

## **VisionTree™ Classroom - “If I Were President...” Case Study**

The current generation of high school students may not be eligible to vote just yet, but they were able to put themselves in an interactive classroom exercise, students at Mill Valley High School in Shawnee, Kansas were able to discuss several current events issues from a leadership perspective including topics such as foreign policy and the economy. Using the VisionTree™ Classroom Edition the students engaged in a critical thinking activity called “If I were President...” by incorporating both current events and individual interaction into an innovative way to learn about some of the many decisions made by the President of the United States.

At Mill Valley, the 30-workstation computer lab accessed VisionTree Classroom and allowed the students to select a current events topic – in this case “Foreign Policy / Iraq”. Independently each student rated the importance how influencing factors such as money, time and public support rated with the various options currently faced at that time by the President. The critical thinking process of VisionTree generated a class discussion about what influences important decisions faced by world leaders, and also allowed the students to do optimized research of key words through the “VisionTree Research Center”. With administrator access, the teacher was able to view a group decision processed by VisionTree for both the morning and afternoon classes followed by a class discussion of the group results. One Mill Valley student commented “The software helped a lot to

discuss” and another said, “I liked that it reasoned with my ideas - it was simple, easy to use and fun to play with.”

In a separate case study at Alliant International University, the students did not have access to a computer in the classroom, so they accessed VisionTree Classroom Edition to run through the exercise of what they would do “If I were President...”. The class project served as a creative way to help students realize their personal stance on today’s current issues through personal reflection, and during class the group results were discussed (accessible with a password by teacher from any computer). In the end, students were conscious of the own individual opinions on these topics, making politics more personal than they previously believed. Ken McKay, a graduate student at Alliant International University commented, “VisionTree Classroom helped involve myself and my classmates in more relevant and insightful discussions. The application also provided direct links to other useful information on the Internet, and I feel its structure and ease of use could benefit anyone both in and out of the classroom.”

**Decision:**

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**What you are trying to decide:** **What were Grants options before deciding to invade the South**

**Possible Outcomes:**

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**Option: Invade the South**

**VisionTree Score: 83**

**Total Points: 380 (Maximum possible points: 460 )**

Factor	Reason	Importance	Rating	Points
Maintaining unity of the country	Having gone through revolutionary war and establishing the US as a solid union	9	9	81
Economic factors	North was reliant on the South for agriculture	8	7	56
Slavery	North beginning to oppose abundant use of slaves	6	6	36
<b>Sub Total:</b>				<b>173</b>

VisionTree Decision Outcomes Scorecard

Nearly all the students believed this program had a very positive effect on their learning experience, and they also thought this program aided them in understanding the relationships between the factors involved in the current events and the possible outcomes. Loaded with history and social studies subjects, VisionTree Classroom Edition can be used for effective assessment of the student's knowledge and offers an interactive way to have students place themselves in that moment in history to learn the critical thinking process and subject material in a fun and engaging manner.