

## **Heroes and Heroines: King David, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and Napoleon**

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Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the past centuries, a hero was a mythological or legendary figure of great strength or ability, admired for achievements and qualities, who showed great courage and was an outstanding soldier or warrior. In modern times, the concept of heroism has evolved to include diverse ideals such as empathy, perseverance and charisma. Women, children and even animals are now revered for their acts of heroism. This is a great change from what was considered the criteria of the past. I will help my students learn about certain heroes from history in order to shape new concepts for today.

Growing up in the metropolitan area of Houston, the Museum district was full of famous local artists and musicians. I learned that many of them had also been in the military at some point in their lives. It was as if their dedication to their work was as determined as their times in the service. Some had stories of war times and living through depression and recessions: they had endured many economic storms. To me as a child these artists were heroes because they had overcome difficulties in life and achieved greatness.

Most men in my family had served in the military; many times during war, and this knowledge about my relatives gave me a special interest in historical military leaders. That curiosity led to the discovery of political history and the leaders that help to mold the times in which we live. I eventually looked beyond my own family and began to absorb the history of the world.

Military and political leaders have always fascinated me because it takes a lot of skill to be able to get people to believe in the same cause and die for it. Persistent people become successful because they are persuasive in winning over the people they lead. People who are willing to explore, fight and live as leaders display the many attributes that must exist at one time in a person in order to make him or her a successful leader.

War creates heroes—people seem to need extra guidance during times of despair and fear and such times do seem to generate bravery. Destruction causes the need for improvement. The hero will take the opportunity to rise up to try to remedy a bad situation, sometimes meeting a challenge with success and other times without victory.

Politics is also an important factor in building the criteria of a military hero because in order for a leader to be successful over all, he/she must be able to have the respect of political leaders and ordinary citizens.

### **Where I Teach**

I work at Sharpstown Middle School on the southwest side of Houston, Texas. The population at my school is 70% Hispanic and Latino, 20% Caucasian, 12% Asian and 8% African American. Our school is divided into small professional learning communities with block scheduling. That means that every teacher will keep the students that they have for three years in their homeroom, advocacy and regular classes. This consistency is helpful not only to the student, who benefits from maintaining a good relationship with his teacher; it also gives the educator an opportunity to grow and learn more about the children that are in his or her care.

At Sharpstown, we have a regular academic, magnet, ESL, special education, and skills for living classes. The school's goal is to try everything possible to "leave no child behind"; as the quote goes from the new Federal program geared towards ensuring that every child has a quality education.

In general most urban children do not identify with the historical figures that they are taught about because only one aspect of the person's character is usually presented. Teenagers identify more with the images given to them daily through the media and advertisements showing athletes and entertainers living lives that most of them can only imagine. The luxury of material possessions and the adoration of fans seem to me to have created a dilemma in recent times. There is an absence of role models that make a significant good impact on society. Instead self desire and advancement is advertised.

Students need to grasp a better understanding about what really makes a hero. Most would agree that the people who worked so diligently to rescue victims of 9/11 are heroes. They risked their lives and gave boundless energy to relieve the stress of terror that hovered over Wall Street and New York for months. Most children would agree that Dr. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Ghandi performed selfless heroic acts on the behalf of their people. Military and political leaders such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are held up to our youth from elementary school on as heroes. But do these students really identify with the figures that are presented to them from history?

A student can become interested in historical and literary figures by examining the lives that such persons have led. When the only information being received are the accomplishments of the person being studied, the conversation can get stale. Teenagers want to hear the trials and tribulations, the more dramatic side of the hero's life, in order to grasp the difference between being a hero and just being talented or popular.

## **My Students**

My sixth grade class is full of energetic and precocious children who are trying to fit into a larger, more independent environment. They are wide-eyed and some create mischief in order to exert their own individuality. Sixth graders are eager to try new ideas and work with artistic aspects of learning such as crafts and drawing. These students need more hands-on activities in order to develop a more accurate understanding of their subjects.

I have an ESL student who absolutely refuses to produce any paperwork in order to get a grade. If I ask him to draw something for me, then I'll get five or more artistic designs. I try to encourage the student to draw the answer if he is unable or unwilling to write it down. This alternative to getting this student to learn has caused me to understand that some children are more visual and hands-on than others; therefore the teaching must be diverse.

A good modification technique would be to have visuals to enhance the learning process. Including a partner to work with the student will also increase the learning process. PowerPoint presentations incorporated into the classroom discussions can generate a better mental picture for the students, too.

The seventh graders are on the verge of understanding the need for community and empowerment through teamwork. They are open and honest about their opinions without consideration to how their comment may affect someone else. Seventh graders are highly political when it comes to what they believe is right or wrong. They have ideals about the treatment of human beings and the earth and are the most environmentally conscious of the grades I teach.

At the beginning of the fall semester, I had a student who was loud, disruptive, extremely outspoken and defensive when approached about completing work and taking responsibility for his actions. I noticed that he was excellent in essay writing and gave understandable and extremely good insight in his opinions.

We began to discuss politics, war and leaders from past and in modern day America. He had a lot to say, so I asked him to write an essay for credit. I incorporated debate into my classroom discussions and this particular student excelled. I noticed that his thoughts were more organized. I believe journalism is in his future.

The eighth grade class is outspoken, political and ready to rebel against anything at any moment. They are like innocent sheep with lion hearts. Each grade of students is different in how they view life mentally and emotionally; therefore, they will interpret the information about the four heroes that will be discussed in different ways.

The eighth graders are the "bosses" of the students in lower grades. They generally make decisions that affect the way the school's learning environment will be for the

next generation. Most of my eighth graders are not motivated to learn and I have to pull grades from some of them, tooth and nail. There are the special few who realize the responsibility that they have to create a future for themselves.

