

# **Teaching American History Grant: Learning Experiences 2008/2009: John Manganiello**

**Topic Title: The President as Commander in Chief**

**Grade Level: 12**

**Overview of the Learning Experience:** Students will study the specific job that the president has as Commander in Chief. This is not an easy job and there are many characteristics that a president needs to be as an effective commander in chief. Students will identify what important characteristics are needed to be a successful commander in chief. Students will also study a president and rate them as commander in chief.

**Standard #5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government:** use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the U.S. and other nations; the U.S. Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

**Essential Question:** How do leaders during wartime make critical decisions that have an impact on society?

**Topic Question:** What are some of the necessary characteristics that a president should have as commander in chief of the United States armed forces? How did your president perform as commander in chief of the United States armed forces?

**Time Allotment: (Class Time)** (Each class is 42 minutes) this lesson will take three days. The first day students will write down the characteristics of a commander in chief. Teacher will also write down on overhead what characteristics he or she should have. Day two they will be assigned a president and how they performed as commander in chief. Day three will be a day or research where each student in their group will have to look up the questions that were presented by the teacher.

**Vocabulary:** Commander in Chief, Public Opinion, Military Advisers, Moral Vision

**Materials/Resources:** A large piece of post It paper the kind that looks like a poster board size, notebooks, textbooks, reading on president as commander in chief, computer lab, library.

**Procedure:** Students will be given a definition of commander in chief. After they are given the definition they will then be put into groups of four or five. They will be given a large piece of post it paper and they will have to write down the characteristics of a commander in chief. Some of their list might be very long and others might not be. The teacher should then discuss some of the answers and also give some of the other important characteristics that they didn't list.

The second day they will be assigned a president and they will have to answer as a group some pivotal questions that will specify whether this president did their job properly and successfully during wartime. Students will research this topic in the library and report back to the class on the third day.

**Assessment:** The assessment will come from the assignment and worksheet that will be handed out to the class as seen on the next page.

**Suggested Reading: The Newsweek Addition February 2009, Inauguration 2009**

**On page 77 "The Ultimate Price of Freedom"** How does a president become a great commander in chief? Study history, seek counsel and acknowledge your fallibility

## Worksheet

This will count twice

### The President as Commander in Chief

Essential Question: How do leaders during wartime make critical decisions that have an impact on society?

Each one of the presidents that you were assigned had to make some very critical decisions. Your job is to research the president and describe certain decisions that he had to make.

Pivotal Questions that will make this lesson successful:

1. Was your president hands on or hands off? Did they rely on military advisers? Did they deal directly in military planning with their military advisers?
2. What vision did they have for the post war world?
3. Did they inherit or initiate the war? Explain the situation.
4. How did public opinion shape or forum the decision making process?
5. What was their use of technology?
6. What was their moral vision (What would they do to win the war)? What was their reason for entering into the war?
7. What was his relationship with the media?

Each president had at least one major decision to make during their years in office.

You are to explain each one of these problems because it is directly related to your group project.

Your final piece to this project is to rate the president as commander in chief.

You need to support your decision

The rating is between 1-10.