compare and Contrast; Analyze the extent; How much; Discuss; Describe; Explain; Apply; etc.*)
2. (2 - 3) historical background paragraphs, providing context of issues surrounding chosen DBQ.
3. Summary of major points of each document, and an inference as to how the document is linked to the DBQ. *This is an Annotated Bibliography.*
4. List of all potential external information that could be used to answer the DBQ.

***Submit final DBQ to my ANGEL drop box by _____ . Do your best work!**

“Create a DBQ and Written Response” Rubric—(1) Test Grade

DBQ and Written Response Requirements:	Exemplary 4 pts.	Adequate 3 pts.	Miminal 2 pts.	Attempted 1 pt.	Points Rec'd:
	<p>—Has <i>excelled</i> in all aspects of this project:</p> <p>Primary Sources:</p> <p>—Mastery of document analysis</p> <p>—All DBQ sources scanned and cited, and are visually appealing</p> <p>—In-depth critical analysis as to how document is linked to DBQ: <i>Annotated Bib</i></p> <p>Historical ¶s:</p> <p>—Abundant quantity and accuracy of historical facts, with in-depth context</p> <p>DBQ:</p> <p>—Is persuasive, original, analytical</p> <p>—In-depth list of external DBQ info</p>	<p>—Has done <i>good</i> work in all aspects of this project:</p> <p>Primary Sources:</p> <p>—Accurate analysis of documents</p> <p>Historical ¶s:</p> <p>—Several historical facts, and has included relevant context</p> <p>DBQ:</p> <p>—Good, but could be more in-depth</p>	<p>—Has done <i>some</i> work on this project:</p> <p>Primary Sources:</p> <p>—Minimal analysis of documents</p> <p>Historical ¶s:</p> <p>—Some historical facts, and some relevant context</p> <p>DBQ:</p> <p>—Minimal work done</p>	<p>—<i>Little to no</i> work has been completed on one or more aspects of this project.</p>	
DBQ in Traditional AP U.S. Format	4	3	2	1	
2-3 Historical Bkgrd. ¶s	4	3	2	1	
Annotated Bib	4	3	2	1	
List of External DBQ Info	4	3	2	1	
Comments:					Total Points: ____ / 12

Step 4 – “Multimedia Group Song”

Overview:

This project is worth (2) **TEST GRADES for each group member**. *ALL* members will share in the workload equally, and will use their strengths to make this project successful for everyone in the group. Grades will be based on the work that students complete both individually and collaboratively within the group. Musical skills are not mandatory. Every group member should choose a specific task which utilizes his/her strengths, such as: perform in-depth research and acquire primary sources for the multimedia presentation; lyric writing; create a visual presentation; audio recording; and vocal and instrumental presentation. *Exemplary group projects will be chosen to perform at Mr. Wolff’s April 2012 End-of-Year American History Review Concert.*

Multimedia Project Options:

All groups are required to write an historical song; however, there are multiple options as to which medium your group chooses to present your project to the class. *You technology-savvy students will be able to create an impressive video song-based presentation—feel free to experiment with new technologies:*

- Music Video / Windows Movie Maker
- Prezi
- PhotoStory
- Garage Band
- *A different medium, approved by Mr. Wolff*

Materials:

- At the group’s discretion

The Lesson (2 - 3 Week Project):

- Show class samples of exemplary student projects and presentations from previous years
- Show class video clips of live student performances from past End-of-Year Concerts
- Remind students of the effectiveness of using song-based instruction to teach historical concepts, and that their projects will be review tools for End-of-Course Tests:
 - *Listeners are more likely to remember concepts through a song that has structure (melody, rhyming lyrics, etc.*
 - *Viewers are more likely to gain a deeper understand of historical contexts if tied to well-chosen, highly visual primary sources*
 - *Students writing songs must undergo the process of synthesizing, summarizing, analyzing large amount of data into the most relevant points, before creating their final presentation.*
- Students choose groups, but are suggested to do so by skill set. Ideally, each group has one student who is a musician, or someone who knows how to work with a music-based computer program such as Apple’s *Garage Band* or the PC-based *Audacity*. Students may borrow a musician from another group to help them perform their final song.
- In groups, students will conduct research and brainstorm ideas about key concepts related to their chosen historical event. Ideas for brainstorming may include:
 - Important people
 - Important dates
 - Important locations
 - Resources – crops; minerals; or valuable commodities
 - Significant broad concepts – slavery; revolution; religious freedom; economics; etc.
 - Relationships between concepts – trade status between two countries; how war influenced the economy of a nation; etc.
 - Historiography

Students conduct extensive primary source research to gather information for their song and multimedia presentation.

Through this process they are able to empathize with people of their chosen era. The more in-depth knowledge they acquire through their primary sources, the better the quality of their final project.

Students will submit a **3-4 paragraph historical context sheet**, describing in detail the historical events, concepts and context for the events that are presented in their song. See Mr. Wolff's historical backgrounds for examples.

As a group, students begin to write the lyrics for their final song using all information gathered throughout this project.

The group is now ready to create the multimedia aspect of this project, which will be used in their final class song presentation.

Groups are now ready to perform their final multimedia song presentations to the class.

- **Each group will distribute a copy of their final song lyrics to each class and historical background to each student.**
- *This process underscores the notion that, through their research, each group must become an expert in their chosen historical period, as they are assuming the role of teacher.*

“Multimedia Group Song” Rubric—(2) Test Grades

Completed Aspects of Final Song:	Exemplary Final Song: —Creative Expression —Group composed original song with clear theme, which conveyed abstract concepts clearly —Group made excellent use of primary sources within their song —Demonstrates higher-order thinking skills — Superior and entertaining class performance Multimedia Prsntn: —Makes excellent use of primary sources — Creative, engaging , entertaining, visually appealing; flows well —Conveys superior analysis and knowledge of historical period	Adequate Final Song: — Somewhat creative —Group song is original; theme is mostly clear; some abstract concepts conveyed —Group makes good use of primary sources within their song — Good demonstration of higher-order thinking skills —Performance somewhat entertaining Multimedia Prsntn: —Makes good use of primary sources —Creative, engaging, entertaining, visually appealing, and flows somewhat well —Conveys adequate analysis and knowledge of historical period	Minimal Final Song: — Not very creative —Group song is original; theme is unclear ; few abstract concepts conveyed —Group makes some use of primary sources within their song — Little demonstration of higher-order thinking skills —Performance somewhat entertaining Multimedia Prsntn: —Makes minimal use of primary sources —Not creative, engaging, entertaining, or visually appealing; does not flow well —Conveys little to no analysis and knowledge of historical period	Attempted — Little to no work has been completed on one or more aspects of this project.	Points Rec'd:
Primary Sources Used	4	3	2	1	
Historical Background Sheet (3-4 ¶s)	4	3	2	1	
Final Song Lyrics + Class Handouts	4	3	2	1	
Multimedia Presentation	4	3	2	1	
Class Performance	4	3	2	1	
Comments:					Total Points (2 Test Grades): <div style="background-color: yellow; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">/</div>