

LBJ's War on Poverty

Project Overview:

Students will embark on an interdisciplinary journey to explore President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, announced in 1964. This project will require them to delve into historical data, socioeconomic indicators, and policy outcomes. By applying mathematical analysis, students will design their own policies for the War on Poverty, understand its impact on American society, and present their findings in a comprehensive presentation that integrates both historical insights and quantitative analysis.

Applicable Indiana Standards

Standard 7: United States in Troubled Times: 1960 to 1980

- USH.7.1: Explain the efforts of groups of African Americans, Native Americans, Latinx, LGBTQ community, and women to assert their social and civic rights in the years following World War II.
- USH.7.3: Assess the social and economic programs of the Kennedy-Johnson era, including policies and legal rulings.
- USH.7.6: Identify the problems confronting different minorities during this period of economic and social change and describe the solutions to these problems.

Standard 10: Historical Thinking

- USH.10.1: Cultivate historical thinking, including the ability to evaluate competing explanations for historical change.
- USH.10.2: Locate and analyze primary sources and secondary sources related to an event or issue of the past; discover possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary opinions.
- USH.10.3: Analyze multiple, unexpected, and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
- USH.10.5: Develop arguments, defended with historical evidence, which explain historical change.

Key Learning Objectives:

1. **Historical Understanding:** Students will gain insights into the socioeconomic conditions that led to the War on Poverty, the policies implemented, and their historical significance.
2. **Mathematical Analysis:** Students will apply mathematical skills to analyze data related to poverty rates, income distribution, and other socioeconomic indicators over time.

3. **Critical Thinking:** Students will evaluate the success and challenges of the War on Poverty, considering various perspectives and the complexity of socioeconomic policies.
4. **Communication Skills:** Students will develop their ability to present complex historical and mathematical information effectively to an audience.

Introduction: Project Introduction

- **Task:** Research the historical background of the War on Poverty, including its causes, main policies, and goals.
- **Output:** A summary report detailing the historical context and objectives of the War on Poverty.

Phase 1: Research and Historical Context

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- **Output:** A summary report detailing the historical context and objectives of the War on Poverty.

Phase 2: Mathematical Data Analysis

- **Task:** Collect and analyze data related to the War on Poverty, such as poverty rates before and after the policies, income inequality measures, and other relevant socioeconomic indicators.
- **Mathematical Concepts:** Statistical analysis, percentages, graphical representations, trend analysis.
- **Output:** A collection of graphs, charts, and statistical analyses demonstrating the impact of the War on Poverty.

Phase 3: Integration and Presentation Preparation

- **Task:** Integrate the historical research and mathematical data analysis to prepare a comprehensive presentation. This presentation should not only detail the historical context and objectives but also demonstrate the impact through data analysis.
- **Output:** A multimedia presentation (using PowerPoint, Prezi, or similar) that combines historical insights with data analysis to evaluate the War on Poverty.

Phase 4: Presentation and Reflection

- **Task:** Present the findings to the class, highlighting the interconnection between historical context and mathematical analysis in understanding the War on Poverty.
- **Output:** A group presentation followed by a Q&A session.

- **Reflection:** After the presentation, students will reflect on what they learned about the War on Poverty, the interdisciplinary approach, and how it changed their understanding of history and mathematics.

Assessment:

- **Rubric:** Assessments will be based on research depth, mathematical analysis accuracy, integration of history and math, presentation quality, and participation in reflection discussions.

Resources:

- Access to historical archives, databases for socioeconomic data, research tools, and presentation software.
- Guided worksheets for research and data analysis phases.
- Access to expert talks or webinars on the War on Poverty and its analysis.

This PBL unit encourages students to look beyond dates and figures, understanding the real-world application of mathematics in historical contexts and policymaking, fostering a deeper appreciation for both disciplines.

Introduction: Prepare for Project

Learning Goals:

- Read and understand the letter from President Lyndon B. Johnson, focusing on key requirements for the project.
- Collaborate to identify "Knows" and "Need to Knows" based on the letter.
- Use a Google Jamboard to document group discussions and share findings with the class.

