

Challenging Learning Lesson Plan-

Adapted for HOME LEARNING

AGE RANGE: 11-16

What makes a great president?

KEY CONCEPT:

Leadership

KEY WORDS:

Leadership, communication, intelligence, charisma, honesty, assertiveness, aspirational, success, failure, confidence, popularity, vision, control, guidance and direction.



SUBJECT AREA RELEVANCE:

No prior learning is needed for students to successfully contribute to the lesson, other than an awareness of the existence of presidents as leaders.

LEARNING INTENTION:

- To develop a greater understanding of leadership.
- To engage and encourage students to question their core values around the concept of leadership.

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

- Students have inquired into what attributes they value in a leader.
- Students have a deeper understanding of the concept of leadership.
- Students have questioned their own and each other's preconceptions of successful leadership.
- Through dialogue and inquiry students begin to develop political awareness.

STRATEGY USED:

Diamond ranking

Note for E-learning- There are tips for e-learning in each section, but there are many ways to engage students. Use your best judgement to decide what will work for your students. You also may find that you only do parts of this lesson plan and that is okay.

1. Identify The Concept:

TIP FOR E-LEARNING- If you have a format for students to interact in chat rooms or on discussion boards, pose the question, *What Makes a Great President?* and ask students to post their ideas.

This is when your students have a basic knowledge of the concept you wish them to explore. The actions that your students might take in this phase include:

- Saying they know something about the central concept
- Being able to identify, name, remember, match or list basic characteristics of the concept
- Having a go at defining the concept with simple answers
- Identifying relevant information
- Beginning to know the relevance of the concept
- Saying they are ready for the pit

Do not confirm or challenge the ideas your students offer at this stage. You want them to explore possibilities, so leave your opinions at the door as much as possible. Remember: the Learning Challenge is about teaching your students how to think, not what to think.

Some of the key areas to investigate within and around the concept of leadership are the following:

- Defining leadership
- Democracy
- Dictatorship
- Charisma
- Power
- Influence
- Confidence
- Collective responsibility
- Popular culture
- Historical interpretations of 'Great Leaders'
- Cultural analysis of 'Great Leaders'

2. Challenge The Concept (Cognitive Conflict):

TIP FOR E-LEARNING- Choose a few of the questions below and post them for your students to think about. Then ask them to go back to their answers to the question *What makes a great president?* and read one another's answers. Encourage them to find at least one statement to respond to in agreement by saying *I agree with this because....* Next encourage them to find at least two statements that they want to explore further by asking questions like *What do you mean by.... Would this always be true of a great president? Could someone have this quality and not be a great president?* Encourage students to engage in continued dialogue for a day or two. Alternatively, if you are able to do small live chats with groups of students, you can discuss some of the questions below.

The key to the Learning Challenge is to get your students 'into the pit' by creating cognitive conflict in their minds. This deliberate creation of a dilemma is what makes the Learning Challenge such a good model for challenge and inquiry, reasoning and reasonableness. Bring other students into the dialogue by inviting comments, responses, examples, agreements, disagreements, reasons and so on. You might need to introduce other relevant perspectives or possible arguments if the dialogue is too limited in scope.

Questions for all students

The questions below becoming increasingly more challenging and will require a deeper level of thinking and understanding towards the end of the list.

- What does leadership mean to you?
- Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader?
- Why and how did this person impact your life?
- Are leaders born or made?
- Do you think that everyone wants to develop themselves? Indeed, does everyone want to be a leader?
- What is the difference, if any, between management and leadership?
- What is popularity?
- Should a president/leader be popular?
- Why might some people say "credibility is the foundation of leadership"?
- What does "being forward-thinking" mean? Why is it an important characteristic for a leader?
- What do you think is meant by the statement "leadership is everyone's business"?
- What is a "role model"?
- Does a role model have to be famous to be a role model?

- In what ways are role models important for leaders?
- Who are your role models? Their characteristics? What have you learned from them? Have they always been positive?
- Is it essential that presidents are role models?
- Can anybody be president?
- What can leaders do to show others that they are trustworthy?
- Is it important that leaders are always honest?
- Is honesty always the best policy?
- Why is learning from experience important? Describe a time when you have learned from experimentation and even failure. What did you learn that you might not have learned if you hadn't had that experience?
- What is the difference between being deeply committed to a value and imposing your will on others? Does a leader need to know the difference?
- What makes something new and innovative worthwhile doing?

3. Construct Understanding:

TIP FOR E-LEARNING- a) Send the cards to students and ask them to print them so they can use them for the ranking exercise. Once they have ranked them, they can send pictures of their rankings to a small group or partners and discuss them on a discussion board. b) Create a virtual document (i.e. a Google Doc) that has a chart that students can fill in and share using the terms from the cards. c) If you are able to have small group chats, you can talk through this activity virtually. **In any case, encourage questions that make students re-think their ranking and allow them to adjust.**

After spending some time in the pit your students will begin to make links and construct meaning. They will do this by examining options, connecting ideas together and explaining cause and effect. While struggling in the Learning Pit together, students begin to create an answer through social construction. This is the part of the lesson that you want to see them constructing a working definition or an understanding through dialogue.

