

Collaborative English-History Projects that Integrate Technology

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Decades Project (tried and true)

Students form groups and are assigned a modern American decade (1950-2000). Each group is then responsible for covering aspects of the decade by creating multiple exhibits. Some aspects to be covered are major political events, intellectual movements, cultural trends, sociological norms, economic events, and technological advances (PICSET). Teachers set the minimum number of exhibits. Exhibits can be either performance or visual based. Use of media is mandatory and may include digital stills, music, and/or video. Props and artifacts are also encouraged, along with activity based presentations. Both teachers work to assist groups create a plan (design), do research, and brainstorm exhibit ideas. Both teachers create the grade criteria in the form of a rubric and layout steps in a project handout. The project culminates in student groups getting a 45 minute period to present their decade.

Historical Board Game (tried and true)

Students are formed into groups and assigned roles. The purpose of the group is to design, create, and present a trivia based board game on a historical topic. Topics could range from Roman Empire to the Jazz Age. Roles for students include a personnel manager, a design manager, a marketing manager, and a materials manager. Each manager is responsible for a specific report to be sent to the presidents of their company (English and History teachers play this role). Teachers assist groups as they research their topic to create trivia cards, design their game, pull materials together, create the prototype, and put marketing materials together. Students may incorporate technology to do the research and various project elements (game board, game pieces, box design, instructions, magazine ad, television ad, Internet ad, etc.). Students receive a team teacher created project handout and rubric prior to the start of the project. English teacher specifically evaluates writing standards in trivia cards, instructions, and advertisements. History teacher evaluates accuracy of information and historical ties in game design. Both teachers evaluate presentation skills during the sales pitch where the team pitches the idea to the president to get the game put in production.

Coat of Arms Project (tried and true)

Students learn about the art and science of heraldry and use resources to craft a family coat of arms. This can be done with marker and paper, or can be done digitally using basic art programs and access to images from the Internet. Students choose lines of partition, charges, tinctures, etc. based on the traditional symbolism of the items and then

develop a historically accurate fictional family history that explains why their coat of arms is the way it is. Students individually present their finished coat of arms to the class and share their family history. Students may use note cards during the presentation and, if digitally produced, project their coat of arms. To add a layer to this project. Students could create a presentation that shows why each item was added to their family coat of arms and the last slide could present their finished coat of arms. Students must incorporate historically accurate information into their fictional family histories. The English teacher will evaluate the quality of writing of the family history, and both teachers will assess the use of symbolism and accuracy of using heraldry terms as well as presentation skills.

How-To Books (tried and true)

Students are assigned or pick a role of a figure in the middle ages (pope, peasant, lord, lady, merchant, rabbi, priest, knight, Viking, etc.). They receive a slip designed around their role and each slip indicates 4-5 aspects of the role the student is required to research. Once the research phase is complete (citing sources is required), students begin to create two products. One is a How-To Book (by hand or using digital technology) and the other is a presentation. Students often create the How-To Book by hand and pass it around while they present their information in the form of a PowerPoint. Other students choose to create an entirely digital How-To Book using PowerPoint and 'read' their book to the class. Students are required to turn in a works cited page as part of their How-To Book. The English teacher assists with editing text and researching, and helps to assess the final book and presentation skills. The History teacher explains the importance of citing information, while the English teacher can present a lesson on MLA format and putting together a works cited page. The History teacher assists with research and also assesses accuracy of information and presentation skills. Students receive a rubric, project handout, and the aforementioned role slip at the beginning of the project.

Visual Geography Project (never tried)

Purchase a book such as Algeria in Pictures, and use it as a model for groups to create their own digital Place in Pictures project. Perhaps linking pictures to Google Maps as an alternative way to navigate through the PowerPoint, Smartboard Presentation, or website. Both teachers would assist students working in groups, discuss layout and format options, and the English teacher would provide feedback on the text and captions for the project, while the History teacher would provide feedback on accuracy of information and depth of coverage. Both teachers would create the project handout as well as the grading rubric.