One of my eighth grade students has come a long way in his short life. He arrived last year from one of the alternative schools. I asked him to help around the classroom. At first he acted as if it were a chore, but soon he was taking the initiative to be charitable without people asking. To me this was a character attribute of a hero; someone who becomes enlightened and takes on responsibility later without being asked.

Generally all of my students are respectful with most being from two-parent households—families that are economically distressed. Most students' parents work, and some have two or three jobs in order to support their family. The teenagers worship athletes and entertainers, considering them their heroes. My goal as a teacher at Sharpstown is to help these students recognize that the real hero makes sacrifices and has courage in adverse situations that cause them to go down the hardest path to reach legendary status.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Students will identify and examine four heroes from history and imaginative literature. I will also incorporate materials for the students, things like handouts to help along class discussion, and I will try to find ways to use some information from the media. Each student within each small group will discuss the characteristics of a hero and share perceptions of what makes a hero. By comparing and analyzing a few historical and literary figures, the students will incorporate the concepts of heroism into their psyches.

Teaching this unit is important for my students because it allows them to expand their imagination and mental boundaries. Generally, upon first examination of the four historical figures to be discussed, students will be somewhat passive because the persons discussed are now no longer alive. The students may feel that the accomplishments of these heroes are still important because their deeds have stood the test of time and are genuinely accepted by most people in the world.

What I hope to encourage the students to see is that the figures we will discuss were simply ordinary human beings first. These people found a reason to pursue their dreams to go beyond the initial ordinary ways they followed from birth. I want them to see why each hero sacrificed his or her very life. I think it is important for my students to see how heroes begin.

## **METHOD**

Once we have identified the life path of the heroes discussed, we will conclude by creating our own list of modern-day heroes. Criteria will be based upon characteristics

that are generally accepted by the social climate of the class. The previously discussed heroes will be used as a pattern for the new ones. This unit is important because students will be given the opportunity to explore options that can be given to an individual and the effect that that person can produce in the world.

A standard vocabulary list will be used to offer ideas for the criteria of a hero. We will examine four different persons of known military history. Those characters are King David of Israel, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra of Egypt and Napoleon Bonaparte. These persons have the aspects of being defined as either political or military heroes through a divine, mythical, or legendary life story. All four persons achieved political greatness through some form of military strategy. Each hero led a people through success and failure, although some stories do not turn out as victorious as others in the end.

We will examine the criteria of hero status through the question, "What is a hero?" as well as through defining the word *hero*. Various other words for a hero such as saint or martyr will be compared and interpreted. The three stated aspects of a hero – divine intervention, mythical aspects, and legendary characteristics – will be examined and applied to the four persons of recognized military and political greatness. Different scenarios of each hero's life will be examined from beginning to end to chart a definite path into the data and tales that make up the each person's status as a hero.

As a small learning community, we will examine the aspects of each hero's political triumphs, failures and their influence through war. Students will be given examples from history and literature about the initial heroes discussed. King David, Cleopatra, Napoleon Bonaparte and Julius Caesar used their military and intellectual skills to conquer foreign lands and create historic empires under their rule. We will compare and contrast them more modern day figures such as U.S. presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Anan and South African leader Nelson Mandela, along with a list of many other modern-day leaders such as Cuban president Fidel Castro and the Communist Chinese revolutionary Mao Tse Tung.

During this time of military influence in terror-infested countries, students will eventually investigate the current political leaders of the world. Students will remain updated on current national and international events in order to discuss the aspects of heroism that may be found in certain leaders. George W. Bush and Bill Clinton have two different points of view about the leadership role of the president. Most Americans consider the presidency a prestigious part of government and society. A president must be courageous and determined in order to get his views implemented. Presidents constantly battle the different political views and subtle sabotage attempts at ruining their reputation and careers.

Students will be grouped into teams and use the information given by the teacher to process the data and to express their opinion by using the facts they acquire in order to apply critical thinking skills. Once in teams, students will track the path of King David,

Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and Napoleon Bonaparte. We will discuss several aspects of the four heroes:

- Family lineage
- Prophesied birth
- Attempts at escaping death
- Military victories
- Later years

The information given by the teacher will consist of one timeline, handouts of important information and worksheets about each hero or heroine. The students will also receive an understanding of the way of life during the era in which these persons lived. We will examine the regions where they lived as well as the religion and culture of the people during that time.

King David, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and Napoleon Bonaparte overcame obstacles during their early years that helped to create the intelligent and strategic mentality that would lead to military and political victories. Each person achieved power in their region after overcoming some obstacle. They also lived knowing that assassination attempts on their lives were a real possibility.

These four persons have attained the criteria for what constitutes a hero based largely on their surmounting adversity and exercising persistence; however, one can still discover more by investigating their other characteristics. Some of them were moved by love of their people or by things other than pure ambition. Among them were characteristics we could call spiritual or religious. Some of them are remembered lovingly and we can wonder why this is so.

In the classroom we will identify the geographical aspects of the location where each hero or heroine lived. We will investigate the people and culture during the time in which the leader was alive as well as the current characteristics of the land. The students will gather information by using various resources such as an atlas, the Internet, handouts and the library.

## **KING DAVID**

### **Background**

Israel is still approximately the same size that it was when he and his people occupied it three thousand years ago. Israel is located in between Lebanon to its north and the Egypt to the south. The Mediterranean Sea provides a sufficient harbor and waterway for trade. The climate is dry and hot and vegetation grows in scarce locations. Farming is limited because of the dry heat and a lack of irrigation. Minerals are abundant, especially salt.

