### STEPS IN THE LESSON

**Lesson 2: Thinking Like a Historian**  
(1-1½ hours)

**Parallel Targeted:**  
The Core Curriculum  
The Curriculum of Practice  
The Curriculum of Identity

**Description:**  
In this lesson, students will understand how historians approach the study and inquiry process of the discipline. Students will take a virtual tour of Thomas Jefferson’s home, Monticello, to better acquaint them with Thomas Jefferson, the author of *The Declaration of Independence*. They will consider how his worldview evolved, what and who influenced it, and consequently, how it affected other choices and actions. Students will learn that decisions or actions significantly can transform people’s lives.

**Content (Including Standards & Objectives)**  
Historian, Perspective, Worldview

- Published standards such as the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the National Council for History Education, the National History Standards and state standards for Wisconsin and California provide a framework a practitioner of the discipline.

- A person’s worldview is influenced by cultural, social, economic, political and religious factors.

- Personal beliefs can differ from public policy.

---

**TEACHER REFLECTION**

Lesson 2: Thinking Like a Historian  
Kimberly Waite-MTI, Barringer Fellow-2014
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS IN THE LESSON</th>
<th>TEACHER REFLECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills:</strong> Understand and apply the methodology that a historian uses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessments:</strong> Formative Assessment-journal entries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment-How Do I Think Like a Historian? Inventory Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groupings:</strong> Whole group Pairs Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Strategies</strong> Cooperative Learning Oral Presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Activities:</strong> Refer to the closing Journal writing from lesson 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Lincoln said that the words “all men are created equal” are the proposition to which the United States is dedicated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask students what they think Lincoln meant by his statement. Have students Think-Pair and Share in whole group discussion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-assessment (located in the appendix):</strong> Give students the How Do I Think Like a Historian? Inventory to complete. Collect when students are done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Activities:</strong> “All men are created equal”-These were Thomas Jefferson’s words but he did not create the ideas, nor did he claim to have.</td>
<td>The Inventory will help you assess where students lie on the continuum of novice to expert with respect to their interest and AID in history. At the end of the unit, students will retake part of this assessment as a post assessment to reflect growth over the course of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What influenced Thomas Jefferson’s worldview that in turn caused him to influence the foundation of a new nation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson 2: Thinking Like a Historian          Kimberly Waite-MTI, Barringer Fellow-2014
To answer this question, students must think like a historian. Pass out and review the “Thinking Like a Historian” charts (at end of lesson).

- Cause and Effect
- Using the Past
- Through Their Eyes
- Turning Points
- Change and Continuity

Discuss each, emphasizing the questions that go with each as stated on the chart. For this lesson, concentrate on Through Their Eyes- How did people in the past view their world?


- "How did their worldview affect their choices and actions? What values, skills and forms of knowledge did people need to succeed?"

- What questions would you want to ask of Thomas Jefferson or about Thomas Jefferson to gain a better understanding of what lead him to develop his worldview and the basis of thought for a new nation?

- Ask students to write down their questions. What would they want to know about Jefferson?

Nikki Mandell and Bobbi Malone provide excellent resources on the following web link~ [http://www.uww.edu/cls/history/for-teachers](http://www.uww.edu/cls/history/for-teachers).

There is an instructional video that is helpful in explaining the points on the Thinking Like a Historian posters/charts.

Have students write down their questions in their journals so they can refer to later. Suggest that students leave space to write in answers as they learn them. On a class chart, write down questions so you can go back after the tour and future lessons to see if any are answered. Go over any answers they learned and add new questions raised to the chart. Remind students that finding out information may provide answers but also often leads to new questions. Historians are like detectives uncovering the mysteries of the past.
### STEPS IN THE LESSON

**Taking a Virtual Tour**

**Introduction:** If I went into your bedroom, what would it tell me about you? What color is your room? What is hanging on your walls? Would I see any pictures or posters that would indicate your interests, likes, etc. Take a few minutes and have students take turns sharing what their rooms would reveal about them?

In 1787 Thomas Jefferson wrote to George Gilmer, “I am happy nowhere else and in no other society, and all my wishes end, where I hope all my days will end, at Monticello.” Monticello was a laboratory for Jefferson’s ideas and experimentation. As you go through the tour of his house, what does his house tell you about him? What are his interests? Who and what is important to him?

Students may take the general house tour on the Monticello website by going to [http://explorer.monticello.org/](http://explorer.monticello.org/).

After students take the tour, be sure to emphasize the things that influenced his worldview: his books, his interest in science, his family, the collegiality of other great thinkers and founding fathers, his love of architectural, particularly Greek and Roman architecture, his prolific letter writing, love of music, technology and invention, etc. Certainly, Thomas Jefferson’s educational and family background shaped his worldview as did his quest for knowledge. In the next lesson, students will study the Enlightenment and its

### TEACHER REFLECTION

Of course, if you can take your class to Monticello, all the better!

You may view the general house tour together as a class. The tour is divided into sections so you can stop after each sections and ask students what they noticed and what influences upon Jefferson are found in each room. Teachers may prefer to have students view individually on a classroom computer or lab and discuss more broadly afterwards.

If the teacher has not been to Monticello, you may want to acquaint yourself with the house and items in the house that reflect Thomas Jefferson’s interests and influences. The Monticello website [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org) offers a wealth of resources. Thomas Jefferson’s *Monticello (2002)* printed by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. is another formidable resource.
**steads in the lesson**

influence on Jefferson.

