

Semester Final Exhibition
"The Great American Debate"

Imagine you are an historical figure who has had a profound effect on America. Your vision, struggles, and triumphs are what make you compelling, and for the serious student of American history and literature, impossible to ignore. You will investigate the life of a significant American, perform research, and write a research paper. Finally, working in pairs, you will participate in a debate on a compelling or controversial issue from the present or past.

The required components are as follows:

1. **Conduct in-depth research** on your historical figure. Your research must include a *minimum of three (3) sources*; exemplary research will include more. While *Wikipedia* may be your first source, please find additional, detailed sources, including the following types: essays; journal articles; magazine or newspaper articles; films or television programs; audio recordings; artistic pieces; websites; or lectures. *Research may be done online, but take great care to use only reliable, reputable sources.*

Deadline for selecting historical figure: Monday, December 2

2. **Compose a paper** providing an overview of your figure's beliefs, viewpoints, and major life achievements, and discussing, more specifically, his or her views on the topic you have selected to debate. Your paper must be typed, double-spaced, and no more than three (3) pages in length. Also, your paper must conform to MLA standards including parenthetical references and a list of Works Cited. Exceptional papers will be thoughtful, focused, and will display a rich understanding of your figure's impact on American society.

Deadline for Summary Research Document (see format online): Friday, December 6

Deadline for rough draft of paper: Thursday, December 12

Deadline for final draft of paper: Monday, December 16

ABSOLUTELY NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

3. **Prepare and present an in-class performance** in which you become the historical figure you researched, and conduct a debate on a compelling or controversial issue from the present or past. Depending on the viewpoint of your figure and the specific nature of your topic, your performance may more closely resemble an enthusiastic discussion than an adversarial debate. In any event, your performance, which should demonstrate the unique vision and lasting impact of your figure, **must be delivered in character and in costume**. Successful performances will require rehearsal and careful scripting. Your performance should be approximately ten (10) minutes in length. You should also be prepared to respond to questions from the audience.

Deadline for working script: Wednesday, December 18

Sign-ups for debates: Monday, December 16.

Based on sign-ups, debates will be held during the finals periods on: Wednesday, December 18 OR Friday, December 20