During the time of 1085 BC (around David's birth), the domestication of animals such as the camel and certain livestock was already in existence. Living conditions were rough and primitive at best. There was no running water or sanitation for waste. The concept of modern day medicine did not exist at this point in history. Many non-Jewish people were scattered about Israel until the emergence of David in Jewish history.

In addition to examining the region, we will look at religion, culture and people of that time.

### **The Story of King David**

David, a shepherd boy and youngest child of his parents was chosen by a Hebrew prophet and became a threat to the King Saul of Israel, who sought to destroy David in jealousy, knowing he would be the future king. The story of David is the story of a physically smaller man with a heroic character. He emerged to help his people and lead them to victory over their enemies. His story is a dramatic one and when he wins victories the reader of the story is on David's side. We can see why David is a hero of his people.

David was born into a "blessed" family, the grandson of Ruth from the Bible. With the blessing of the God of Israel, David overcame the jealousy of King Saul after David defeated the giant Goliath of the Philistines. David was considered handsome and talented. His victories over Israel's enemies made King Saul hate him and much of David's story is the story of running from Saul, who tried to kill him several times.

Fortunately David had a few loyal followers and the friendship of Saul's son, which allowed him the opportunity to go into exile with the knowledge that he had a mission to one day be king. Later, after many adverse life situations, David became King of Israel, but even then he made great mistakes, and had to struggle with the consequences.

We will discuss several aspects of David: his family lineage, his youth, his escape from assassination attempts, military victories and later years. The information will be given by the teacher in order to produce an accurate timeline and understanding of the way of life during that era.

David was born in Bethlehem around 1085 BC, into the tribe of Judah, the youngest son of eight. Some of David's life can be read in the Bible's Psalms. The teachings of the Bible conflict somewhat with non-biblical history as to when David actually ruled. The scientific community places his reign thirty to fifty years after the Bible's recordings due to recently found Assyrian inscriptions. He reigned from 1055 to 1015 BC. He began as a shepherd tending his father's sheep. Brought to King Saul to sooth evil spirits by playing his harp, David was made an armor bearer.

Instead of having to fight in battle like his three older brothers, David was sent to deliver provisions to the troops preparing to fight the Philistines. Legend states that

Goliath was a strong giant whom had beaten the army single handedly in a previous battle. No one dared to stand up to the giant except for little David. With one carefully maneuvered strike from his slingshot, he defeated the giant Goliath. This gained David a permanent position at court, the friendship of Saul's son, Jonathan, popularity among the women of the court and the jealousy of the king.

Saul promised David his eldest daughter Merob if he killed one hundred Philistines; he succeeded but Saul broke his promise and David married another of Saul's daughters—Michal. Saul's jealousy became more intense after the marriage between David and his daughter. Jonathan convinced David to run into exile because reconciliation was impossible. While in exile the priest Achimelech was accused of conspiracy and executed by his fellow priests.

- David had to feign madness to escape death by the hands of the king of Gath.
- On return from Gath, David becomes head of four hundred men.
- David spares Saul's life and marries Abigail
- Saul and Jonathan are both killed in battle while David is somewhere else.
- At age thirty, the men of Judah accept him as king.
- Saul's general Abner attacks David's people but is defeated
- Civil war is continuous as David's power increases
- David brings Israel to a state of great political power
- David has son with Bathsheba named Solomon
- David publicly annoys Solomon as king
- David dies at seventy and is honored

Before his death, David had accomplished a great deal for the people of a united Israel. By defeating Goliath of the Philistines, he proved his determination and valor through quick thinking and a willingness to sacrifice his own life. He had many enemies, some of whom were his from his own family.

The Bible describes the evolution that David underwent in one of the Psalms:

*I will exalt you, O Lord,  
for you lifted me out of the depths and  
did not let my enemies gloat over me.  
O Lord, my God, I called to you for help  
And you healed me.  
O Lord, you brought me up from my  
grave  
You spared me from going down the pit.  
  
Sing to the Lord, you saints of his:  
Praise his holy name.*

*For his anger lasts only a moment,  
But his favor lasts a lifetime;  
Weeping may remain for a night,  
but rejoicing comes in the morning.  
  
When I felt secure, I said,  
'I will never be shaken.'  
O Lord, when you favored me  
You made my mountain stand firm;  
But when you hid your face,  
I was dismayed.*



*To you, O Lord, I called;  
To the Lord I cried for mercy:  
What gain is there in my destruction,  
in my going down into the pit?  
Will the dust praise you?  
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?  
Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me:  
O Lord, be my help.*

*You turned my wailing into dancing:  
You removed my sackcloth and clothed  
me with joy that my heart may sing to  
you  
and not be silent.  
O Lord my God, I will give you thanks  
forever (Psalm 30).*

David evolved from a soft-spoken and charming shepherd to fearless military leader, from compassionate to sinful ruler. He is revered for the success of the Jewish nation of Israel. Some people may argue that his pride and arrogance later tarnished his victories. The people of Israel suffered because of his actions against God. Some people may agree that David's compassion for his people helped them to be spared more suffering because he repented before God for his sins.

David's character contained courage, cunning and charisma. He also had the ability to persevere in times of adversity. Records of his victories show his strengths as well as his sinful exploits and behavior. In determining whether David is indeed a hero, one can examine the admiration he has received from the descendants of his people.

## **JULIUS CAESAR**

### **Background**

Rome lies within the country of Italy in the Mediterranean region of the world. The climate is sunny, and the region is warmed by breezes off the coast of North Africa. The sea provided trade and was a vital source of riches for the Romans during the time of Julius Caesar. Trade for the Romans was important because natural resources were scarce. Trade contributed to the imports from the regions that lay to the east, north, west, and south. Latin was the dominant language of the Roman world, which is the root to the French and English languages of today. The political structure of Rome has remained an influence for much modern politics in the world.