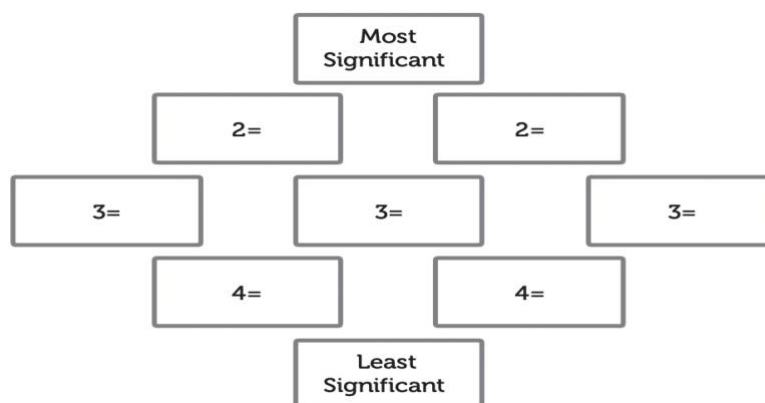
Activity: Diamond Ranking

A 'Pit Tool' that would work particularly well with this concept would be ranking. This is a commonly used and easily understood way for your students to sort through the many ideas they have come up with during the wobble phase.

The diamond ranking strategy encourages active participation. It will help your students to prioritise the information, clarify their thoughts and create reasons and reflections.

Before diamond ranking, your students could group the characteristics into different categories. For example, common and unusual factors; relevant and irrelevant; what adults believe and what children believe; wants and needs; always true, sometimes true and never true. It is probably best not to give these categories to your students but instead to ask them to come up with their own.

Now, focusing on the question 'what makes a great president', ask your students to place the characteristic they think is most important, in making a president great at the top. The next two most important should be placed underneath the first one, but side-by-side to each other to show they are thought of as 'second equal'. After that, there are three third-equals, two fourth- equals and then the single least important one at the bottom, as shown in the figure below.



SIMPLIFICATION / EXTENSION / ADAPTATION:

In order to simplify this activity, you could reduce the amount of characteristic cards you give the students to sort and classify. Please note that some students will imply 'rank' characteristics in alphabetical order, particularly when they are finding the idea of ranking too challenging. If your students do this then gently remind them that the task is not to 'sort' but to 'rank' and that alphabetical order is not a rank. In this instance you could ask them to diamond rank only 4 characteristics.

To extend the activity you could ask the students to re-rank according to different criteria, but still focused on the concept of leadership. The following categories could be used, 'key qualities that every good leader should possess when- being honest; delegating; communicating, showing confidence; having a positive attitude and being creative.' Again it is probably best not to give these categories to your students but instead to ask them to come up with their own.

To extend the activity further students could research past presidents and supplement the existing characteristic cards with some of their own, that they identify through considering the attributes or previous presidents.

4. Consider The Learning Journey:

TIP FOR E-LEARNING- These reflections can be done through journaling.

This is when your students are considering their learning journey and looking for ways to apply their new understanding. After achieving a sense of eureka, your students should reflect on their learning journey. They can do this by considering how they progressed from simplistic ideas (stage 1), to the identification of more complex and conflicting ideas (stage 2), through to a deeper understanding of how all these ideas interrelate to each other (stage 3). Now at stage 4, they can think about the best ways to relate and apply their new understanding to different contexts.

The actions that your students might take in this phase include:

- Reviewing, relating and understanding their learning journey
- Applying their understanding to new and different contexts
- Being able to generalise, hypothesise, prioritise, design, create, evaluate and perform
- Explaining how they developed their understanding and saying what they could have done differently
- Critiquing the process and strategies they used this time so as to identify how best to tackle other concepts
- Creating similar tasks or problems for others to try

ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-1

Good communicator

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-2

A man

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-3

A woman

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-4

Confidence

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-5

Attractive

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-6

Toughness

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-7

Intelligence

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-8

A calm manner

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-9

Influential

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-10

Visionary

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-11

Honesty

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-12

Popular

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-13

Decisive

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-14

Charismatic

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-15

A good sense of humour

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-16

Knowledgeable

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-17

Fashionable

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-18

Tall

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-19

Smart

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-20

A university
education

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-21

Aspirational

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-22

Powerful

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-23

Youth

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-24

Experience

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-25

Good hair

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-26

Positivity

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-27

Compassion

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-28

Generosity

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-29

Conflict

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-30

What makes a great president?
1-30

Fit

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-31

Healthy

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-32

What makes a great president?
1-32

Passionate

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-33

What makes a great president?
1-33

Empathetic

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-34

Reasonableness

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-35

What makes a great president?
1-35

Honesty

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-36

What makes a great president?
1-36

Wisdom

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-37

Religious beliefs

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-38

Money

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-39

Stubbornness

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-40

An extrovert

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-41

An introvert

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-42

An animal lover

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-43

An environmentalist

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-44

Energetic

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-45

Inspiring

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-46

Creative

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-47

Trustworthy

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-48

Integrity

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-49

Persuasive

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-50

A positive attitude

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-51

Under 30

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-52

Committed

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-53

Empathetic

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ACTIVITY:
What makes a great president?
1-54

Accountable

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Optimistic

Focused

Risk taker