Activities:

1. Reading the Letter:

- Distribute the letter from President Lyndon B. Johnson to the class, either as a printed copy or digitally on classroom devices. (Appendix A – Introduction Letter)
- Allow students time to read the letter carefully, encouraging them to highlight or make notes about key points related to the War on Poverty and their project task.

2. Group Discussion:

- Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students.
- Instruct each group to discuss the following questions after reading the letter:
 - What is the War on Poverty, and what does it aim to achieve?
 - What does President Johnson expect from the "Cabinet" (the students)?
 - What are the specific tasks outlined in the letter?

3. Google Jamboard Activity:

- Create a Google Jamboard with two sections: "Knows" and "Need to Knows."
- Each group should brainstorm and post virtual sticky notes in the "Knows" section with the following:
 - Things they know about the War on Poverty from the letter.
 - What they know about the project requirements based on the letter's content.
- In the "Need to Knows" section, each group should post sticky notes with the following:
 - Questions they have about the War on Poverty or the project's scope.
 - Information they need to gather to meet the requirements outlined in the letter.

4. Class Discussion and Consolidation:

- As groups finish their work on the Google Jamboard, bring the class together for a group discussion.
- Review the "Knows" and "Need to Knows," discussing similarities, differences, and gaps.
- Consolidate the feedback to create a comprehensive list of what students know and what they need to know to complete the project.
- Address any immediate questions or concerns, guiding students toward resources or steps to fill the gaps in their knowledge.

Outcomes:

- Students will gain a clear understanding of the War on Poverty and the project's goals through analysis of the presidential letter.
- They will collaborate to identify what they already know and what they need to learn, providing a foundation for further research and project development.
- The class discussion will help create a unified understanding of the project's requirements and foster a collaborative approach to the project's completion.

Resources:

- Appendix A – Introduction Letter

By the end of the Introduction Phase, students should have a clear understanding of the project's scope, including its overall objectives, the specific tasks involved, and the context of the War on Poverty in American history. They should have collaboratively compiled a comprehensive list of "Knows" and "Need to Knows," outlining what they already understand about the project and identifying areas where additional information is required. Each team should have a preliminary sense of their roles and a basic strategy for working together, fostering effective collaboration for the project's success. Additionally, the instructor should be equipped with sufficient insight into the class's progress, allowing for informed guidance on the next steps, including further research, data collection, and project planning.

Phase 1: Research and Historical Context

Learning Goals:

- Understand the socioeconomic conditions leading to the War on Poverty.
- Identify key figures, policies, and programs associated with the War on Poverty.
- Analyze the political and social motivations behind the War on Poverty initiatives.

Activities and Assignments:

1. Document Analysis Workshop:

- Conduct a workshop on analyzing primary sources. Teach students how to find sources, extract useful information, understand historical context, and question the source's reliability.
- Have students create a list of questions that they can search for to find relevant primary sources.
- Use the Primary Source Resources Provided Using the Hint Card Protocol (See Appendix C)

2. Socioeconomic Profile Project:

- Students will create a socioeconomic profile of America in the early 1960s. This profile should cover various indicators such as income distribution, poverty rates, employment sectors, racial disparities, and education levels.
- Utilize government reports, historical datasets, and academic papers for accurate data. This project will help students grasp the scale of poverty and inequality, setting a factual basis for understanding the necessity of the War on Poverty.
- Use the Primary Source Resources Provided Using the Hint Card Protocol (See Appendix C)

3. Debate: The Political Landscape of the 1960s:

- Host a class debate on the political and social forces that shaped the War on Poverty. Topics can include the influence of the civil rights movement, the role of government in addressing social issues, and the political feasibility of such initiatives in today's context.
- This debate encourages critical thinking and understanding of the complex motivations and challenges in implementing widespread social policies.

Deliverables:

- **Socioeconomic Profile Report:** A comprehensive report detailing the state of America leading up to the War on Poverty, focusing on poverty and inequality.

- **Debate Reflection Essay:** Following the debate, students will write a reflection on what they learned about the political and social dynamics of the 1960s and how it influenced the War on Poverty.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Research and Analysis:** Depth and accuracy of research in the socioeconomic profile and fact sheets.
- **Critical Thinking:** Ability to analyze sources, debate viewpoints, and reflect on the complexity of socioeconomic policies.
- **Communication:** Effectiveness in presenting research findings, arguing points in the debate, and reflecting on learning outcomes.