### **The Story of Julius Caesar**

Julius Caesar, the privileged son of Rome, escaped many attempts on his life and went on to achieve more awards than most modern day entertainers, let alone politicians or military heroes. He too, was revered in his time and later. We can read about his life in William Shakespeare's play and in the writings of Caesar himself. His fame and notoriety when he was alive made him the object of hatred and love and led in the end to his betrayal and murder.

Born into the aristocracy around 100 BC. Julius Caesar was determined to be the best candidate for the future of Rome. In Rome it was the duty of the son to be greater than the father had been. At the age of thirteen, he was chosen for the lifetime dignity of *flamen dialis* (high priest of Jupiter). He was later stripped of his title. Sulla became hostile toward him. After Sulla's death, Caesar returned to Rome and resumed his rise to power.

- Julius Caesar was born in Rome, Italy between 102-100 BC
- Teenage Caesar is chosen for the lifetime dignity of *flamen dialis* (high priest of Jupiter), 87 BC
- 84 – 81 BC: Caesar's father dies, marries first wife and flees into exile from Sulla, after Civil War, his only daughter Julia is born
- 78 BC – Sulla dies and Caesar returns to Rome
- 75 BC – Caesar is captured while in Roman army and crucifies the pirates once his ransom is paid.
- Caesar fights in Asia and later serves as military tribune.
- 74 – 61BC: Caesar's rise to military fame. He marries second and third wives.
- 60 – 52 BC: Caesar creates "First Triumvirate," becomes emperor, loses mother and daughter to death and expands Roman Empire
- 51 BC – 45 BC: Caesar marries Cleopatra, expands Roman Empire to Africa and serves fourth consulship
- 44 BC – Caesar murdered by a large group of Roman senators including Brutus and Cassius,
- 42 BC – Julius Caesar is deified after one of the most famous assassinations in world history.

Caesar accomplished far more than his father and most others in Roman history ever had. His military victories were notorious and often quickly executed with great success. Caesar later married Sulla's granddaughter to unite Rome under Pompey's rule. Four years later he became Chief consul of the Senate, later general and finally Emperor.

Centuries after Caesar's death, the writer William Shakespeare stated, "When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome, that her wide walks encompassed but one man?" His battles and victories from Asia to the North African peninsula expanded Roman influence to make the city itself the largest economic center of its time. The emergence of Rome as an empire is a turning point in history. Julius Caesar was the key factor in this change, which led to a new environment in the world and generated a new philosophy of government.

Julius Caesar showed characteristics of a hero through pursuing his ambitions and creating a Roman Empire. His perseverance through great military battles by using his wit and charisma, helped to mold the Roman Republic into a great empire that ruled over

much of the world for centuries. Caesar's influence was great and he certainly can be said to have changed the world.

Caesar was allowed to sit in the Senate without age restriction. This honor is an example of the respect that he instilled within his people. Caesar also defied the government and his people by falling in love with an African queen from Egypt—Cleopatra.

## **CLEOPATRA**

### **Background**

The country of Egypt is located in Northeast Africa, which contains the Sahara desert. The desert has sand dunes that reach almost 1,000 feet. The Nile River is located in Egypt and is the longest in the world. The river is prone to flooding. In fact, the flooding of the Nile is understood to be one of the great sources of the wealth of ancient Egypt, since it makes the farmland fertile along its banks. Some parts of Egypt receive rain only once every few years, and when it does rain, major flooding can occur. During the time of Cleopatra, pharaohs ruled the people and pyramids—built as a kind of burial monument to help their passage to the afterlife—were a dominant reminder of their power.

### **The Story of Cleopatra**

Cleopatra had to overcome being a woman in a “man's world” during a time when females were not considered equal in Egypt and especially Rome. Cleopatra, like David and Caesar, faced attempts on her life and, like Caesar, her death was legendary.

She had to overcome jealousy, greed and prejudice in order to rule a nation, later with the help of Caesar. Her ability to manipulate situations enabled her to benefit the people of her country and maintain her political power.

She was well-educated and favored over her other siblings by her father, which may have attributed to her lack of fear of men. Cleopatra used her knowledge to gain the necessary protection that Egypt needed until she began her relationship with Mark Antony.

The most infamous showmanship of grandeur was her introduction to Mark Antony, by arriving as the goddess Aphrodite. Mark Antony considered himself to be like the god of wine and women, Dionysus. Together they created a spectacle that prompted the wrath Rome.

As a class we will examine the life of Cleopatra from birth to death. Information will be given of the history of Egypt, Cleopatra's lineage and her ambitious and glamorous

lifestyle. We will also discuss how a woman ruled a nation in a time where most did not have a voice to speak their mind.

