

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

Who Should Be the Icon on the VA Website?

Grade(s): 11th grade (can be adapted for any grade level)

Time (minutes): 3-50 minute class periods

Lesson Overview:

Throughout this lesson on veterans, students will be given the opportunity to learn about various veterans and their stories by analyzing their biographies and other available primary sources. Students will be discussing the 6 pillars of character and discussing which veteran from the biographies reviewed should be the new Icon for the VA website. This lesson was designed for use with the biographies from the St. Augustine National Cemetery, but can be adapted for any national cemetery.

Relevant Social Studies Standards:

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) issued by the Florida Department of Education for Social Studies:

- SS.912.A.1.2-Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.
- SS.912.W.1.6-Evaluate the role of history in shaping identity and character.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) issued by the Florida Department of Education for Language Arts:

- LAFS.1112.RH.1.1-Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- LA.1112.RH.1.2-Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Required Materials:

Primary Sources:

- Biographies of Florida veterans, available at [UCF VLP Website](#)
 - Sample Biography - [Paul Hon](#)

Other:

- Letter from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs
- List and description of the 6 pillars of character
- Matrix for assessing and selecting an icon
- Computers with internet access (optional)

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Learning Objectives:

The students will be able to understand how to navigate a biography.

The students will understand the purpose and function of the U. S. Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The students will understand the six pillars of character and their importance to society.

Special Vocabulary:

Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship, Veteran

Procedure:

1. Discuss what a Veteran is. Show the students the [website](#) for the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs.
2. Discuss the 6 pillars of character (sheet attached below). You may have to explain what each word means and give examples.
3. Read the letter from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (attached).
 - a. Discuss the problem (which Veterans should be the new icon on the website. Introduce students to the [UCF VLP website and biographies](#).
4. Choose one biography from the UCF website ([example available here](#)), and demonstrate the decision-making matrix (attached) to the class as a whole group. Review the criteria and discuss how the students may approach their decision making process.
 - a. Discuss the skills of each veteran in their personal jobs or in their service to their country.
5. Assign students to work in groups of three or four.
 - a. **Option one:** Using computers with internet access, have each group work together to research and select four veterans from the UCF website (30-50 minutes). Then have each group fill out the matrix assessing their interpretation of their veteran's characteristics.
 - b. **Option two:** The instructor can select any number of biographies from the website, and assign them to each group. From there, the students can work to fill out the matrix, assessing their interpretations of their veteran's characteristics.
6. After each group has selected (or been assigned) their veterans, have them take notes and fill out their matrix.
 - a. Each group should discuss which veteran meets the criteria for being the icon on the new website. Redirect students to the letter from the VA, and review the prompt.
 - b. Groups should spend time discussing amongst themselves which of their veterans they would like to nominate. Discussion should be encouraged as they research.

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7. Finally, each group will do a presentation and explain to the class which veteran they nominated, and how they made their choices.
 - a. Groups can also spend a few minutes discussing each of the veterans that they selected in their research (or were assigned), and should explain their decision making process as well as why they ultimately selected their veteran for nomination.

Differentiation:

- Reduce alternatives and/or criteria
- Increase alternatives and/or criteria
- Provide note-taking tools with some of the information already filled in

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Materials

Six Pillars of Character

Trustworthiness

- Think “true blue”, Be honest
- Don’t deceive, cheat, or steal
- Be reliable—do what you say you’ll do
- Have the courage to do the right thing
- Build a good reputation
- Be loyal—stand by your family, friends, and country

Respect

- Treat others with respect; Follow the Golden Rule
- Be tolerant and accepting of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don’t threaten, hit, or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

Responsibility

- Do what you are supposed to do
- Plan ahead, Be diligent, Persevere
- Do your best, Use self-control, Be self-disciplined
- Think before you act, Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes
- Set a good example for others

Fairness

- Play by the rules, take turns and share
- Be open-minded, listen to others,
- Don’t take advantage of others, don’t blame others carelessly, treat all people fairly

Caring

- Be kind, Be compassionate and show you care, Express gratitude, Forgive others, Help people in need, Be charitable and altruistic

Citizenship

- Do your share to make your school and community better, Cooperate, Get involved in community affairs, Stay informed
- **Vote**
- Be a good neighbor, obey laws and rules, respect authority, protect the environment, volunteer



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery
Administration



Department
of History

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Matrix

Veterans Trustworthy Respectful Responsible Fair Caring Citizenship

I chose _____ because _____.

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Letter from the VA (prompt)

Our local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) organization received a request from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs to nominate a veteran to be represented as an icon on their new website. This is something that has never been done before. The VA would like to choose someone who is deserving of this honor.

You have been given several biographies of veterans that are worthy of this designation. The VA would like for each candidate to be considered based on the following criteria:

- Trustworthiness
- Respectfulness
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship
- Education
- Occupation
- Service to the United States

After completing your research, decide which veteran should be the icon on the new website. Once you have made your decision, please email us and explain who you chose and why. Also, explain the process you used to assess each veteran you selected.

Thank you for your assistance in this historic effort,

Your Local VFW