Resources:

- Access to online archives (e.g., Library of Congress, National Archives) for primary sources.
- Academic journals and databases for secondary research.
- Tools for creating interactive reports and presentations (e.g., Canva, Google Slides).
- Appendix B – Primary Sources Hint Cards (Level 1 to Level 3)
- Appendix C – Primary Source Hint Protocol

By the end of Phase 1, students will have a solid understanding of the context, challenges, and aims of the War on Poverty, setting the stage for their subsequent analysis in the following phases.

Phase 2: Mathematical Data Analysis

Learning Goals:

- Develop skills in statistical analysis and interpretation of socioeconomic data.
- Understand how mathematical analysis can provide insights into historical events and policy impacts.
- Enhance proficiency in using data visualization tools to represent complex data in an accessible manner.

Activities and Assignments:

1. **Data Collection Workshop:**

- Start with a workshop on data collection methods, focusing on identifying reliable sources of socioeconomic data, such as poverty rates, income inequality, education levels, and employment rates.
- Introduce students to databases and resources where historical economic data can be found, including government archives, the U.S. Census Bureau, and academic research databases.

2. **Statistical Analysis Seminar:**

- Conduct a seminar on basic statistical analysis, including calculating percentages, mean, median, standard deviation, and interpreting trends over time.
- Teach students how to use software or online tools (e.g., Excel, Google Sheets, or more advanced statistical software) for their analysis.

3. **Group Data Analysis Project:**

- Divide students into groups, assigning each a specific aspect of the War on Poverty to analyze (e.g., impact on poverty rates, effect on education levels, changes in employment sectors).
- Students will collect relevant data from the pre-War period, during its implementation, and the years following to analyze trends, changes, and the potential impact of the policies.

4. **Data Visualization Creation:**

- Guide students in creating visual representations of their data, including graphs, charts, and infographics, to highlight their findings effectively.
- Focus on how to choose the most appropriate type of visualization for their data sets and the importance of clarity and accuracy in data presentation.

Deliverables:

- **Data Analysis Report:** A detailed report including the collected data, the statistical analysis performed, and the conclusions drawn about the War on Poverty's impact on the assigned socioeconomic aspect.
- **Data Visualization Portfolio:** A collection of graphs, charts, and infographics created by the students, showcasing their ability to translate complex data into understandable visual formats.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Accuracy and Depth of Analysis:** Quality of data collection, correctness of the statistical analysis, and depth of insights gained.
- **Creativity and Clarity in Data Presentation:** Effectiveness and aesthetic appeal of data visualizations, including the appropriateness of the chosen formats to represent the data.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** Ability to work effectively in groups and communicate findings both in written and visual formats.

Resources:

- Tutorials and guides for statistical analysis and data visualization tools.
- Access to databases and archives for historical socioeconomic data.
- Examples of effective data visualizations for inspiration.
- Google Slides – Data Analysis and Visualization

By the end of Phase 2, students will have gained valuable skills in data collection, statistical analysis, and data visualization. They will have a clearer understanding of the War on Poverty's quantitative impact, setting the stage for integrating their findings with historical context in the next phase of the project.

Phase 3: Integration and Presentation Preparation

Learning Goals:

- Integrate historical context and quantitative analysis to form a comprehensive understanding of the War on Poverty's policies and goals you wish to accomplish.
- Develop skills in creating and delivering effective, interdisciplinary presentations.
- Enhance ability to work collaboratively in synthesizing diverse information into a cohesive argument or narrative.

Activities and Assignments:

1. **Interdisciplinary Integration Workshop:**

- Conduct a workshop focused on how to integrate data with historical narratives effectively. This workshop should cover techniques for storytelling with data, ensuring that quantitative findings support and enhance the historical context.
- Discuss the importance of a coherent narrative that weaves together the socioeconomic conditions, policy intentions, statistical outcomes, and their broader implications.

