Lesson Plan: Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Coast Pirates

Overview: Students will examine the interactions between the United States and the Barbary Coast Pirates during the Jefferson Presidency, particularly through the lens of foreign policy.

Website: http://jeffersonlesson.weebly.com/

Materials:
- Newspaper with the article declaring war with Tripoli
- Map from the 1800’s
- Computers
- Copies of letters between Cathcart and Secretary of State

Objectives:
Students will:
- Understand the conflict between the Barbary Coast Pirates and the United States
- Explain how US foreign policy developed from the Tripolitan War
- Develop a proposal to the President, explaining what they think they should do
- Use maps to explain how geography factors into economic growth, foreign policy and international relationships.

Links:
- Map of the Barbary Coast: http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101040705/barbary_map/

Procedures:
- Students follow the link to the cartoon: “Who were the Barbary Coast Pirates” from the Daily Press
  - Answer any questions regarding the cartoon and have them read the newspaper article
- Students will use FreeMapTools to locate Tripoli on a map and calculate the distance between the US and Tripoli
  - Students will analyze and examine the relationship geography played in relation to piracy in the Mediterranean.
  - They will examine why the United States would be involved in trade within the Mediterranean.
  - Additionally, students may use the Map of the Barbary Coast
Students will examine the letter from James L. Cathcart, the US Consul in Tripoli and the second letter from the US Secretary of State.

- This letter explains how Tripoli is growing unhappy with the treaty in place with Tripoli in comparison to the one US holds with Algiers. It also explains how the leader doesn’t want to deal with anyone but the president. The letter is a bit difficult to read with language, but reading aloud and deciphering it together will allow the students to understand how “foreign policy”
- In examining these two letters, students will begin to understand the perspective held by the United States in regards to trade and foreign policy and how geography played a part in diplomacy.
  - **ELL Modifications:** Student will examine only one portion of the letter. Reading it aloud with the teacher and focusing on key details.

**Activity**

Students will be tasked with becoming Thomas Jefferson’s “Foreign Policy Advisors.” Working in small groups, it will be their job to create a proposal to the President explaining what the United States should do. They will be tasked with creating a document, webpage or video (technology based) explaining what the United States should approach the problem with Tripoli.

- **Jefferson’s Mission: Foreign Policy Advisors:**
  
  *I am in dire need of your assistance! The conflict with Tripoli has escalated and we are having concerns all about the Barbary Coast. I am going to need you to help me formulate a plan to deal with this situation. Working in small brain groups, I would like you to create a proposal I can submit to my cabinet explaining how we should move forward with the situation. Your proposal could be a word document, a PowerPoint presentation, webpage or even a video. Please be sure to include some pictures and quotes to support your suggestions. Thank you so much for your help!*

  *Sincerely,*

  *President Thomas Jefferson*

- Additional Resources:
  - **Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary:**
    
    [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796t.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796t.asp)
Images of the US war with Tripoli:
http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/picamer/paTripoli.html
http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/barb-war/burn-phl.htm

Links to the letters from Cathcart and Secretary of State:
http://teachinghistory.org/system/files/Letter_from_Secretary_of_State.pdf

Copy of a “Mediterranean Passport”
http://www.history.navy.mil/library/manuscript/jefferson1807.htm

Students will present their “proposals” and course of action to the class.

Closing

- There will be an open discussion to talk about why certain courses of actions were taken, how the war played out and why it is relevant in today’s world:
  - The pirates of today, the issues with “terrorist” type demands, how foreign policy has been influenced over the course of US history.

Tentative Lesson Plan