- 51 BC – Ptolemy Auletes dies. His oldest daughter Cleopatra is eighteen and youngest son, twelve year old Ptolemy XIII.
- Pompey, the brother-in-law of Julius Caesar, is left in charge of Cleopatra and her siblings
- Rome begins to control more of Egypt over time, however Cleopatra has other ideas
- She drops her brother's name from official documents and has her portrait placed on Egyptian coins.
- Cleopatra defies the rule that men should dominate the throne.
- She is dethroned around 49 BC by Theodotus, the eunuch Ponthinus and half Greek general Achilles, and flees Egypt
- 48 BC – Ptolemy's men murder Pompey after retreating to Alexandria. Caesar arrives in Egypt.
- During the Alexandria War, parts of the Alexandrian Library are burned.
- Caesar manages to capture the lighthouse in the Alexandrian harbor and defeat Ptolemy
- Cleopatra returns to Rome. Cleopatra meets Caesar
- 47 BC – Cleopatra has a son (Caesarion) and a daughter.
- Caesar lavishes gifts and riches upon Cleopatra. Her intelligence and inheritance are enticing to him.
- March 44 BC – Caesar is assassinated outside the Senate Building in Rome after rumors that he wanted to be declared king. Cleopatra flees Rome to Alexandria. Caesar had not claimed their children in his will.
- Upon arriving back in Egypt she has her consort Ptolemy XIV murdered and claims her son as co-regent at age of four years old.
- Egypt suffers from plagues and famine while Cleopatra is away
- Mark Antony arrives in Egypt in 41 BC She greeted him by sailing on a ship with silver oars, purple sails and her servants fanning her, while handmaid steered the ship. She was dressed as Aphrodite the Goddess of Love.
- 41 – 40 BC: Mark Antony agrees to marry Octavius's sister Octavia because Octavius feels that Antony had left Rome unprotected while enamored with Cleopatra.
- Over time Mark Antony neglects his duties in Rome for the splendor of Cleopatra and Egypt and spends all his time at Alexandria. Octavian becomes furious and the battle between the Roman Empire and Egypt begins.
- 30 BC – Octavian's forces defeat Mark Antony and Cleopatra at Alexandria.
- Cleopatra, on hearing of Antony's death, and being unwilling to accept Octavian's defeat of Alexandria, has an asp bite her and dies.
- Cleopatra was Egypt's last monarch. Rome began to rule completely after her death.

Cleopatra's charisma and skill was enough to enable her to rule Egypt but not enough to save her kingdom. Upon her death Caesar's son was murdered and her other children raised by Antony's wife, Octavia. Cleopatra felt that she was Egypt and her people were her country. She showed courage in battle and in her death by refusing to be made a slave by the Roman Empire.

## **NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**

### **Background**

France is located on the continent of Europe, bordering the Atlantic. To the north and east lie Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and to the southwest is Spain. Mont Blanc, on the French/Swiss/Italian borderland, is the highest peak in Europe. France has four major rivers: the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne and the Rhone. These basic geographical facts are not known to my students and studying Napoleon will give me a chance to teach them about France's geography.

### **The Story of Napoleon**

During Napoleon's reign as emperor, he built many roads and conquered most of Europe. He also implemented the new metric system of measure and reformed the French educational system. In many ways Napoleon brought much new learning not only to France but to all the nations to which his armies came.

One side of Napoleon Bonaparte character is his romantic nature. An example of this can be seen in his love letters to his first wife Josephine. Napoleon was also a jealous person. He was stunned and envious of the art and architecture found in Egypt, so much so that he destroyed some of the country's valuable treasures. Bonaparte led France into new terrain, conquering and being defeated with the same kind of courage that he exerted all of his life.

- 1769 – Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Ajaccio, Corsica, seven years before the American Revolution
- 1785 – Napoleon is garrisoned in the town of Valence
- 1789 – King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette are overthrown during the French Revolution. The Rights of Man is adopted
- 1793 - King Louis XVI is executed; Reign of Terror begins
- 1794 – Bonaparte goes on a mission to Genoa, ordered by Robespierre
- 1794 – Robespierre falls; Bonaparte arrested, but eventually cleared.
- 1795 – Bonaparte is promoted to the rank of General in the armée de l'Ouest. He helps to suppress the Royalist rebellion against the Convention. Bonaparte is made general of the army of the Interior, and finally commander-in-chief.

- 1796 – Napoleon marries Josephine de Beauharnais.
- 1796-1797 – Napoleon’s army is victorious in Montenotte, Mondovi, Lodi, Castiglione, Bassano, Arcole, Rivoli, Mantua, etc.
- 1798 – After returning to Paris, Bonaparte leaves for Egypt and conquers Malta and Alexandria. Bonaparte attempts to siege Saint John D’Acre, but fails repeatedly.
- 1799 - Failed Egyptian campaign leaves Bonaparte defeated but determined
- 1802 – France declares Napoleon consul for life
- 1804 – He is crowned emperor of France
- 1805 – 1806: French war with Britain; Napoleon wins victory at Jena
- 1808 – Napoleon and troops begin to drain resources on the Iberian peninsula
- 1810 – Bonaparte divorces Josephine for not producing an heir; marries Austrian Archduchess Marie Louis
- 1811 – Napoleon’s son, Duke of Reichstadt, is born, nicknamed “King of Rome”; French empire is at its peak
- 1812 – The victory of Wellington at Ciudad-Rodrigo, after which an ultimatum is sent to Napoleon by Alexander. Wellington then beats Marmont. Napoleon goes to Moscow.
- 1813 – In various battles, the Napoleonic empire loses Spain, Napoleonic Germany, Holland.
- 1814-1815 – Italy is lost to the empire, Paris falls to attackers, and Bonaparte is deposed. He abdicates, but escapes from Elba. Eventually, he arrives at St. Helena, and moves to Longwood.
- 1821 – Napoleon dies after illness.

Napoleon Bonaparte is one of history’s most powerful leaders. He was a noted military genius that rose from the ranks of the military to the title of Emperor. Napoleon was a small man with big ambition and a cunning wit and adventurous nature that helped to expand the French Empire into the New World and Africa.

