

# Northwest History Consortium

## A Monument to Nixon

Revised Version of "Nixon Monument" by Rick Whitmore

Alyssa Vis  
10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### National Standard

#### **Era 9: Postwar United States (1945-1970s) / Standard 2C**

*Standard 2C: The student understands the foreign and domestic consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.*

*Grade Level 7-12: Assess the Vietnam policy of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administration and the shift of public opinion about the war.*

*Grade Level 5-12: Evaluate how Vietnamese and Americans experienced the war and how the war continued to affect postwar politics and culture.*

#### **Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968-Present) / Standards 1A and 1C**

*Standard 1A: The student understands domestic politics from Nixon to Carter.*

*Grade Level 5-12: Evaluate the effectiveness of the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations in addressing social and environmental issues.*

*Grade Level 5-12: Explain the Nixon administration's involvement in Watergate and examine the role of the media in exposing the scandal.*

*Grade Level 9-12: Analyze the constitutional issues raised by the Watergate affair and evaluate the effects of Watergate on public opinion.*

*Standard 1C: The student understands major foreign policy initiatives.*

*Grade Level 7-12: Assess Nixon's policy of détente with the USSR and the People's Republic of China.*

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this PBL is for students to evaluate Richard Nixon's Presidency and to decide whether or not he deserves to have a monument built in Washington, D.C.

In order to determine this, students will have to look at Nixon's background and his actions while president, including his historic trip to China, his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, his actions during the Vietnam conflict, and also his alleged responsibility for the Watergate break-in and other political maneuverings. Students will have to look at Nixon's legacy and decide whether or not he deserves a monument by comparing him to other presidents who have monuments. They will need to decide why those presidents, like Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln received monuments and then evaluate if Nixon is also deserving of a monument or memorial in Washington, D.C.

### **PROBLEM**

You will need to determine whether or not Richard Nixon should have a monument built to him in Washington, DC.

### **SCENARIO**

Richard Milhous Nixon was born January 9, 1913 in Yorba Linda, CA. He graduated from high school, Whittier College, and Duke University School of Law. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Nixon joined the Navy and served in the Pacific Theater. He left the service after the war with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. In 1946 he was elected to represent California's 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in the US House of Representatives and in 1950 to represent California in

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the United States Senate. In 1952 he was selected to be Dwight D. Eisenhower's running mate and served two terms as the Republican vice president.. In 1960 Nixon ran for president and was narrowly defeated by John F. Kennedy. Unwilling to give up on public service, Nixon ran for governor of California in 1962 and was again defeated. After this failed campaign Nixon retired from public life. In 1968 Nixon returned to the political scene winning the Republican Party nomination for President. Nixon narrowly defeated Vice President Hubert Humphrey in 1968, and in 1972 he defeated George McGovern by one of the largest margins in American history.

During Nixon's two terms as President he accomplished many things. In his domestic policy he ended the draft, passed new anti-crime laws, worked in support of the Civil Rights Movement, created a broad environmental program, and witnessed the completion of former President Kennedy's charge to the nation—landing a man on the moon. His foreign policy also shaped the way the United States dealt with the world. In 1972 he visited Beijing and Moscow and reduced the tensions with both communist nations. He also ended the American involvement in Viet Nam in 1973. However, within a few months of his reelection in 1972, news of an attempted break-in at the Democratic National Committee located in the Watergate building began to cast a shadow over President Nixon, especially once the break-in was traced back to the Committee to Re-elect the President. President Nixon denied any involvement or that he had committed any crimes. Although President Nixon maintained his innocence, on August 9, 1974 faced with almost certain impeachment, President Nixon resigned from the office of President of the United States so that the country could begin, ". . . the process of healing which is so desperately needed. . . ."

Following his resignation, Richard Nixon resigned from public life and died on April 22, 1994.

#### TASKS

Now that the nation is more than 10 years removed from Nixon's death and 30 years from his resignation, there is increasing public opinion that a monument should be built to honor President Nixon. This proposal is extremely controversial, especially as he would be joining the ranks of men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King, Jr.—the last man the Senate agreed to have a monument built for in Washington, DC.

