

Role-Playing World History

Medieval to 20th Century

Seventh Edition

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Welcome to Role-Playing World History

This book is an exciting collection of role-playing simulations for social studies classrooms. Thirteen open-ended simulations involve students in reenacting certain world-changing events from medieval times to the twentieth century. Students are actively engaged in assuming the roles of decision makers at crucial junctures in history, using critical thinking and group decision-making skills to resolve conflicts. Although most of the simulations are written for World History, some of them would work equally as well in other social studies classes. All of these simulations have been play tested in classes ranging from junior high to high school and at ability levels ranging from sheltered classes to honors.

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Lesson 2

Renaissance Patronage Competition

Objective

- To understand the difficulties that artists, writers, and inventors faced in obtaining funds for their creative endeavors in the years before sponsorship of the arts became a widespread public function

Duration and Complexity

- 2 class periods
- Level 3: Average

Materials

- A copy of the **Renaissance Patronage Proposal Form** for each applicant

Procedure

1. Divide the class into two groups of students. The smaller group (8–12 members) will role-play the monarchs, who will choose whom to sponsor. The larger group (12–24 members), which is the rest of the class, is composed of the applicants for patronage.
2. The monarchs group will research a particular king or queen and the types of arts and sciences that they actually sponsored and why. The monarchs they choose to role-play could include an Italian prince or banker, a pope, a Holy Roman emperor, the king or queen of Britain, France, Spain, or Portugal, the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, or any other Renaissance monarch or wealthy merchant.
3. The larger group will role-play the applicants for patronage. They must decide whether they are going to role-play an artist, scientist, discoverer, writer, inventor, musician, or some other creative person. They will research their masterpiece and come up with a proposal that will help them to win sponsorship and patronage from a monarch.
4. You may also wish to assign the role of an adviser to the monarchs to help them decide whom to sponsor, if you have enough students to play these roles.
5. The applicants will present their finished proposals to each monarch in turn by building a case to show that they are the one most worthy of patronage.

- The monarchs will take a few minutes to consider the proposals. They will then announce to the class which projects they decided to patronize and why.
- Conduct the debriefing (see below).

Teacher Recommendations

- This activity could be used as a culminating activity after the subject of Renaissance patronage has already been taught.
- Even though this simulation is entitled "Renaissance Patronage," it could be used for other time periods as well. In some countries, this system of patronage was in place as early as the late Middle Ages, and in many countries it continued until the advent of public funding for the arts in the Industrial Revolution. Some private patronage continues until this day.
- Give your class plenty of examples of stories of real, historical patronage. It may be helpful to show excerpts from films such as *Cosmos* or *The Agony and the Ecstasy* to portray how difficult it was to maintain a good relationship with a wealthy patron.
- Provide your students with lots of books and websites that show the types of arts and sciences that were sponsored by wealthy patrons.
- Make sure that a variety of disciplines are represented in the proposals. You don't want them all to be artists or sculptors, for example.
- The monarchs should have a lot of good proposals to choose from, but only limited resources. Adjust the amount of wealth they have available for patronage based upon the size of their kingdom and the number of students involved in the simulation.
- The following chart suggests the amount of money available to each monarch in florins, a widely accepted currency of the day:

An Italian prince	5,000 florins
A banker such as the Medici or Fuggers	10,000 florins
A pope	10,000 florins
A Holy Roman emperor	8,000 florins
The king or queen of Britain	7,500 florins
The king or queen of France	10,000 florins
The king or queen of Spain,	10,000 florins
The king or queen of Portugal,	5,000 florins
The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire	2,500 florins
A Dutch or German merchant	2,500 florins

The French Revolution Simulation

Time: Circa 1789

Object of the game

To become the sole party in control of France and draft a constitution that will make the majority of people happy

The teams

Parties:

- The Radicals
- The Liberals
- The Moderates
- The Royalists

Social Groups:

- The Clergy
- The Nobles
- The Merchants
- The Peasants

The parties (of 2–4 people each) will compete for the power, approval, and wealth of the four social groups (of 2–4 people each).

How the game is played

1. Each team will carefully read its description sheet to determine what their goals and desires are. This description sheet will also tell each team who its likely allies and enemies are. Each party will then discuss among themselves how they will go about gaining the support of as many social groups as possible. Figure out what you will promise each group, but remember that you must try to do what you promised or lose their support later on.

2. Each party goes out and negotiates with each of the social groups. In exchange for the promises made to them, each group can give away points to show their support for a party. The points are divided as follows:
 - 10 points of taxes
 - 10 points of military support
 - 10 points of votes in the Estates General
 - 10 points of party recruits
3. The members of the party report back the results of the negotiations, and the party drafts a constitution explaining their new form of government.
4. Each social group listens carefully to the constitution and then decides which party will get their points.
5. The winner is the party with the most points. Multiple rounds of the simulation can be played with each turn representing one year. Losing parties can try and gain additional support and overthrow the government. Whichever party is in control at the end of ten years is the winner.
6. The winner may deal with the losers in any way that they wish. But remember, excessive violence only breeds resentment and retaliation among your enemies.
7. If, at any time, a party has exclusive control of the military, they may proclaim their leader to be a dictator. If a dictator can stay in power for more than five years, his party wins the game.

Party #1

The Royalists

You are people who profited from having a strong king in control. You miss the old days of absolute monarchy. France has had a king for 1,000 years, so why change now? What you would like is to get King Louis XVI or one of his relatives back on the throne. You like the old ways of feudalism, central control, and deference to authority. You think that leaders should be born into a special class, and that no one should lessen the power of the king. Your natural allies are the nobility and the clergy because they prospered under the old system and are afraid of what they might lose if something replaces it. You have limited support from some peasants, who are loyal to their feudal lords, and from some merchants, who made money by selling and lending to the king.



King of France, Louis XVI

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