Napoleon Bonaparte exhibited many characteristics of a hero. He was loyal to his country, full of valor and determination. His strong character and belief in himself –his conviction—allowed France to reach new heights. Napoleon brought many good changes to Europe and spread learning and new political ideas, but some felt he was a tyrant. His enemies had enough respect for Napoleon to exile rather than execute him. In modern times Napoleon Bonaparte still invokes the idea of ambition taken to its highest level and defeat with honor.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Students can learn that life-changing events and tribulations can create adverse situations that can evolve into strength of character. The stories of the people listed above are meant

to show this. The material presented in the classroom will use their stories and will include:

1. The identification and examination of a hero. The student will define and discuss the characteristics that make up a hero. Weigh the concept of divine, mystical and legendary within the confines of our definition of a hero.
2. The teacher will place individual students into teams to analyze the four heroes previously discussed.
3. Students will determine if a hero is mostly based on their accomplishments in the areas of military and political affairs, or in the characters of these people.
4. Each team will analyze the data given and create their own ideas of a modern day hero that exerts divine, mythical and/or legendary characteristics.
5. The class would examine at the importance of each individual in political and military history.
6. The strategies used will be a series of power point presentations, handouts, creative learning packets and teamwork through group projects.
7. Students will then pair up within their teams to find their own heroes in "Project Hero," which will include an individual essay from each student in the pair, commenting on their findings and point of view.

This unit should take approximately six weeks to complete. The goal is to understand what a hero is by studying these four people from various cultures and backgrounds.

The sixth grade class will gather information that they believe is important from the data given about each person discussed. They will then create the criteria of a hero. For instance, does a hero have to encompass many characteristics that are deemed positive in order to be considered exceptional? Does being exceptional make one heroic?

The seventh grade class will examine the data from sixth grade through PowerPoint and handouts, and then apply it in order to compare and create their own criteria for a hero. After obtaining the information from both the sixth and seventh grade, a power point presentation of the data will be presented to all three-grade levels.

The eighth grade class will examine and investigate the lives of the discussed persons. One team may study one person. I will let my students argue about these people and their characters. Each team will then create a 10-step point of view checklist that establishes whether their person is a hero.

Sixth and seventh grade will receive the information through video recording from eighth grade and reply accordingly. Their response will be either to agree or refute the data through a small two or three minute speech from each team regarding each name on the list. For one week the students will respond back and forth.

Each student will determine whether or not heroism is in the "eye of the beholder."

## CONCLUSION

I believe our past can instruct us on how to create a better present and more promising future. The intention to become the leaders of their nations and the way they went about getting power shows each of the four heroes' courage and valor. The quality of the character can be determined by exploring all aspects of the individual's life and that will enable us to conclude who is or is not a hero. The students will examine the conviction and sacrifice that the discussed ruler experienced. War and politics will also be discussed as a part of the individual's lives. How did the person react to danger and adversity? What obstacles did the individual overcome in order to pursue their goals? Did the person make sacrifices in order to improve the lives of their people or were their actions mostly for their own glory?

The characteristics that will be the criteria for discussing who is or is not a hero are listed here:

- Courage, because this characteristic signifies a willingness to defy death in order to achieve the desired goal.
- Charisma, since it creates the ability to obtain leadership and leadership qualities can be an aspect of heroism.
- Cunning wit helped each person discussed above—is this required for heroism?
- Prevailing over adversity.
- Sympathy and understanding for the cause of a people.
- Must a hero be an optimist? That is, must heroes believe their heroism can help the plight of the people or that the world can be made better through their dedication and conviction?
- Loyalty—is this required of heroes?
- Determination may be part of prevailing over adversity, but is it something extra?
- Sacrifice. It enables people to endure hardship but is it something different from determination?
- The morals and values of the hero or heroine. Can a hero or heroine be someone with questionable morals in some part of his or her life?

Beyond the attributes each leader had, each was helped by circumstances that gave them a chance to show their gifts and courage. How much do circumstances matter in making heroes?

Reflecting on what makes a person strong and heroic can produce a more diverse concept of what true heroism means.



## LESSON PLANS

### Lesson Plan 1: What is a Hero?

#### *Objectives*

We begin with the definition of a hero. Students will define the characteristics of a hero. Students will discuss each characteristic and give examples of heroism.

#### *Materials needed*

- 7 Sheets of paper to create a journal
- Stapler and staples
- Pen
- Dictionary
- Handout of Definition for set characteristics
- Blank handout for new characteristics and definitions

#### *Procedure*

The lesson begins with an open discussion about who the students feel are their heroes and heroines. The discussion should contain contemporary people as well as historical. We will examine why the student chose that particular person as a hero. Each student will be given a chance to speak. The students will be given the handout of definitions of the set criteria for a hero. Using the dictionary, each definition will be discussed individually to encourage a better understanding of each word.

Once each vocabulary word has been examined, the students will create their own list of criteria for a hero. This will be done at the beginning and end of the unit. The student will write his/her name on a sheet of paper and the title “ My Hero Journal.” The sheets of paper will be stapled with the title page on the front. Each sheet after the title page will be numbered from one to six.

Once the students have created their own criteria for the characteristics of a hero, they will write in their journal on page one giving the reason why they have chosen their particular hero or heroine. The student will explain what purpose the hero has pursued and if their life followed some or most of the set criteria of definitions. Did the person have leadership qualities such as commanding an army in battle? Was the person capable of achieving their primary goals with a certain amount of success?

### Lesson Plan 2: Geography

#### *Objectives*

Students will learn about the geography of the country in which the person lived. Students will complete a worksheet once the information has been given to use for future projects.

***Materials needed***

- Journal
- Pen
- Worksheet
- Organizer

***Procedure***

Students will listen to the information given by the teacher about the geography of the country that the person lived in. Information given should be the location, climate, terrain and culture. Students will take notes about information they believe is important for filling out the organizer. The student will complete the worksheet and write their findings in their journal.

Questions help to create an understanding of the country's environment.

1. What is the weather like?
2. Could you grow vegetables like peaches and pineapples there? Explain why or why not.
3. What people(s) live there?
4. Could you find lions and tigers there? Explain why or why not.
5. Would you need a boat there? Explain why or why not.
6. Could you find silk or bananas there? Explain why or why not.

