

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title - Creating a Report Card for Late 20th/Early 21st Century America by Assessing Our Adherence to President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address from Cynthia Petrie

Grade – 11

Length of class period – 50 minutes

Inquiry

1. What does President Eisenhower see as America's most positive assets in 1961?
2. What does President Eisenhower believe are the United States most pressing concerns as he leaves office?
3. What advice does President Eisenhower give the nation in his farewell address?
4. How would President Eisenhower have viewed our adherence to his warnings in his farewell address? How well did we as a nation do in following his advice?

Objectives

Content:

1. Students will learn about the foreign policy of the United States in the late 20th century and the significance of military spending in pursuing those policy objectives
2. Students will learn about the way in which President Eisenhower believed we should approach military growth and foreign policy

Skills:

1. Students will improve their ability to analyze primary source documents to form an opinion
2. Students will improve their ability to see cause/effect relationships
3. Students will improve their ability to support an opinion in writing using both primary and secondary source materials

Materials – A copy of Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address, Guiding Questions for reading the address, America's Report Card Assignment (attached at the end of the lesson)

Activities

1. Assign the Eisenhower's farewell address to be read for homework along with the guiding questions prior to the day of the lesson. This lesson can work at any point when teaching about the Cold War or more recent events in US history. It really depends on how much information you want students to include in their report card assignment.

2. In class have students share their answers to the guiding questions on Eisenhower's farewell address. Ask them if they feel he was making valid points and to explain their reasoning.
3. Then have students work in small groups (or this can be done as a whole class) to brainstorm on how well we have done in listening to Eisenhower's concerns and advice. Have them create a chart. On one side they should list policies that show we listened. On the other side they should list things that show we didn't adhere to his goals for the country. When they have finished with this task bring the groups back together to share their lists. Make a chart on the board. Students should take down information from the other groups to use in their report card assignment.
4. Give out homework assignment on creating a report card for America based upon Eisenhower's advice to the nation. (see below) On the day the assignment is due have students share their reports cards with the class. Compare/contrast the class assessment of our policies since Eisenhower left office.

Assessment – Students will be graded on both their answers to the guided reading questions as well as the report card that they will create for the nation.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards

1. describe, explain and analyze political, economic and social consequences that came about as the resolution of a conflict
2. describe and analyze, using historical data and understandings, the options which are available to parties involved in contemporary conflicts or decision making
3. analyze and evaluate the significance of major U. S. foreign policies and major international events and conditions over time
4. identify and analyze the various domestic, political, economic and social interests which play roles in the development of foreign policy

United States History
Eisenhower's Farewell Address

Name _____
Date _____

Read President Eisenhower's Farewell Address and answer the questions below. You will be responsible for discussing your answers to these questions in class tomorrow.

1. What is President Eisenhower's overall opinion of the United States in 1961? Does he see the country in a positive light? Explain with details.
2. What does Eisenhower believe the United States does well?
3. What does he see as our biggest threat in 1961?
4. What is his reasoning behind our need for a large military?
5. Why does he believe we need specific industries dedicated to building military equipment and weapons?
6. What does President Eisenhower mean by the term "military industrial complex" and what warning does he give about its growth?

7. What specific pieces of advice does Eisenhower give to the nation? What is he worried about?

United States History

America's Report Card Assignment

Based upon the concerns and advice contained in President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address create a report card for the United States covering the time period since 1961. Your report card may be designed in any format that you choose, but it must contain the following information. You may be as creative as you wish, but the information used to support your reasoning should be accurate and valid.

1. A minimum of five specific things contained in Eisenhower's Farewell Address upon which you will grade the nation.
2. A key that explains your grading scale.
3. A grade assigned for each topic contained in number 1 above.
4. For each grade given an **in-depth** explanation for that particular grade that includes details about key events and/or government policies and their consequences that support the grade you have given America for this topic. You should include several pieces of support for each grade given.
5. A final assessment for America in how well we did overall in adhering to Eisenhower's warnings and advice. Essentially, where do we stand today? What are we doing well and what improvements need to be made? Give advice where you can. Be specific.

Grading Rubric

Five specific topics to grade	25 points (5 points each)
Grading Key	5 points
Explanation of grades given	50 points (10 points each)
Final overall assessment	15 points
Creativity and Neatness	5 points

Transcript of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address (1961)

My fellow Americans:

Three days from now, after half a century in the service of our country, I shall lay down the responsibilities of office as, in traditional and solemn ceremony, the authority of the Presidency is vested in my successor.

