**Lesson Plan:**

Teacher      Eleanor Forstater                      Grade Level     11th Grade American History

**Dolley Madison and the First Ladies**

**I. Content and Standards**:

PA Standard - 8.1.W.B  
**Evaluate the interpretation of historical events and sources, considering the use of fact versus opinion, multiple perspectives, and cause and effect relationships.**

PA Standard - 8.4.W.A  
**Evaluate the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.**

**II. Prerequisites:**

Prior to this lesson, students have learned about the election of President James Madison.  In addition, they have learned about the War of 1812.

**III. Instructional Objective**:

**SWBAT** Describe the activity and action at the White House on August 23 and 24, 1814 ; characterize the tone  that Mrs. Madison used in describing the events on those dates; describe the importance of saving the George Washington portrait as a national icon; describe the role of the first lady and compare and contrast the role that First Lady Dolley Madison portrayed in her position to other First Ladies who have held the position .  
   
**IV. Instructional Procedures:**   
   
**Before:** I will provide students with a background of Dolley Madison.  Included in my introduction of the First Lady will be a narrative on how she first acted as the unofficial hostess of the White House for President Thomas Jefferson.  Students will be provided with information on Dolley Madison’s role in changing the social and political scene in the capital.  And finally, I will explain how she saved the portrait of President George Washington from being burned by the British.   
   
**During:** Students will watch a short video clip that will show them how Dolley Madison conducted herself while living in the White House.  It will also show how she made the decisions that she did during the War of 1812 in regard to what items she removed from the White House before the British arrived.  Students will read the two letters written by Mrs. Madison.  They will analyze the lady’s tone in the writing.  They will decide, based on the tone, which of the two letters was a more emotional out-crying of the situation that she was faced with on the fateful day.  Students will include in their analysis, what information influenced their decision on the tone of the letters.  
   
Students will then go onto the website <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-first-ladies-timeline> and choose two additional First Ladies, one historical and one contemporary, that they would like to learn more about.  They will research these two ladies and determine how they performed their duties as the First Lady and compare these to Dolley Madison.     
   
**After:** Students will finish up the assignment by creating, in pairs, a slide where they will display the similarities and differences between the three First Ladies.  Each student pair will then present to the class the information that they researched.  Students will ask questions of their presenting classmates to clarify information presented that they may have misunderstanding or need further clarification of.  To conclude the lesson, students will identify three things that they learned from another student pair about a First Lady that they did not know before the assignment.     
   
Presentations will be made in front of the class the day following, students who are absent on the day of the initial instruction will be added to a group that has not presented yet.  They will choose another First Lady to research that was not previously done by a member of their group.  They will then incorporate their research into the group slide.  Presentations that are not completed on the second day of the lesson will be completed on the following day until all students have both completed the assignment and presented to the class.  
   
**V. Materials and Equipment**:  
   
Laptop and projector (show video of Dolley Madison Saves Washington’s Portrait); laptops for students, students will use these laptops to conduct research and to create powerpoint slide of their final presentation.  Documents:  Extract from a letter to my Sister published in the sketch of my life written for the “National Portrait Gallery”, a letter written by Dolley Madison to her sister on Tuesday, August 23, 1814; a letter written by Dolley Madison to Mary Latrobe, December 3, 1814 (Source:  Anthony, Katharine, Dolley Madison:  Her Life and Times, p. 230).  
   
Letters written by Dolley Madison will provide the students with a first-hand accounting of the events that led up to the burning of the White House.   
   
The First Ladies Time Line (Biographies)  <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-first-ladies-timeline>  
   
 

**VI. Assessment/Evaluation**:  
   
The instructional objective will be assessed based on the slide created by the students about their chosen First Ladies.  Additionally, the listing made by the students of three things that they now know about the ladies they researched will demonstrate their attainment of knowledge about their subjects .  
   
**VII. VII. Accommodations or Modifications needed for students with disabilities or**  
**ESOL:**   
   
Students will be paired with another student who will assist in the research and design of their informational slide  
   
**VIII. Technology:**   
   
Laptop Computer Cart will be provided for students to conduct their research in class.  They will then utilize Google Slides in order to create their presentation slide at home.  
   