Students can examine the culture of the people such as religion, architecture, art, language and government before the discussed heroes took over leadership.

**Lesson Plan 3: Travel Brochure*****Objectives***

Students will create a travel brochure after exploring the designated country. Students will use information from previous worksheets and handouts.

***Materials needed***

- Journal
- One sheet of writing paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Construction paper
- Pen, marker and/or crayons
- Information about the country
- String to hang brochure

### ***Procedure***

1. Students will gather information on the designated country
2. On writing paper, draw a straight line down the center of the page
3. Cut the paper in half and then cut each half into another half
4. Fold the construction paper in half.
5. Glue each square of writing paper onto both sides – two on each side
6. In square one write the **Climate** as the title
7. In the second square, write the title as **Terrain**
8. The third square should be labeled **The People**
9. The fourth square should be titled **Sights and Attractions**
10. On the opposite side of the construction paper – use the right side, as the front of brochure and the left will become the back.
11. Place the name of the country and draw or past a picture of the country. The student can also draw symbols through the brochure or cut and paste pictures.
12. Write all important information in the squares inside the brochure
13. Punch hole into corner of brochure and tie string through it.
14. Teacher will hang the brochures around the room as a display of the unit.

Once the brochure is complete, the student will write a paragraph describing the brochure into their journal. Students will present their country to the class and attach the string

### **Lesson Plan 4: Passport into the Past**

#### ***Objectives***

Students will create a passport into the past. Students will use the passport for the journey into exploring the past lives of the heroes that will be discussed.

#### ***Materials needed***

- A square sheet of construction paper, the length of the students hand
- One square piece of writing paper, 3 inches shorter in length and width than the construction paper.
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pen or marker

#### ***Procedure***

Glue the writing paper onto the construction paper. Fold the papers in half. On one side of the construction paper, the student will write the word **Passport** in the center. The student's name and class should be placed on the inside left corner of the passport. As each hero is introduced into the unit, the student will decorate the inside right portion of the passport with the name of the country and years visited during their journey.

An example of an introduction into a hero and their life story should be fun. In order to come with different ideas, the teacher can use software such as Marco Polo and Kidspiration, to create graphic organizer and get lesson plan ideas. Maps can be hand draw rather than copied from a machine. Students can get a better understanding of the proportional distance between each country discussed during the unit.

**Name of hero or heroine: Julius Caesar**

**Year: 100 BC – 44 BC**

**Position: City of Rome**

1. Who was Julius Caesar?
2. What years was Julius Caesar emperor of Rome?
3. How did Caesar show determination after the king Sulla tried to harm him?
4. When did Caesar create the First Triumvirate?
5. Why were Mark Antony and Octavius Augustus important to Julius Caesar?
6. Describe some of the exploits that Caesar ventured on for the Roman Empire?
7. What made Caesar help Cleopatra reclaim access to her throne?
8. Caesar was allowed to wear his laurel in public in Rome; do you believe that this was a sign of respect for his heroic military and political victories?
9. After examining the life of Caesar, explain the characteristics that may relate to a person that has heroic attributes.
10. Was Caesar a hero in the eyes of the Roman people?

### **Lesson Plan 5: Hero Checklist**

Here's a way students can evaluate whether or not the person qualifies as a hero.

#### **10 Point Hero Checklist**

**Name of Hero** \_\_\_\_\_

- Courage**  
Did the person exert a willingness to meet danger without fear?
- Charisma**  
Did the person show exceptional ability to lead?
- Cunning**  
Did the person show an ability to be clever or quick-witted?
- Prevail**  
Did the person persevere in times of adversity?
- Sympathy**  
Did person show an understanding of the issues at hand?
- Dedication**  
Did the person give selfless devotion?
- Conviction**  
Did the person have a strong belief in his/her purpose?



## **Lesson Plan 7: What makes a hero?**

### ***Objectives***

Students will determine what being a hero means by answering thought-provoking questions.

### ***Materials Needed***

- Pen
- Worksheet consisting of the following questions:
  1. Is it important to have courage to be a hero?
  2. Could a hero be ambitious yet make sacrifices?
  3. Describe a moment of conviction in one of the heroes that you learned about in class.
  4. Give an example of heroism that one of the discussed individuals performed.
  5. In your opinion discuss whether or not you feel that a person can be heroic and have flaws.
  6. What significant role did the hero play in history if any?
  7. Once the students have answered the questions, they can group into pairs to discuss their answers. Debate would be an excellent way to encourage the students to explore their opinions.

## **Lesson Plan 8: Newsletter**

### ***Objective***

Students will create a newsletter about their favorite historical hero or heroine.

### ***Materials needed***

- Paper
- Pen
- Crayons

### ***Procedure***

The student will create a name for the newsletter, headings with information for each article about the hero or heroine.

#### **Napoleon takes Europe by Storm**

Napoleon Bonaparte and his troops won the battle against the British yesterday morning. The battle at Jena created quite a stir at the ball, which was hosted by his lovely wife, Josephine.

#### **French Empire is at its Peak**

Napoleon Bonaparte has expanded the French empire into the New World. It seems to be a promising but unexplored location. The French educational system has become almost as exceptional as the roads in Paris.

The student can also create pictures for the articles to give the newsletter color. A minimum of three articles should be created describing the exploits and adventures of the hero or heroine. A comic strip could be a good attribute. If the student isn't artistic, then a poetry or word puzzle section could be added. Students will be grouped into teams and use the information given by the teacher to process the data and to express their opinion by using the facts they acquire in order to apply critical thinking skills. Once in teams, students will track the path of King David, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and Napoleon Bonaparte

### **Lesson Plan 9: Project Hero**

#### ***Objectives***

Students will use what they have learned about historical heroes and heroines to create a new list of criteria. Students will gather into groups to work on project together.

