

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 22 MODEL

TASK 22

STRUCTURED ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY
THIS EXAMPLE USES "CLINTON'S LEGACY"—COLLECTION #10002

Labeling?

STEP 1: Choose a historical question that lends itself to contrasting viewpoints and arguable answers:

President Clinton was more successful after leaving the White House than he was as President.

STEP 2: Select texts representing a variety of view points for students to examine.

"CLINTON'S LEGACY"
(FROM: CLINTON'S LEGACY—COLLECTION #10002)
by Kevin Baker

AMERICAN HERITAGE | DECEMBER 2000 | VOLUME 51 | ISSUE 8

<http://www.americanheritage.com/content/clinton%E2%80%99s-legacy?page=show>

...So if he dodges the "Failure" level, whom should Clinton be compared to? The yardstick for most Presidents in the second half of this century has become Franklin Roosevelt, or maybe Harry Truman, the reigning exemplar of courage in office. Here, too, Clinton falls short. Political careers must always be in part a matter of circumstances, and to reach the "Great" or "Near Great" level of Presidents, it's imperative to lead the nation through a war, a depression, or some similar crisis. FDR had the good fortune to serve during the most grueling depression and bloodiest war in human history. The Clinton administration just has not been blessed with the sort of catastrophes necessary to showcase real leadership.

So which President does compare most closely to Bill Clinton? I would opt for what might seem a most unlikely choice: Calvin Coolidge...

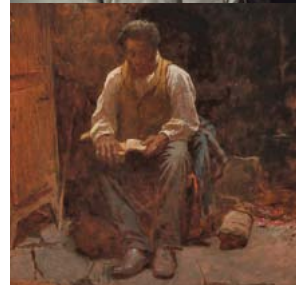
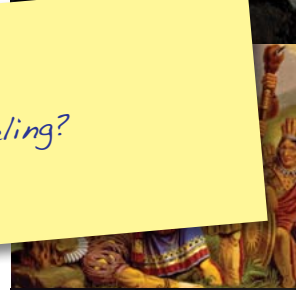
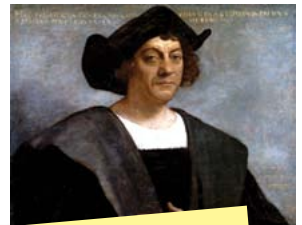
THE BUDGET AND DEFICIT UNDER CLINTON
by Brooks Jackson

POSTED ON FEBRUARY 3, 2008, UPDATED ON FEBRUARY 11, 2008

Q: During the Clinton administration was the federal budget balanced? Was the federal deficit erased?

A: Yes to both questions, whether you count Social Security or not.

...Clinton's large budget surpluses also owe much to the Social Security tax on payrolls. Social Security taxes now bring in more than the cost of current benefits, and the "Social Security surplus" makes the total deficit or surplus figures look better than they would if Social Security wasn't counted. But even if we remove Social Security from the equation, there was a surplus of \$1.9 billion in fiscal 1999 and \$86.4 billion in fiscal 2000. So any way you count it, the federal budget was balanced and the deficit was erased, if only for a while... So which President does compare most closely to Bill Clinton? I would opt for what might seem a most unlikely choice: Calvin Coolidge...



INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 22 MODEL (continued)

BILL CLINTON'S AMERICA

by Douglas Koopman

ON PRINCIPLE, V8N6 | DECEMBER 2000

<http://ashbrook.org/publications/onprin-v8n6-koopman/>

...The final legacy of Bill Clinton is the willingness to stay in office at the expense of the dignity of the office. To beat back forced removal, Clinton claimed attorney-client privilege, executive privilege, secret service privilege, and other assertions that all failed in court. He used every tool and person under his authority to defend himself and attack his opponents. Nothing, even the dignity of the office, was more important than keeping Bill Clinton as president...

IMPACT AND LEGACY

<http://millercenter.org/president/clinton/essays/biography/9>

...Additionally, the Clinton presidency will certainly be studied and evaluated in terms of its major domestic success: eliminating the federal deficit and overseeing the strongest economy in recent memory. Although there has been some partisan debate about the extent to which the 1990's boom can be attributed to Clinton, the mainstream interpretation now tends to give great credit to Clinton and his economic team, especially Robert Rubin of the National Economic Council and later the secretary of the Treasury, for uncommon fiscal discipline in 1993..