Your group of well-respected presidential historians has been tasked to speak at a Senate committee meeting that is contemplating this proposal. They would like to know your opinion on constructing a monument to President Nixon and are looking forward to your 7-10 minute presentation on the subject. However, since you are not the only group that they are calling in, they also would like a 3-5 page written report that they can peruse once the presentations are completed. Your presentation must be well-organized and must include your evaluation of the President Nixon's actions and accomplishments and how you plan to deal with the proposed monument. Your written report must include reliable, cited sources to back up your information.

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#### RESOURCES

##### Internet

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#### **ASSESSMENT**

Each group will be required to complete a written paper and an oral presentation. In addition, each group member will anonymously evaluate their fellow group members, along with the effort and the energy they demonstrated toward the project.

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### ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Central Question or Problem</b>	Identifies a relevant issue or sub-problem in the scenario	States a central question or problem in the scenario	States a clear and accurate central question or problem with reasons for its importance	Gives other possible questions or problems and tells why this is the central question or problem
<b>Position or Decision</b>	Focuses on the central issue in the scenario	Answers the question or addresses the problem	Explains why this decision is better than other possible choices	Describes the process of making the decision
<b>Supporting Argument</b>	Explains the decision with reasons	Provides three or more logical reasons	Provides three or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position	Provides at least one counter-reason to the position
<b>Evidence Sources</b>	Gives sources to explain the decision	Gives three or more reliable sources	Gives sources to support the main parts of the argument	Gives sources that do not support the decision and tells why they were not accepted
<b>Argument</b>	Uses vocabulary that can be understood by the audience	Gives the question, decision, argument, and evidence with sources	Explains why the ideas should be important to this audience	Uses a story, or other "hook" to get the audience interested
<b>Reflection</b>	Gives timeline of problem solving activities	Describes problems or challenges the group had	Identifies important "ah-has" for the group and explains how they happened	Describes what could have been better and lessons learned
<b>Speaking Skills</b>	Inaudible or too loud; no eye contact; rate too slow/fast; speaker seemed uninterested and used monotone	Some mumbling; little eye contact; uneven rate; little or no expression	Clear articulation but not as polished	Poised, clear articulation; proper volume; steady rate; good posture and eye contact; enthusiasm; confidence
<b>Audience Response</b>	Incoherent; audience lost interest and could not determine the point of the presentation	Some related facts but went off topic and lost audience; mostly presented facts with little or no imagination	Presented facts with some interesting "twists"; held the audience's attention most of the time	Involved the audience in the presentation; points made in creative way; held audience's attention throughout
<b>Length of Presentation</b>	More than 4 minutes away from allotted time	Between 2-4 minutes of allotted time	Between 0-2 minutes from allotted time	Within allotted time

\*The score is dependent upon meeting the requirements of the lower scores as well.

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### WRITTEN REPORT RUBRIC

	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Central Question or Problem</b>	Identifies a relevant issue or sub-problem in the scenario	States a central question or problem in the scenario	States a clear and accurate central question or problem with reasons for its importance	Gives other possible questions or problems and tells why this is the central question or problem
<b>Position or Decision</b>	Focuses on the central issue in the scenario	Answers the question or addresses the problem	Explains why this decision is better than other possible choices	Describes the process of making the decision
<b>Supporting Argument</b>	Explains the decision with reasons	Provides four or more logical reasons	Provides four or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position	Provides at least one counter-reason to the position
<b>Evidence Sources</b>	Gives sources to explain the decision	Gives five or more reliable, cited sources	Gives sources to support the main parts of the argument	Gives sources that do not support the decision and tells why they were not accepted
<b>Argument</b>	Uses vocabulary that can be understood by the audience	Gives the question, decision, argument, and evidence with sources	Explains why the ideas should be important to this audience	Uses a story, or other "hook" to get the audience interested
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Repetitious; fragments and run-ons are frequent	Variety is present; some errors are evident	Complete and correct	Complete; varied; interesting
<b>Punctuation/ Spelling</b>	Block meaning	Careless or distracting	Errors present but do not interfere with meaning	Error-free
<b>Voice</b>	Unclear	Mechanical, formulaic	Clear and authentic	Distinctive; appropriate to task and audience

\*The score is dependent upon meeting the requirements of the lower scores as well.

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