#### ***Materials needed***

- Paper
- Pen
- Dictionary
- Index cards

#### ***Procedure***

Students will gather in groups and designate roles. There will be a leader, timekeeper, secretary and motivator. The leader will maintain order in the group, making sure that everyone is heard and ideas are encouraged. The timekeeper will keep the group on track as not to stray away from the subject at hand. The secretary will jot down the new set of criteria for a contemporary hero or heroine on the paper in numerical order.

Students must use the dictionary to find definitions that are appropriate for their list of words. Groups are encouraged to create new concepts of heroism or add to the list of criteria previously given by the teacher earlier in the unit. The list can consist of as many words that the students can think of.

Once the list is created, the group must decide the ten most important characteristics for their hero or heroine. The secretary will put the accepted words onto the index card. The students will come up with a list of people--not previously discussed in the unit--that they believe fit the criteria that they have set. The hero or heroine can consist of people from modern times.

When the index cards are complete, the group will present their findings and their choice for a contemporary hero. Classmates can question and debate the opinion of the student presenting. Eventually the class should come to a concise list created together.

## **Lesson Plan 10: Create a comparison chart**

### ***Objectives***

The students will analyze and compare the attributes of a past hero to a modern day hero.

### ***Material needed***

- Writing paper
- Pen

### ***Procedure***

Fold the paper in half and draw a line down the center of the paper. The student will write the name of the historical hero on the left and the modern hero's name in the right column. The student will list ten attributes and accomplishments of both heroes on the appropriate side of the paper. If the student can find more than ten then he/she should expand the list.

Below the comparison chart, the student will give an analysis of what he/she observed about the characteristics of the heroes being compared.

## **Lesson Plan 11: Symposium**

### ***Objectives***

Students will reenact the symposiums of ancient Italy. Discussions will encourage an open debate on heroism in both ancient and modern times.

### ***Materials needed***

- Index cards
- Pen

### ***Procedure***

Each student will write a thought-provoking question on an index card. Students will sit in a circle and take turn answering the questions. The teacher monitors the conversation between the students to ensure that one get a chance to speak on the issues. Questions that could be used are:

1. Did the relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra lead to the eventual assassination of Caesar?
2. Was Napoleon Bonaparte's ambition a sign of heroism or greed?
3. Can a hero aspire to prosperity as well as be willing to sacrifice one's own pursuits?
4. What are some attributes or flaws that modern day heroes have which are similar and different when compared to our ancient examples?



### ***Correspondence Between Classes***

Students will identify and examine four heroes of history and literature. I will also incorporate various forms of data for the students through the use of handouts, technology and in-class discussion. Each student within a group setting will analyze and discuss the characteristics and perceptions of what makes a hero. By comparing and analyzing each historical and literary figure, the student will absorb the concepts of heroism, and hopefully come to practice some of them in life.

### **Lesson Plan 12: Make a Diary**

#### ***Objective***

Students will expand the boundaries of their imagination and pretend to be a historical figure.

#### ***Materials needed***

- Journal
- Pen

#### ***Procedure***

The student will create five entries discussing five days in the life of the heroine Cleopatra. Examples of entries are:

Day 1 – When I took the throne there was famine and my brother’s consorts tried to kill me. My sister Arisone and I escaped with my troops into the mysterious lands beyond Egypt. The regime within the country stopped all trade going in and out of Alexandria, starving my people.

Day 2 – We have gotten word that Julius Caesar has arrived in Alexandria. My guardian appointed by my father Ptolemy was murdered. We hope to return to Alexandria as soon as tomorrow.

After creating the diary, students can share what they have written or choose to keep it confidential. The goal of the diary is to connect the facts given by the teacher to the student about the hero with a person’s interpretation of the person’s history.

### **Lesson Plan 13: War and Politics Game**

#### ***Objectives***

Students will understand the influence of war and politics on a culture. Students will also relate to the role of being a hero or heroine.

#### ***Materials needed***

- Large piece of construction paper
- Different color construction cut into squares

- Round plastic chips or objects that can be used as game pieces
- Markers
- Handouts
- Glue
- Index cards with questions about the heroes put into two separate piles consisting of Geography and History

### ***Procedure***

Students will gather into groups to construct the board game. The small colored square of construction paper will be glued onto the larger paper along the borders creating the first level of questions. The second handout will consist of the second level. The students will continue to paste into squared levels until there is one square in the center of the board game.

The construction paper squares in the board game will each have points that can be added up. The winner has the most points at the end of all of the questions being answered. The teacher will create questions that the students will attempt to answer by pulling the question from the top of the cards placed in the center of the board game.

Students will use the game pieces to determine the place of each participant in the game. Ideas for the squares on the board game are:

1. You have just been chosen to serve in the French army, who is your emperor? Ten points and a step forward would be given if the student produces the correct answer.
2. You have just been a part of a voyage across the Nile to visit Cleopatra. What is her occupation?
3. You have just witnessed the defeat of Goliath the giant. Who was the person that was victorious over Goliath?

### ***More Fun Things to Do***

1. Draw a map of Italy and trace the battles of Julius Caesar.
2. Examine the role that Egyptian women played in ancient times.
3. What kind of shelter did the Jewish people of Israel dwell in?
4. Create the family lineage of King David on a paper tree cut out?
5. Create a play about your favorite hero or heroine's life
6. Debate a modern day hero or heroine's relevance to today's society
7. Create a timeline about the military and political aspects of the historical figure's life.
8. Watch a movie or read a book about your favorite hero

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