2. **Presentation Skills Seminar:**

- Offer a seminar on effective presentation skills, including structuring a presentation, designing visually appealing slides, engaging storytelling techniques, and public speaking tips.
- Introduce students to various presentation tools and software, such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or Google Slides, and include a brief tutorial on how to use advanced features for a more dynamic presentation.

3. **Group Collaboration on Presentation Development:**

- Students work in their groups to develop their presentations, integrating their historical research with their data analysis to tell the story of the War on Poverty's impact.
- Encourage groups to critically engage with their research, highlighting the successes and shortcomings of the War on Poverty, and proposing what could have been done differently based on their findings.

4. **Peer Review Sessions:**

- Conduct peer review sessions where groups can present their drafts to another group for feedback. Focus on constructive criticism, particularly on clarity of integration between historical context and data analysis, presentation skills, and the effectiveness of the visual aids used.

- Use feedback from these sessions to refine presentations, with an emphasis on clear communication, persuasive argumentation, and engaging storytelling.

Deliverables:

- **Final Presentation:** A comprehensive, multimedia presentation that integrates the historical context of the War on Poverty with your designed policies. This presentation should be designed for an audience unfamiliar with the topic, making it accessible and informative.
- **Presentation Script or Outline:** A detailed script or outline that accompanies the presentation, ensuring that all speaking points are coherent, well-structured, and effectively integrated with the visual elements.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Integration of Disciplines:** Demonstrated ability to cohesively integrate historical context with quantitative data analysis within the presentation.
- **Quality of Presentation:** Effectiveness of the presentation in terms of structure, design, content, and delivery, including the use of visual aids and the clarity of the narrative.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Ability to work effectively as a team in integrating diverse elements into the presentation and responding constructively to peer feedback.

Resources:

- Access to presentation software and tools.
- Examples of effective interdisciplinary presentations for inspiration.
- Guides and tutorials on presentation skills and visual design.

By the end of Phase 3, students will have developed a deep, integrated understanding of the War on Poverty, showcasing their ability to not only research and analyze complex historical and socioeconomic topics but also to communicate their findings effectively to an audience. This phase prepares them for the final presentation, where they will share their insights and analysis, culminating the project with a rich, interdisciplinary learning experience.

Phase 4: Presentation and Reflection

Learning Goals:

- Effectively communicate the findings from both historical and mathematical analyses to an audience.
- Reflect on the interdisciplinary approach of the project and its impact on students' understanding of the War on Poverty.
- Evaluate the process of collaborative learning and presentation.

Activities and Assignments:

1. **Final Presentation Event:**

- Organize an event where each group presents their project to the class, and if possible, invite other classes, teachers, and parents to broaden the audience. This event can be held in a suitable space that accommodates multimedia presentations and allows for audience interaction.
- Ensure each group has equal time to present their findings and answer questions from the audience. The Q&A session is crucial for engaging the audience and deepening the understanding of the topic.

2. **Audience Feedback Collection:**

- Provide the audience with feedback forms to evaluate the presentations on clarity, integration of historical and mathematical analyses, engagement, and overall effectiveness.
- Encourage constructive feedback that can help students understand the impact of their presentation and areas for improvement.

3. **Reflective Discussion Session:**

- After the presentations, hold a class session for students to reflect on their experiences throughout the project. Discuss the challenges faced, the skills learned, the process of integrating math and history, and how their understanding of the War on Poverty has evolved.
- Facilitate a discussion on how this interdisciplinary approach has affected their view on learning and the relevance of historical and mathematical education in understanding complex societal issues.

4. **Individual Reflection Essays:**

- Ask students to write a reflective essay on their personal learning journey through the project. Prompt them to consider how their perspective on the War on Poverty has changed, what skills they found most valuable, and how they can apply what they've learned to other academic or real-life situations.

Deliverables:

- **Presentation:** A polished and engaging presentation delivered to an audience, incorporating feedback from practice sessions and peer reviews.
- **Audience Feedback Summary:** A compiled summary of the feedback received, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Reflective Discussion Notes:** Notes or recordings from the reflective discussion session, capturing the key insights and takeaways from the project.
- **Individual Reflection Essay:** A personal essay that explores the student's learning experience, insights gained, and the value of interdisciplinary study.

