



Woodrow Wilson | Lesson Plan

How did Woodrow Wilson expand the role of the federal government, shape global diplomacy, and influence progressivism?

Students will understand how Woodrow Wilson's presidency expanded the federal government's power in ways that undermined individual freedoms, shaped international relations through controversial decisions in World War I and the League of Nations, and advanced progressivism by pushing for reforms that increased government control while also entrenching harmful policies like segregation.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify key life events of Woodrow Wilson.
- Explain how Woodrow Wilson's policies expanded federal power and shaped America's global role.
- Compare the key hardships and achievements of Woodrow Wilson that impacted his presidency.
- Evaluate Wilson's leadership and decision-making skills, which contributed to both his domestic and foreign policy legacy.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Progressivism:** A political philosophy that advocates for increased government control and intervention in society to implement reforms aimed at addressing social, political, and economic issues. While presented as a movement for progress, it often leads to expanded government power at the expense of individual freedoms and personal responsibility.
- **Federal Reserve Act:** A 1913 law established the Federal Reserve System and gave the federal government control over the economy.
- **Income Tax:** Taxes collected by the government on the money individuals and businesses make from their jobs.
- **Segregation:** The institutional separation of people of different races, classes, or ethnic groups, especially as a form of discrimination.
- **Fourteen Points:** Wilson's plan for a post-war world order to prevent future conflicts, including the creation of the League of Nations.
- **League of Nations:** The first worldwide organization whose main goal was to maintain world peace. The idea of the League originated with President Woodrow Wilson. It functioned from 1920 to 1946, but it was proven to be ineffective when World War II broke out in 1939.

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, Historical Figures

What You'll Need

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

Lesson Plan: Read and Discuss (60 minutes)

Introduction to Wilson: (5 minutes)

1. Begin with a brief discussion about what it means to run a modern political campaign. Ask students if they know of any early presidents who changed the way campaigns were conducted.
2. Display the *Woodrow Wilson* digital book using an electronic device. Briefly highlight Wilson's role in pioneering new campaign strategies, his military career, and his brief tenure as president.

Wilson History Huddle: (25 minutes)

1. Read the "Meet Woodrow Wilson" section on page 2 together as a class, with the teacher leading to model fluent reading and set the tone for the lesson.
2. Split the class into small groups and assign each group a different section of the digital book to explore:
 - Group 1: *Young Thomas, Interesting Facts* (page 3)
 - Group 2: *Academic, Princeton* (page 4)
 - Group 3: *Rise to Power, The 1912 Election* (page 5)
 - Group 4: *President* (page 6)
 - Group 5: *A World Government* (page 7)
 - Group 6: *The First Woman President?* (page 8)
 - Group 7: *Retirement, Legacy* (pages 10-11)
3. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. Students should discuss the main ideas.
4. 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.
5. 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 with these instructions:

2. **Timeline:** Students should select key dates and events mentioned throughout the digital book. Suggested dates:
 - 1773 - Birth of Woodrow Wilson
 - 1811 - Battle of Tippecanoe
 - 1840 - Elected President
 - 1841 - Dies in office after 31 days
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 Woodrow Wilson that stood out to them and write it in the space provided.
5. **Vocabulary Builder:** Instruct students to choose a word from the Glossary 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 Woodrow Wilson and can also be used to play along while watching. See “Extension Activity” below.)

Reflection Round-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Briefly summarize the key points covered about Woodrow Wilson, focusing on his life, presidency, and legacy.
2. **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to recall one fact about Woodrow Wilson and share it with a partner. Encourage them to discuss why that fact was significant.
3. Give each student a sticky note or index card and ask them to answer one of these reflection questions:
 - What did you find most interesting about Woodrow Wilson?
 - How do you think his campaign changed American politics?
 - Can you think of a modern issue that relates to something Wilson dealt with?
4. **Bonus Activities:** If time allows, let students solve the puzzle on page 2 by finding hidden letters throughout the book. They can also explore 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 Woodrow Wilson—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 *Woodrow Wilson: President for 31 Days*, click [here](#).

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

Read the *Woodrow Wilson* 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.