



FDR Hiding his Disability Lesson Plan



Lesson title: FDR Hiding his Disability

Subject and topic:

History and US Government

Grade level:

9th-12th and college

Duration:

60-120 minutes

Lesson summary:

Students will engage in discussion about the Stigma associated with disability. They will then learn about FDR and how illness made him lose the ability to fully walk. They will then learn about how FDR, the people around him, and the press worked to keep his disability as secret as possible. This will lead to a discussion about the impact of his decision to hide his disability, and how taking a prideful approach to his disability could have changed how people perceived him and others with disabilities.

Standards:

- **5.2.9.C:** Examine political leadership and public service in a republican form of government.
- **5.2.12.B:** Examine the causes of conflicts in society and evaluate techniques to address those conflicts.
- **5.2.12.C:** Evaluate political leadership and public service in a republican form of government.
- **5.2.U.C:** Examine political leadership and public service in a republican form of government.
- **5.3.9.H:** Evaluate the importance of freedom of the press and the political influence of mass media.



Objectives:

SWBAT

- understand how the stigma of disability caused FDR to think he had to hide his disability from the public.
- understand how disability-pride can help to erode the harmful stigma associated with disability.
- analyze how FDR's reaction to the stigma changed how the public perceives disability, and how a prideful approach could have helped erode the stigma.

Essential Questions:

- EQ1: Why did FDR hide his disability?
- EQ2: What are the possible outcomes if FDR showed his disability?

Vocabulary:

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- Polio
- Disability
- Stigma
- disability-pride

Lesson procedures

1. Instruct students to write an answer for the “Do Now” activity as they walk in. The “Do Now” activity ask students to write down answer to this question:
 - a. “What do you think is the most common cause of disability?”
2. Before going to the next slide, have some students share their answers.
3. The next slide includes information that states the most common cause of disability is illness and/or injury, and that in fact, most people are not born with a disability, but rather become disabled later in life.



Then introduce the fact that FDR fits into this category, with how he became disabled at 39 years old.

4. Next slide is a title slide introducing the lesson. Tell students this lesson will focus on how FDR and the people around him worked to hide his disability, and how the class will analyze why he did that, and how he could have acted differently.
5. Next slide reviews the basics of FDR. Ask students to share their knowledge of FDR before revealing the points on the slide. Before moving on, really stress how much of an impact FDR had on our country and government.
6. Slide 5 introduces FDR's disability, and how he hid it.
7. Slide 6 poses a class discussion question. Ask the question and have students write down an answer on the same paper they did their "Do Now" on. After giving them a couple minutes to do that, have a few volunteers share their answer.
8. Then reveal the next two points on the PowerPoint and present them.
9. Slide 7 includes a 2:00 video from Time Magazine. It covers FDR's popularity, and how the people around him helped to minimize the image of his disability.
10. The next slide has the students answer another question, this one focused on defining stigma and another on FDR. Have students answer these questions on the same paper they have been working on.
11. To conclude the lesson, the next 2 slides introduce the idea of disability pride as a counterpoint to stigma. Slide 9 gives the definition of disability pride from the National Council of Independent Living.
12. Slide 10 shows images of "The Disability Pride Parades" in NYC. Have students take a second to look at the photos. To encourage discussion, you can ask them what emotions they see in these pictures, or how parades like this impact a community.
13. The last slide has an "Exit Ticket" activity. Have students fill out the answers to the 3 questions on their own, in complete sentences. If there is time left, you can have volunteers share their answers, or just have the students hand in their answers.



Post Lesson:

1. The papers that are handed in by the students can be evaluated to see if students met the objectives of the lesson.
2. If you run out of time and do not get to discuss the “Exit Ticket” questions, you could have students share their answers as a “Do Now” activity the next lesson.

Related materials:

1. Paper for students to write on
2. Way to present a PowerPoint
 - a. Projector or screen in a classroom
 - b. Screen share for a virtual classroom
3. PowerPoint titled “[FDR and Hiding His Disability](#)”
4. Internet Connection for Youtube Video embedded in PowerPoint.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based on conversation and completion of lesson activities.

Should FDR have hidden his disability yes or no?

Thank you for bringing the conversation about disability into your classroom.

Help us evaluate this lesson plan by visiting [our evaluation page to assess this lesson](#). You will find an evaluation both for you and your students to complete there.

