

Teaching American History Project

Nixon Farewell Address

Any last words?

By: Michael Meyer

Grade: 7-12

Length of Period: 84 minutes

Inquiry: What is it like to be a president faced with impeachment?

Objectives:

Students will know and be able to:

- Build literacy skills by reading and interpreting a primary document.
- Analyze the presidency of President Richard Nixon by summarizing it with the bias of support for President Nixon.
- Empathize with someone who is not often empathized with by taking the role of President Nixon in his last days as president.

Materials:

- President Richard Nixon's Farewell Address found at <http://www.shabbir.com/nonmatchbox/whithous.html>
- Copy of critical thinking questions

Activities:

- Initiation: Students will be asked to write down five reasons they believe it would be appropriate for any president to be dismissed of his duties as commander and chief.
- Students will be asked to create a one page speech as if they were Nixon and were giving their farewell address. This should summarize in part Nixon's positive achievements and use bias to make light of his negative limelight.
- Students are given opportunity to share their speeches
- Student read Nixon's actual farewell address and answer critical thinking questions.
- Closure: Student will discuss the activity by going over some of their answers to the critical thinking questions.

Assessment:

- Informal: Class discussions and participation will be monitored.
- Formal: Critical Thinking questions will be collected and graded for effort and content.

CT State Standards:

Educational experiences in **Grades 9-12** will assure that students:

- use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives
- initiate questions and hypotheses about historic events they are studying
- display empathy for people who have lived in the past

Critical thinking questions

1. How was Nixon's speech like your own?

2. How was Nixon's speech unlike your own?

3. How would you change your speech now that you have seen the president's?

4. How would you change his speech if you could? (cite pieces that you would change)

5. Do you think Nixon does an adequate job of defending his legacy? (cite pieces where he does or does not)

6. Of all Nixon's mistakes which do you think harmed him the most in the public eye? Explain why.

7. Summarize your opinions about President Nixon as an American President.

8. Summarize your opinions about President Nixon as a person.