This evening I come to you with a message of leave-taking and farewell, and to share a few final thoughts with you, my countrymen.

Like every other citizen, I wish the new President, and all who will labor with him, Godspeed. I pray that the coming years will be blessed with peace and prosperity for all.

Our people expect their President and the Congress to find essential agreement on issues of great moment, the wise resolution of which will better shape the future of the Nation.

My own relations with the Congress, which began on a remote and tenuous basis when, long ago, a member of the Senate appointed me to West Point, have since ranged to the intimate during the war and immediate post-war period, and, finally, to the mutually interdependent during these past eight years.

In this final relationship, the Congress and the Administration have, on most vital issues, cooperated well, to serve the national good rather than mere partisanship, and so have assured that the business of the Nation should go forward. So, my official relationship with the Congress ends in a feeling, on my part, of gratitude that we have been able to do so much together.

II

We now stand ten years past the midpoint of a century that has witnessed four major wars among great nations. Three of these involved our own country. Despite these holocausts America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence, we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.

III

Throughout America's adventure in free government, our basic purposes have been to keep the peace; to foster progress in human achievement, and to enhance liberty, dignity and integrity among people and among nations. To strive for less would be unworthy of a free and religious people. Any failure traceable to arrogance, or our lack of comprehension or readiness to sacrifice would inflict upon us grievous hurt both at home and abroad.

Progress toward these noble goals is persistently threatened by the conflict now engulfing the world. It commands our whole attention, absorbs our very beings. We face a hostile ideology-global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method. Unhappily the danger it poses promises to be of indefinite duration. To meet it successfully, there is called for, not so much the emotional and transitory sacrifices of crisis, but rather those which enable us to carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle-with liberty at stake. Only thus shall we

remain, despite every provocation, on our charted course toward permanent peace and human betterment.

Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in newer elements of our defense; development of unrealistic programs to cure every ill in agriculture; a dramatic expansion in basic and applied research-these and many other possibilities, each possibly promising in itself, may be suggested as the only way to the road we wish to travel.

But each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs-balance between the private and the public economy, balance between cost and hoped for advantage-balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between action of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration.

The record of many decades stands as proof that our people and their government have, in the main, understood these truths and have responded to them well, in the face of stress and threat. But threats, new in kind or degree, constantly arise. I mention two only.

IV

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.

Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peace time, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea.

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United State corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence-economic, political, even spiritual-is felt in every city, every state house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades.

In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the Federal government.

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been overshadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free

ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present and is gravely to be regarded.

Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system-ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

V

Another factor in maintaining balance involves the element of time. As we peer into society's future, we-you and I, and our government-must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.

VI

Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.

Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic, and military strength. That table, though scarred by many past frustrations, cannot be abandoned for the certain agony of the battlefield.

Disarmament, with mutual honor and confidence, is a continuing imperative. Together we must learn how to compose difference, not with arms, but with intellect and decent purpose. Because this need is so sharp and apparent I confess that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment. As one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness of war-as one who knows that another war could utterly destroy this civilization which has been so slowly and painfully built over thousands of years-I wish I could say tonight that a lasting peace is in sight.

Happily, I can say that war has been avoided. Steady progress toward our ultimate goal has been made. But, so much remains to be done. As a private citizen, I shall never cease to do what little I can to help the world advance along that road.

VII

So-in this my last good night to you as your President-I thank you for the many opportunities you have given me for public service in war and peace. I trust that in that service you find somethings worthy; as for the rest of it, I know you will find ways to improve performance in the future.

You and I-my fellow citizens-need to be strong in our faith that all nations, under God, will reach the goal of peace with justice. May we be ever unswerving in devotion to principle, confident but humble with power, diligent in pursuit of the Nation's great goals.

To all the peoples of the world, I once more give expression to America's prayerful and continuing inspiration:

We pray that peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations, may have their great human needs satisfied; that those now denied opportunity shall come to enjoy it to the full; that all who yearn for freedom may experience its spiritual blessings; that those who have freedom will understand, also, its heavy

responsibilities; that all who are insensitive to the needs of others will learn charity; that the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance will be made to disappear from the earth, and that, in the goodness of time, all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love.

Transcription courtesy of the [Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum](#).

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