Assessment Criteria:

- **Presentation Performance:** Evaluation based on the effectiveness of communication, the clarity of the integration between disciplines, audience engagement, and the ability to respond to questions.
- **Reflection Depth:** Quality of insights and reflections shared in both the discussion session and the individual essays, demonstrating personal growth and a deeper understanding of the project's themes.

Resources:

- Feedback forms for audience evaluation.
- Guidelines and prompts for reflective essays.
- Access to a suitable presentation space and necessary technology.

By completing Phase 4, students will have not only shared their comprehensive analysis of the War on Poverty with an audience but also engaged in a meaningful reflection on their interdisciplinary learning process. This phase emphasizes the importance of communication, feedback, and reflection in deepening understanding and fostering personal and academic growth.

Rubrics

Criteria	Exemplary (4 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Developing (2 points)	Beginning (1 point)
Research and Analysis	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the historical context and conducts comprehensive data analysis.	Shows a good understanding of the historical context with solid data analysis.	Displays a basic understanding with limited data analysis.	Lacks understanding of the historical context and data analysis is minimal or incorrect.
Integration of Disciplines	Seamlessly integrates historical context with quantitative analysis in a coherent and insightful manner.	Integrates historical and quantitative analysis well, with minor gaps in coherence.	Integration of disciplines is attempted but lacks clarity and depth.	Fails to integrate historical context with quantitative analysis effectively.
Quality of Presentation	Presentation is engaging, well-organized, and effectively communicates complex ideas clearly with excellent visual aids.	Presentation is organized and communicates ideas clearly with good visual aids.	Presentation is somewhat organized but struggles to clearly communicate ideas; visual aids are adequate.	Presentation is disorganized, lacks clarity, and uses poor or no visual aids.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Demonstrates exceptional teamwork, with each member contributing significantly and effectively to the project.	Shows good teamwork with each member contributing to the project.	Teamwork is evident, but some members may not contribute equally.	Limited teamwork; uneven contribution levels significantly impact the project outcome.
Critical Thinking	Provides deep insights into the effectiveness and impact of the War on Poverty, critically evaluating outcomes with comprehensive evidence.	Offers clear insights and evaluates the War on Poverty's impact with solid evidence.	Shows basic critical thinking in evaluating the War on Poverty's impact, with some evidence.	Shows minimal critical thinking or evaluation of the War on Poverty's impact.
Audience Engagement	Captivates the audience with a compelling narrative,	Engages the audience with a clear narrative and	Somewhat engages the audience with a basic narrative;	Fails to engage the audience or

	encourages active engagement, and effectively answers all questions.	answers most questions well.	struggles with some questions.	answer questions effectively.
Reflection and Growth	Reflection demonstrates a profound understanding of learning and personal growth, with insightful analysis of the project's impact on their perspective.	Reflects thoughtfully on learning and growth, showing a good understanding of the project's personal impact.	Reflection shows some understanding of learning and growth but lacks depth.	Minimal reflection on learning or growth; fails to articulate the project's impact on their perspective.

Appendix A – Introduction Letter

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 8, 1964

Dear Members of the Cabinet,

As we stand on the precipice of a defining moment in our nation's history, we face an opportunity not only to advance but to truly revolutionize the spread of prosperity across every corner of our nation—from every shackled urban center to the smallest rural towns. Today, I reach out to you not merely as your President, but as a fellow citizen deeply moved by the dire straits of our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

We have embarked upon an unprecedented mission—an outright War on Poverty. Our goal transcends mere alleviation of this blight; we are committed to its complete eradication and, fundamentally, to its prevention. This endeavor is not for one person, nor one party, nor one branch of government—it is a calling for all of us, uniting our efforts as one.

Your Mission:

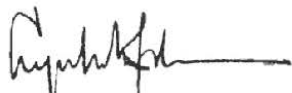
1. **Research:** Delve into the socioeconomic dynamics that necessitate this war on poverty. Understand the enduring factors that entrap millions of Americans in poverty despite our era's economic prosperity.
2. **Analysis:** Employ mathematical tools to dissect and interpret data on income disparity, joblessness, and educational opportunities. Your analytical rigor will lay the foundation of our strategic offensive.
3. **Integration:** Forge your historical insights with your analytical findings into a comprehensive strategy. This phase demands your sharpest critical thinking, seamless teamwork, and innovative spirit.
4. **Presentation:** Craft a presentation that not only communicates your findings but also mobilizes action. Your audience will extend beyond your peers to engage a larger community, igniting a national movement towards understanding and action.

