



Pixton Practices Handout

Social Studies

For Use With Pixton PowerUp Webinar

Best Practice #1: If-Then

Prep

To prepare for an If-Then activity, select a historical era or event relevant to your lesson. Use Pixton's content tools to create a comic frame (or frames) summarizing key events or narratives leading up to a point where a different decision is made than is historically accurate. For instance, this could be Gaius Julius Caesar deciding not to attend the Senate on the Ides of March, or Abraham Lincoln deciding not to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, etc. Ensure the comic includes characters, backgrounds, and props accurately representing the historical context. This setup will provide a visual and engaging way for students to learn about history.

Activity

Introduce the comic to your class and challenge students to use Pixton to complete the next frame (or frames) following the decision made in your setup frame(s). This can be done individually or in groups (perhaps paired with the Build in a Bunch strategy).

PowerUp Variations

One variation is the Gallery Walk, where you display multiple If-Then setups around the classroom and have students rotate in groups, interacting with each comic and completing the next frame. Then, for a second round, ask student groups to rotate through the stations and view the completed comics of other groups. This activity engages students and helps them understand that historical data can be interpreted differently. Another variation is to use the comic as a discussion starter. Begin a classroom discussion or debate on the historical topic introduced in the comic.



Differentiation

Adjust Reading Levels: Create multiple versions of the same If-Then with varying levels of text complexity to cater to different reading abilities.

Use Visual Supports: Incorporate more visual cues and fewer text elements for students who struggle with reading.

Guided Reading Groups: Group students by reading level and provide additional support and scaffolding for lower-level readers.

Interactive Discussions: Use think-pair-share strategies to engage students in discussing the content, providing sentence starters or guiding questions for those who need them.

Best Practice #2: Choose Your Own Bubble (CYOB)

Prep


To set up a CYOB activity, create a comic using Pixton and leave some speech bubbles blank. Develop multiple-choice options for the blank speech bubbles to guide students' responses. Prepare a set of completed strips with different dialogue options for comparison. This preparation will help structure the activity and provide clear expectations for students.

Activity

Distribute the CYOB comics to the class and ask students to fill in the blank speech bubbles. Using a projector or the Pixton app, present multiple-choice options for each blank bubble, guiding students in their choices. After completing the comics, discuss the different possible dialogues and the historical context behind each choice. This exercise encourages students to apply their knowledge creatively and critically, enhancing their understanding of the historical material.

PowerUp Variations

You can use the CYOB strategy as an icebreaker at the beginning of a lesson to engage students and assess their prior knowledge. Another variation is to create a set of CYOB questions for quizzes or tests, using this method as an assessment tool to evaluate students' understanding of historical events. Additionally, you can design CYOB comics based on current global issues and



have students suggest dialogues, reinforcing their understanding of contemporary topics and developing their ability to articulate informed opinions.

Differentiation

Multiple-Choice Scaffolding: Offer varying levels of support in the multiple-choice options, from simple choices to more complex ones requiring deeper understanding.

Visual Aids: The comics should include images or symbols alongside text options to support comprehension for visual learners and ELL students.

Flexible Grouping: Students can work individually, in pairs, or small groups based on their comfort level and ability.

Think-Aloud Strategies: Model the thought process for filling in speech bubbles for students who need additional guidance.

Sentence Starters: Provide sentence starters for students struggling to generate ideas independently.

Best Practice #3: Build in a Bunch

Prep

For a Build in a Bunch activity, start by selecting a passage from a text, article, or historical source. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different aspect of the topic. Provide guidelines for democratic decision-making within the group, including using absolute vetoes. This preparation ensures that the group work is structured and each member has a voice in the final product.

Activity

Have each group create a comic using Pixton, with every element voted on by the group members. Ensure each group member uses their absolute veto on at least one element to encourage active participation and representation. Facilitate the creation process by offering guidance and feedback as needed, ensuring that the groups stay on track and collaborate effectively. This collaborative process helps students draw on each other's strengths and better understand the material.



PowerUp Variations

The Build in a Bunch technique can be used in various ways. Depending on your lesson objectives, you can focus on either historical accuracy or alternative histories. For instance, groups can be assigned to depict historical events or imagine alternative outcomes accurately. Another variation is the Rotating Strips activity, where groups complete the first two frames of a comic strip based on a historical event and then rotate the comics so another group finishes the final frame. This activity helps students confront different points of view on the same event. Lastly, you can assign groups to cover various themes of a historical event or era, such as daily life, significant battles, or political developments, and then have them compare and discuss the differences. This approach helps students see the broader context of historical events and reinforces their knowledge.

Differentiation

Role Assignments: Assign specific roles within each group (e.g., researcher, writer, artist) based on students' strengths and preferences.

Group Composition: Form heterogeneous groups to ensure a mix of abilities and skills, fostering peer support and collaboration.

Veto Support: Offer additional support and mediation during the veto process to help students navigate conflicts and ensure every voice is heard.


Ongoing Check-Ins: Regularly check in with groups to provide feedback and support, ensuring all students participate and understand the task.

Associated Research

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Santangelo, T. (2015). Research-based writing practices and the common core: Meta-analysis and meta-synthesis. *The Elementary School Journal*, 115(4), 498–522.

Merç, A. (2013). The effect of comic strips on EFL reading comprehension. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, 4(1), 54–64.

Schnotz, W. & Bannert, M. (2003). Construction and interference in learning from multiple representation. *Learning and Instruction*, 13(2), 141–156



Zimmerman, B. (2008). Creating comics fosters reading, writing, and creativity. *Education Digest*, 74(4), 55–57.