Dolley Madison Saves Washington’s Portrait  
<https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-rotz-001&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=rotz&p=dolley+madison+video#id=2&vid=b5ec6be32ade9678479556ecf11632cc&action=click>  
   
**IX. Self-Assessment**   
   
As this is the first time that I will have used the computer cart in the classroom, and the first time that I will have used Google Slides and Google Classroom, I will use their performance in the task completion to determine future projects.  The successful completion of this assignment will provide information necessary to create similar future projects.  Additionally, an analysis of students comfort level in presenting in front of the class will provide information as to what areas need to be worked on for public speaking projects.

**Dolley Madison and the First Ladies - Lesson Reflection**  
   
The lesson was a continuation of the unit in which we were learning about the first four Presidents of the United States.  Additionally, we were learning about the War of 1812 and the participants of that war.  During the discussions about the 3rd and 4th Presidents, Jefferson and Madison, it was mentioned that Dolley Madison had performed the duties of “Hostess” for President Jefferson and as “First Lady” for her husband, President James Madison during his term in office.  Students had asked questions as to why the first three Presidents were accompanied in the White House by their wives, who were always referred to as “hostesses”.  However, in the case of President Jefferson, they understood that he was a widow and thus Mrs. Madison was assisting him as her husband at the time was Secretary of State.  
   
Because of these questions, I decided that it would be a great opportunity for the students to learn about the women in our history.  Up until this point most of their learnings had been about our “Founding Fathers”, it was about time to learn about the “Founding Mothers”.  The goal of the research and compare/contrast slide assignment was to provide students with the understanding that it was not only the men who were vital to the development and growth of the new nation, women were also key members of these societies.  
   
This lesson provided me with the rare opportunity to share with my students, my knowledge about a few of the early First Ladies .  As a tour guide in Historic Philadelphia, I have the opportunity to talk with my guests about the women behind the men.  Now, in the classroom, I have the opportunity to share some of this information with these students.  Because this topic is not one that the students had discussed in previous Social Studies classes, the students demonstrated interest in the subject matter with their questions.  They were enthusiastic about learning about Dolley Madison’s eccentric personality and how it influenced her decisions in the White House.   The White House History website that the students were instructed to use, provided just a minimal amount of information to get the students started which then prompted students to conduct further internet search on their own.  
   
During our classroom sessions, students do not have availability of technology and the textbooks that we have to use are several decades old.  The use of computers in the classroom provided the students with the ability to delve further into the available information about their chosen women.  Students were able to each conduct research on individual laptops  and then once they had the information they had researched, they then discussed with their partner how they were going to design their slide.  
   
Students demonstrated, with their creativity of their slides, not only their research abilities, but also their ability to work together with another student .  The slide assignment not only required students to work together in the classroom, it also required them to communicate from their individual homes through the Google Slide application.   
   
Because this activity included the rare occasion of using laptops in the classroom, students were enthusiastic in working on the assignment.  They were quietly engaged both during their research and also while discussing the slide creation process with their partner.  Many of the pairs were looking to create a design that was different from what the other pairs would do.  This project allowed students to work together in a productive manner.  
   
This assignment not only achieved the objective goals that were outlined in the lesson plan, it also provided the students and myself with the opportunity to get to know one another better.  The students were able to interact with each other as well as hold each other accountable for their workload.  One pair of students had the situation where one student performed the bulk of the research and slide creation, so that student then passed the majority of the presentation responsibility onto the other student.  This showed a level of maturity on the part of these students to accept an equal level of responsibility for the assignment.  
   
My goal for future lesson plans would be to attempt to incorporate more opportunities with technologies.  Limitations are often placed on the teacher due to lack of resources.  However, I would like to investigate other possibilities available within the school to utilize computers.  Perhaps in the library, or even the usage of smart phones within the classroom.  Smart phones would require a greater degree of supervision as it would require monitoring the student’s application usage.  It would be easy for students to text or take pictures while in class if not supervised.  Students need to have more than just textbooks and worksheets to keep them engaged in the classroom.