

Images of Leadership

SUBMITTED BY: Kathryn McGinn

SUBJECT(S): Career Development

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

Modeled after the assignment described in the Knowledge@Wharton article “Gandhi, Mandela, Mother Teresa, a Tree, a Pillow...,” this lesson will ask students to represent characteristics of strong leaders through images and text. Students will reflect on what their pictures have in common with their classmates’ depictions, and they will connect their symbols to the images described in the article.

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Princess Aghayere Shares Her Love of Basketball to Inspire Young West African Women”](#)
- [“Part I: Hip Hop Artist Kayvon Asemani on Building His Brand and Controlling His Destiny”](#)
- [“MLK Day Tribute: Student Lessons in Leadership”](#)
- [“Great Leaders Recognize and Value the Power of Emotions”](#)
- [“Graduates Define Success”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Emotional Intelligence”](#)
- [“Career Insight: Saif Saeed Ghobash on Why Great Leaders Study History”](#)
- [“5 Leadership Lessons from Israeli Model Titi Aynaw”](#)

Common Core Standard(s):

- ELA CCR Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ELA CCR Reading 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- ELA CCR Reading 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- ELA CCR Reading 9: Analyze how two or more texts (including images!) address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches authors take.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Objectives/Purposes:

- Students will represent the qualities of strong leaders through images and text.
- Students will read/analyze an article and make connections.

Knowledge@Wharton Article:

- [“Gandhi, Mandela, Mother Teresa, a Tree, a Pillow ... Images of Leadership from Future Leaders”](#)

Other Resources/Materials:

- Newsprint and markers

Activities:

1. Give students the following assignment: Design an image that represents leadership, and then write a paragraph explaining why you selected that image. When students are

done, post their images around the room.

(15 mins)

2. Invite students to walk around the room and look at all the depictions of good leaders. What do the images have in common? What pictures stand out as different? Are there any illustrations that surprise you?

(10 mins)

3. Explain that this is a version of an assignment given by Wharton professors to an introductory class every semester. The professors are interested in how their students think about leadership. Hand out copies of “Gandhi, Mandela, Mother Teresa, a Tree, a Pillow.” As students read the article, tell them to keep track of what their images have in common with the business students’ images.

(10 mins)

4. Discuss the following questions with students:

- a. How do Greenhalgh and Maxwell define plural, moral and inspirational leadership? Do your images fit in one (or more) of those categories?
- b. How do Greenhalgh and Maxwell define transactional and transformational leadership? What kind of leaders did you depict?

(5 mins)

Tying It All Together:

Ask students if there is anything they would change or add to their images of strong leadership after seeing their peers’ work and reading the article? Out of all of the qualities that students have discussed, what do they think are the most important characteristics for a leader to possess? Why?

(5 mins)

Practice Outside of the Classroom:

- Look for examples of transformational leaders in your own life, as well as in history and current events. What makes these leaders transformational?
- Think about times when you have been a leader. What characteristics do you embody? What leadership skills would you like to improve?
- Encourage students to read Wharton Global Youth Program articles that explore leadership, and use the questions at the end of each article as conversation starters with your students: [Leadership Challenges from an FBLA President](#), [MLK Day Tribute: Lessons in Leadership](#), [CEO David Pottruck on How to Be a Great Leader](#)

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:

This was, by far, one of my most successful lessons this summer. Students enjoyed the task of illustrating leadership, and their images demonstrated the same range/creativity described in the K@W article. I made students spread out (so they wouldn't be influenced by each other's work) and played mellow music, which set a nice mood in the classroom. Students loved looking at each other's pictures and seeing how they interpreted the assignment differently.

The article was definitely more interesting/relevant to students because they participated in the same activity as the subjects of the report. Students were surprised/amused to see some of their ideas represented by Wharton students, and they were also proud when they created entirely original interpretations of leadership.

☺