...In terms of foreign policy, the Clinton record is also mixed. One of Clinton's core missions as President, he often said, was to prepare Americans for a world in which global economic forces failed to respect national boundaries. Perhaps his greatest accomplishments, then, came in the area of economic globalization—establishing several new regimes of free trade, with NAFTA and GATT...

...The President's success in the Balkans will undoubtedly resonate well historically, as the administration helped end a conflict that threatened both the security of Europe and the viability of transatlantic cooperative arrangements. But the failure to act in Rwanda, in particular, seems likely to loom large in future historical evaluations. Clinton's overall management of the immediate post-Cold War environment will certainly endure great scrutiny.

...Finally, it is probably the case that few Clinton historical retrospectives will get very far before noting that this was only the second American President to suffer the disgrace of impeachment. It is evident from the presidency of his successor that any harm Clinton did to the institution of the presidency was, all things considered, rather meager, as the younger Bush has amassed an extraordinary degree of power in that office. But the damage done to Clinton's place in history is far more pronounced and probably permanent. Future historians will likely evaluate not just what Clinton did, but also what he did not accomplish, because he was tied-up in a second-term struggle for political survival. It is this consideration of "what might have been" that may be Clinton's greatest obstacle to gaining historical stature..

STEP 3: *Organize students into pairs.*

STEP 4: *Each pair takes a position about the historical question and reviews the texts. An organizer, included below, can help students track their analysis and prepare their positions.*

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 22 MODEL (continued)

STEP 5: *Student pairs with opposing views then come together as four-person teams and present their views to one other with one pair presenting while the others listen.*

STRUCTURED ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY OUTLINE

Historical Question: *Was President Clinton a Successful President?*

SIDE A:

Position: *YES*

SIDE B:

Position: *NO*

1. Partners prepare:
 - a. Find evidence that supports your side of the argument.
 - b. Prepare your position statement.
2. Position Presentation:
 - a. Side A presents their position using supporting evidence from the texts.
 - b. Side B restates to Side A's satisfaction.
 - c. Side B presents their position using supporting evidence from the texts.
 - d. Side A restates to Side B's satisfaction.
3. Consensus-Building:
 - a. Abandon original roles.
 - b. Build consensus regarding the question using supporting evidence.
 - c. If consensus can't be reached, clarify where the difference lie considering the evidence in the texts.

Source: http://teachinghistory.org/system/files/SAC-Handouts_12.pdf

STRUCTURED ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY-TEXT ANALYSIS CHART

Historical Question: *Was President Clinton a Successful President?*

SIDE A: Position: <i>Bill Clinton was a success as President</i>	SIDE B: Position: <i>Bill Clinton was a failure as President</i>
Evidence 1: <i>Federal budget was balanced, deficit erased, if only for a little while</i>	Evidence 1: <i>Did not lead the nation courageously through great difficulty or tragedy...basically a "Calvin Coolidge", or mediocre president</i>
Evidence 2: <i>Economic globalization...such as NAFTA and GATT</i>	Evidence 2: <i>All he really cared about was staying in office, no matter what he had to do to achieve that</i>
Evidence 3: <i>Success in the Balkans, overall management of post-Cold War environment</i>	Evidence 3: <i>Failure in Rwanda</i>
Evidence 4: <i>Strongest economy in recent history</i>	Evidence 4: <i>Disgrace of impeachment, no lasting harm to office, but will always cloud his legacy...trying to stay in office kept him too busy to be truly "great"</i>

Questions you have about the sources, evidence and ideas in the text or presentation:

All the sources seem fairly unbiased, with the exception of The Ashbrooke Organization, which is a conservative think tank, so that makes sense. All the other sources presented both positive and negative aspects of Clinton and his administration

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 22 MODEL (continued)

STEP 6: *Once the first pair has presented, the listening pair repeats back what they understood; they do not argue or debate but can ask clarifying questions and solicit responses. Listeners do not become presenters until the original presenters are fully satisfied that they have been heard and understood.*

STEP 7: *After both pairs have presented and listened, the group of four abandon their original positions and work toward reaching consensus. If consensus proves unattainable, the team clarifies where their differences lie.*

STEP 8: *Students then independently write an argumentative essay based on the question.*

Consensus/Thesis Statement for Essay:

Bill Clinton's Presidency had both positive and negative impact on the country, both during the time he was president; and in successive years. He will most likely be judged somewhat high on the presidential scale for his economic policies, medium for his foreign policies, and low on personal integrity. In short, he was fairly effective, but the nickname, "Slick Willie", will unfortunately be one of his enduring legacies.