



EXPERIENCING AMERICA

(50-60 minutes over several days)

OBJECTIVE

Students conduct research and interview adults about historical events.

MATERIALS

Access to the library and/or Internet

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three or four

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they will be researching various events in American history. Explain that they will then interview adults on the topic they were assigned.
- ✓ Assign each group an event to research:
 - ✓ Conservatism and the rise of Ronald Reagan
 - ✓ Nixon's accomplishments and defeats (Watergate)
 - ✓ Kennedy and his 1968 assassination
 - ✓ President Truman and the dropping of the Atomic Bomb
 - ✓ *Brown v. Board of Education* – 1954
 - ✓ World War II
 - ✓ Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal
- ✓ Have the groups do background research on the event they were assigned. The groups should gather research from various sources and then develop 10 interview questions based on the research.

- ✓ Individual group members should start brainstorming adults they want to interview, including family members. (Note: Students need to make sure their interviewees were alive at the time of their respective event!)
- ✓ Your students should next use the interview questions they developed to learn from their interviewee about what it was like to be an American during the specified period.
- ✓ Students should take the interview responses and their group research and create a well-thought-out and cohesive essay on the event/topic.
- ✓ Conclude the activity with your students sharing aspects of their interviews and essays with the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did you learn about your interviewee's experience with the event?*
- ★ *What did you learn about the event that you did not know before?*
- ★ *What were you surprised to learn from your interviewee?*
- ★ *How did this assignment impact your understanding of your country?*