App Developer: Powers of the President

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like an app developer and create an app to teach students about the powers of the president and why a system of checks and balances is in place.

Activity

Step 1: Background Information (5 minutes)

- Show Video: Powers of the President.
- Explain to students that many surveys have been conducted that reveal that American adults do not understand the roles that each branch of the United States government has. Show Handout: Results of Survey.
- As a class, discuss why the results of this survey are significant. Is it a problem that adults in our country are not knowledgeable about our government? What are some consequences of not understanding this information? Does adults' lack of knowledge on these topics affect their ability to be an informed voter?
- Pose the following question: What would happen if no one knew how the government was actually structured? Discuss how the government wouldn't need to be accountable to citizens and could become corrupt because no one would know they are violating the Constitution.

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will imagine they are app developers who are creating an app that people can use to learn about the powers of the president and the role of each branch in the federal government. The app will be a game that people can play. In the game, people will learn about what could happen if there weren't any checks on the president.
- Provide students with Handout: Steps to Create an App. As a class, read through the steps. Explain to students that they will be creating a wireframe for their app. Discuss reasons why app developers make wireframes (e.g., to plan out ideas, to make sure users can easily navigate the app, to get feedback on ways to improve the app).
- Next, provide students with Handout: Information on Branches of Government and Handout: Three Branches in Action. Explain to students that they will use these handouts while they create their app.
- Teacher note: When students are prompted to draw pictures, they can either hand draw pictures, use a computer to create images, or cut out pictures from the handout.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups.

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.

SOCIAL STUDIES CAREER ADVENTURES

Step 3: Designing Wireframe (30+ minutes)

- Have groups follow the steps listed on the handout. Remind students to include all requirements in their app.

Step 4: Discussion (5+ minutes)

- Have students present their apps to the class. Have other students provide constructive feedback about ways to improve the app (e.g., make it more user friendly, have more information for users to learn about the government, provide more engaging material, provide a quiz at the end to make sure users understand the material they learned).
- Have a concluding discussion about any of the following topics: How would our country be different if in 50 years no one knew the structure of the government or the rights listed in the Constitution? Whose responsibility is it to teach both kids and adults about the structure of the government? What are current barriers to learning about the government?

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Powers of the President
- Handout: Results of Survey
- Handout: Information on Branches of Government
- Handout: Three Branches in Action

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