If I Were President

Estimated Time: 40 minutes

I. Objectives
As a result of this lesson, students will:

• learn about the qualifications, responsibilities, and roles of the President of the United States.
• illustrate a response to the prompt (grades K-2).
• write a response to a prompt (grade 3-6).

II. Materials and Resources

• Project Presidency Web site: What is the President’s Job?
• If I Were President by Catherine Stier
• Paper and art supplies
• Internet, news magazine, or newspaper photos showing President Bush at work
• Chart paper
• Poster with the President’s job requirements and qualifications
• Copies of If I Were President handout
• Computer (s) with Internet access
• Overhead projector or an interactive whiteboard
• Sample response to the prompt, “If I Were President, I would...” (optional)

III. Preplanning

Parental Involvement: The weekend before the lesson send a letter home letting parents know that the students will be learning about the President’s job. Ask parents to help their child find a photo of the president performing any of the following duties: speaking before an audience, meeting with leaders of other nations, signing laws, or visiting disaster sites. Explain that students will be using the photos for a lesson about the President’s job.

Create a poster with the President’s job requirements and qualifications. Visit the Project Presidency Web site: What is the President’s Job? Copy the information under the subhead “The President’s Job.” Use this poster with option 2 below.

IV. Introduction

Option 1 (for younger students): Tell students they are going to learn about the President’s job. Invite them to listen to the book, If I Were President by Catherine Stier. Before you begin, ask students to listen for the tasks the President is required to do.

Option 2: On an overhead projector or an interactive whiteboard, access the Project Presidency Web site: The President’s Job. Ask volunteers to read the article aloud as the class follows along. Display the poster with The President’s Job information. Go over the list, making sure students understand each section (qualifications, responsibilities, and employment).
V. Procedures

1. Encourage students to share what they know about the President’s job and responsibilities. On chart paper or on the board, write down students’ responses.

2. List their answers on chart paper titled, “The President’s Job”. Answers may include: signing laws; making decisions about how to solve our country’s problems; meeting with people in our government; being in charge of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines; making speeches; meeting with leaders of other nations; comforting people who have been in a disaster; or giving medals to heroes.

3. Have students share the photos of the president that they brought from home. Ask them to describe what the president is doing in each photo. You may need to prompt answers. Display the photos next to each of the tasks students discussed in steps 1 and 2.

4. Ask students to imagine that they are the President of the United States. Instruct students to write a response to the prompt, “If I were President, I would...” Ask them to choose a job and write about how they would handle the responsibility. For kindergarten and first-grade students, you may wish to have them draw their response to the prompt.

5. Go over the sample response, highlighting the job you chose and how you would handle the responsibility.

6. Distribute the writing paper and art supplies. Give students time to write or illustrate a response to the prompt.

7. Have students share their responses in front of the class.

8. Display students’ writing in the hallway or on an election bulletin board.

VI. Extensions

- Display books about the President’s job in the Social Studies Center or Election Corner. Encourage students to report what they learned from the books in a book talk or in a written (or illustrated for grades K and 1) book report.

- Place Velcro® or magnet pieces on the back of magazine photos of the current president. Write phrases on word cards describing the job he is doing in the photo and place a piece of Velcro or magnet on back. At the Social Studies Center, let students hang the photos on the felt board or magnetic board and match them with the appropriate job description.

VII. Assessment

- Students contribute a photo showing the president performing one of his roles.

- Students participate in the discussion about the President’s jobs.

- The written response to the prompt is legibly written and illustrated.

- The response shows comprehension of one of the President’s roles.
VIII. National Standards
National Council for the Social Studies
Thematic Strands
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Civic Ideals and Practices

National Council of Teachers of English
Language Arts Standards
- Standard 4 Communication Skills
- Standard 5 Communication Strategies
- Standard 12 Applying Language Skills
If I were President, I would