This is no mere campaign; it is a comprehensive war against the entrenched enemy of poverty. It demands our utmost energy, compassion, and intellect. It requires the active engagement of every citizen. Through your detailed research, rigorous analysis, and passionate advocacy, you will contribute significantly to our national dialogue on eradicating poverty.

I have full confidence in this Cabinet's capabilities to meet this challenge. I look forward to your strategies and solutions. Let us commence this critical battle, buoyed by the knowledge that the hopes of millions hang on our resolve and our actions.

With determination,

Lyndon B. Johnson
President of the United States



Appendix B – Primary Sources

Hint 1	Hint 2	Hint 3
Academic Studies	Library JStor	https://theswishers.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Poverty-in-the-United-States.pdf
Who might have statistics about Americans	Bureau of the Census	The Extent of Poverty in the United States 1959 to 1966 (census.gov)
Primary Sources are not always online	Did you look in my History Library	1960 Census of Population: Volume 1. Characteristics of the Population
Primary Sources do not have to be just text	Look for speeches about the War on Poverty	January 8, 1964: State of the Union Miller Center
A more modern “How the Other Half Live”	Did you look in my History Library	Michael Harrington's "The Other America" (1962) Dwight MacDonald's “invisible poor” (1963)
Oral Histories Give you stories	Look for specific stories about the War on Poverty	War On Poverty Oral History Project

Appendix C – Primary Source Hint Protocol

Purpose:

To guide students in their research by providing a tiered hint system. This protocol aims to balance guidance with student autonomy, fostering critical thinking and encouraging students to work independently.

Hint Structure:

- **Level 1 Hint:** Offers a simple, general hint to guide students in the right direction.
- **Level 2 Hint:** Provides a more specific direction, pointing students towards particular resources or databases.
- **Level 3 Hint:** Reveals the specific source or direct link to the desired information.

Protocol for Using Hints:

1. Introduction to the Hint System:

- At the beginning of the project, explain the hint system to students, emphasizing the importance of attempting to find information independently before seeking hints.
- Describe the three hint levels and the types of questions associated with each level.

2. How to Request a Hint:

- Students may request a hint when they encounter a challenging point in their research.
- To receive a hint, students must answer a series of questions that demonstrate their effort to find the information independently.

3. Questions to Answer Before Requesting a Hint:

- **Level 1 Hint:**
 - What resources have you already checked?
 - What keywords or phrases have you used in your search?
- **Level 2 Hint:**
 - What information are you missing to continue your research?
 - What specific area or aspect of the project do you need help with?
- **Level 3 Hint:**
 - What have you learned from previous hints?
 - Why do you need this specific hint to move forward?

4. Rewards and Penalties:

- **Rewards for Not Using Hints:**
 - Extra credit or bonus points for completing the project without using hints.
 - Recognition in class for those who demonstrate exceptional problem-solving skills without hint assistance.
- **Penalties for Using Hints:**
 - Minor point deductions for each hint used.
 - The use of multiple hints at Level 2 and Level 3 may result in additional point deductions to encourage more independent research.

Example Hint System (For the War on Poverty):

- **Level 1 Hint:** "Consider using the U.S. Census Bureau's website to find information on 1960s poverty statistics. Start with general searches like '1960s income distribution' or 'historical poverty rates.'"
- **Level 2 Hint:** "Try exploring the Economic Reports of the President on the FRASER website. These reports contain detailed information about the economy and poverty rates during the 1960s."
- **Level 3 Hint:** "Use this direct link to the 1964 Economic Report of the President, which discusses the War on Poverty and includes relevant statistics."

Final Thoughts:

The Primary Source Hint Protocol is designed to promote independence and critical thinking. While hints can be helpful, students should be encouraged to find information through their research skills. The system's goal is to strike a balance between support and self-reliance, helping students develop problem-solving abilities while achieving success in their projects.