



## Dwight D. Eisenhower | Lesson Plan

How did Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership and decisions impact the United States and the world during times of war and peace?

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Students will understand how Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership, values, and decision-making as a military leader and president influenced the course of American history, shaped the nation's role in global affairs, and contributed to peace, progress, and prosperity during pivotal moments in the 20th century.

### Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key life events of Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- Explain how Dwight D. Eisenhower united the country and abolished the institution of slavery during his presidency.
- Compare the key hardships and key achievements of Dwight D. Eisenhower that made him a strong leader and successful president.
- Evaluate Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership skills and decisions, which have named him one of the United States' greatest presidents.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Cold War:** A period of political and military tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, marked by ideological conflict and the threat of nuclear war (1940s–1980s).
- **Communism:** A political and economic system in which the government owns and controls all property and resources, aiming for equality but often resulting in dictatorship.
- **D-Day:** The Allied invasion of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, during World War II, the largest seaborne invasion in history.
- **Interstate Highway System:** A network of highways established in 1956 under President Eisenhower to improve transportation, connect states, and strengthen national defense.
- **Military-Industrial Complex:** The relationship between a country's military, defense industries, and government, which may overly influence national policies.
- **Fascist:** A political system led by a dictator promoting extreme nationalism, suppression of dissent, and total control over society.
- **Nuclear Weapons:** Explosive devices powered by nuclear reactions, capable of causing massive destruction and central to Cold War tensions.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

**Academic Subject Areas:** Biography, U.S. Presidents, Civil War



## What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Guess or Mess: Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Click [Here](#))
- PragerU Kids biographical book: *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Download [Here](#))
- Large paper or poster board for each group, along with markers

## Lesson Plan: Read and Discuss (60 minutes)

### **Introduction to Eisenhower:** (5 minutes)

1. Begin with a brief discussion about U.S. presidents and the qualities that make a great leader. Ask students what traits they believe a leader should have during times of war and peace.
2. Ask students if they know of any presidents who were military leaders or who helped America navigate difficult times (such as wars or global tensions).
3. Display the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* digital book on an electronic device. Briefly introduce Eisenhower as the 34th president, a World War II hero, and a leader during the Cold War.
4. Show images from the digital book to give a visual overview of Eisenhower's life, focusing on key moments like his leadership during D-Day and his presidency during the Cold War.

### **Eisenhower History Huddle:** (25 minutes)

1. Read the "Meet Dwight D. Eisenhower" section on page 2 together as a class, with the teacher leading this page to model fluent reading and set the tone for the lesson.
2. After completing the teacher-led reading, explain that students will now explore other key aspects of Eisenhower's life in small groups.
3. Split the class into small groups and assign each group a different section of the digital book to explore. The following are recommendations:
  - Group 1: *Young Ike, Interesting Facts, Early Career* (pages 3-4)
  - Group 2: *World War II, D-Day, The 1952 Presidential Election* (pages 5-6)
  - Group 3: *President, Farewell Address, Retirement* (pages 7-8)
  - Group 4: *Legacy* (page 9)
4. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. As students read, they should discuss the main ideas.
5. Provide each group with a large piece of paper or a poster board and markers to write down key points and any interesting facts or quotes they find.
6. Allow each group one to two minutes to present their findings to the class. After each presentation, provide time for classmates to ask questions and discuss the content.

### **Worksheet Workshop:** (15 minutes)

1. Hand out individual copies of the worksheet to each student. Explain how to fill out each section of the worksheet with these instructions:

2. **Timeline:** Students should select key dates and events mentioned throughout the digital book. The following are recommendations, but the teacher and students can use many other dates mentioned in the book:
  - October 14, 1890 - Birth of Dwight D. Eisenhower
  - 1939 - World War II begins in Europe; Eisenhower is tasked with leading training exercises in Louisiana.
  - June 6, 1944 – D-Day: Eisenhower leads the Allied invasion of Normandy, the largest seaborne invasion in history.
  - November 1952 – Eisenhower elected as the 34th president of the United States in a landslide victory.
3. **Interesting Quote:** Have students choose a meaningful quote from the book to fill in the quote section on their worksheet.
4. **Interesting Fact:** Ask students to select an interesting fact about Dwight D. Eisenhower that stood out to them and write it in the space provided.
5. **Vocabulary Builder:** Instruct students to choose a word from the Glossary on page 10 that they find interesting and use it in a sentence that conveys its meaning.
6. **Multiple Choice:** Explain that students should complete the multiple-choice section of the worksheet individually. (Note: The multiple-choice section corresponds to the *Guess or Mess* episode about Dwight D. Eisenhower and can also be used to play along while watching. See “Extension Activity” below.)

**Reflection Round-Up:** (10 minutes)

1. Briefly recap the major themes covered about Dwight D. Eisenhower, emphasizing his leadership during World War II (e.g., D-Day), his presidency during the Cold War, and his contributions to peace, progress, and national development (e.g., Interstate Highway System, NASA). Highlight his enduring legacy as a leader who balanced strength with diplomacy.
2. **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to recall one fact about Eisenhower—either from his early life, military career, or presidency—and share it with a partner. Encourage discussion on why they think that fact was significant, such as how it shaped his leadership or influenced history.
3. Give each student a sticky note or index card and ask them to answer one of these three sample reflection questions:
  - What did you find most inspiring or interesting about Dwight D. Eisenhower?
  - How do you think Eisenhower’s leadership influenced America’s role in the world?
  - Can you think of a modern issue that connects to something Eisenhower dealt with (e.g., global conflict, technology, or civil rights)?
4. **Bonus Activities:** If time allows, allow students to complete the puzzle on page 2 by finding hidden letters throughout the book. They can also explore and engage with the other interactive activities included in the book.

**Extension Activity:** (20 minutes)

*Guess or Mess* Trivia Show: After the lesson, students can participate in the *Guess or Mess* trivia show for Dwight D. Eisenhower—direct students to the multiple-choice section of the worksheet. Students can play along with the contestants to see if they can answer the trivia questions correctly.

**PragerU 5-Minute Videos:**

Did you know that PragerU has a comprehensive video catalog of U.S. Presidents in an easy-to-watch 5-minute format? Enhance this lesson plan with one of our insightful, engaging, and educational videos that provide students with a deep dive into the lives and legacies of America's leaders. To view *Dwight Eisenhower: A General Keeps the Peace*, click [here](#), and to view *Dwight Eisenhower: War Hero to President*, click [here](#).

**Don't have time for a full lesson? Quick Activity (30 minutes)**

Read the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* book together as a class, with students taking turns reading aloud. Then, watch the *Guess or Mess* video and play along with the trivia questions.