



Subject: AP US History

Grade Level: High School

DI Strategy: Expert Partner Jigsaw

AP US History Thesis Statements Expert Partner Jigsaw Lesson

In AP US History, one of the key skills that students must develop is their ability to write an effective thesis statement. In an attempt to help students assess and improve upon that skill I developed a lesson that started with an expert partner jigsaw and ended with a tiered split screen. To begin the lesson, I placed students into heterogeneous groups (with a mix of high, medium, and low students) based on my observations on previous assignments regarding the creation of thesis statements. Each of these groups was given a specific question and they were asked to individually create a thesis statement, rationale, and eligible content for homework.

The next day in class, I first asked each student to complete a Google Form survey that asked a series of reflection questions. Students were asked to reflect on their comfort level with assessing a question, developing a thesis statement, developing rationale, and providing eligible content to support the rationale.

After completing the Google Form, students met in their heterogeneous groups to discuss their approach to the question that was completed for homework, their argument, and the content material. Their goal was to come to a consensus as a group and ensure that all group members could explain their process. I then rearranged the groups so that each new group contained one member from each question. In their new groups, group members took turns being the “expert” and explaining their question, thesis statement, rationale, and eligible content. When this was finished, we then debriefed each question with the entire class.

Before leaving class for the day, I asked the students to complete a second Google Form. This time I asked reflection questions about meeting in their heterogeneous groups. Now that they had the opportunity to meet with and talk to other students about their assessment of the material, how did they feel in terms of their comfort level?

During the next class period, I created a split screen with three levels of students.

Group 1: These were students who self-assessed that they were struggling with analyzing the question and developing reasoning points. This group received a scaffolded worksheet on how to develop a strong thesis statement. This was where I spent the majority of the class period working on developing a thesis for a new question.

Group 2: These were students who self-assessed that they felt more comfortable with developing a thesis statement, but still needed more help developing strong arguments. This group also received the scaffolded worksheet and worked together as a group to work on developing a thesis for a new question. I checked in occasionally with this group.

Group 3: These were students who self-assessed that they felt very comfortable with the formation of thesis statements. This group was given a new question, but no scaffold and asked to develop a thesis statement.



Teaching Learning Succeeding

When all three groups had finished, we debriefed as a whole class on the three new questions. Students in the other two groups took notes as each group explained their thesis, rationale, and eligible content.