**Closure: Journal Entry-Formative Assessment**

Students respond to the question, *How can a person’s ideas change the world long after the person is gone?*

**Differentiation Based on Learner Need (Including AID)**

**Novice**

The novice sees history as isolated people, places, and events and does not always see the concepts that connect facts and skills. The novice needs experiences with sequencing to establish a sense of chronology. Using Sandra Kaplan’s depth and complexity model (see appendix) will provide novices with tools to develop deeper thinking. Elements in the model such as language of the discipline, details, patterns, trends, rules, ethics, and unanswered questions will encourage depth in student thinking. Elements such as points of view, change over time, and interdisciplinary connections will encourage complexity.

Encourage apprentices to use the “*Thinking Like a Historian*” charts. The additional use of graphic organizers, concept and thinking maps, timelines, and role play are different ways the teacher can scaffold for novices.

**Apprentice**

The apprentice can understand history at the conceptual level but still needs make connections to recognize historical patterns and trends. Apprentices will understand cause and effect and the importance of perspective in historical events. Again, as for the novice, the apprentice can also benefit from Sandra Kaplan’s concrete model of depth and complexity (see appendix) as a tool to guide

**Teacher Reflection**

This may be a difficult question for students initially but encourage them to consider how values and beliefs are passed from generation to generation both on a personal level and on a societal level. Review students’ journal writing as on-going formative assessments. What concepts are they grasping? What extensions are they able to make?

Remind students to date their entry. You will compare this with their End-of-Unit entry to see how their view has developed. Also they will retake the “*How do I Think Like a Historian*? inventory in the end-of-the-unit lesson so teachers and students can compare both to determine student growth.
### STEPS IN THE LESSON

| their approach to the discipline. Encourage apprentices to use the “Thinking Like a Historian” charts to guide their inquiry and help them develop research questions. Experience and use of primary source documents, photographs, movies, art, and simulations will help apprentice to move to the next level. |

**Practitioner**-The practitioner automatically views events through a historical lens, understands chronology, and identifies themes and concepts across events and time periods. The practitioner also appreciates the influence of personal experiences, values and traditions on historical perspectives. Consequently, the practitioner is ready to use more varied types of research tools, such as technology, various media and print sources, access to experts, etc. Encourage the practitioner to consider deeper issues such as ethics, patterns, trends, etc. in their research and to contemporary issues.

**Expert**-The expert develops themes and connections across historical events and time periods. The expert is curious about history, enjoys the challenge of unanswered questions, and recognizes history’s connectedness shapes the present and future. Students with this level of interest and expertise in history would be good candidates for an independent study, mentorship or internship with a local museum, professor, or expert in the field.

### TEACHER REFLECTION

### Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS IN THE LESSON</th>
<th>TEACHER REFLECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Products**

Discussions and questions

**Extension Activities:**

Students displaying an interest in history might be interested in events and programs offered at museums and historical sites. Colonial Williamsburg, for instance, staffs and trains children interpreters. Monticello, Mt. Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg, The Francis Land House use volunteers and offer programs throughout the year and during the summer which can further a student’s historical knowledge or practice.
Lesson 2-How Do I Think Like a Historian?
Inventory

Pre-Assessment

Name ___________________________ Date ___________________________

How Do I Think Like a Historian?
Inventory

1. How does the past help us make sense of the future?

2. What kinds of things influence a person’s worldview?

3. What is a primary source?

4. Why should historians consider evidence from multi-points of view?

5. Historians are researchers and must know how to develop good research questions. Name at least three elements of good research questions.

6. How are you like a historian?
Answer the questions below and check all that apply.

1. I really enjoy learning about history and connecting people, places and events.
   □ Yes!
   □ Somewhat
   □ Not Really
   □ Not at all

2. I prefer learning about history by?
   □ Learning in history class or from a textbook
   □ Reading or viewing historical fiction books
   □ Reading or viewing biographies and/or historical accounts
   □ Visiting historical sites or museums
   □ Listening to oral histories
   □ Researching on my own

3. Unanswered questions in history
   □ frustrate me
   □ intrigue me to learn more
   □ don’t bother me
   □ drive me crazy until I find out the answer

4. How would you describe your interest in history?
   □ I can easily put events and dates together.
   □ I usually learn the facts and information so I can do well in class.
   □ I like to look for patterns and connections in history.
   □ When I hear events in the news today, I often connect them to events in the past.
   □ I view history as something that happened in the past and has little bearing on my life today.
Lesson 2: *Thinking Like a Historian* charts from Bobbie Malone and Nikki Mandell - [http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ThinkingLikeaHistorian](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ThinkingLikeaHistorian)
WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE ASK OF THE PAST?

THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

CAUSE AND EFFECT

- What were the causes of past events?
- What were the effects?
  - Who or what made change happen?
  - Who supported change?
  - Who did not support change?
  - Which effects were intended?
  - Which effects were accidental?
  - How did events affect people's lives, community, and the world?

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

- What has changed?
  - What has remained the same?
  - Who has benefited from this change? And why?
  - Who has not benefited? And why?

TURNING POINTS

- How did decisions or actions affect future choices?
  - How did decisions or actions narrow or eliminate choices for people?
  - How did decisions or actions significantly transform people’s lives?

USING THE PAST

- How does the past help us make sense of the present?
  - How is the past similar to the present?
  - How is the past different from the present?
  - What can we learn from the past?

THROUGH THEIR EYES

- How did people in the past view their world?
  - How did their worldview affect their choices and actions?
  - What values, skills and forms of knowledge did people need to succeed?