

Who Was Toussaint L'Ouverture?  
[A Lesson in Uncovering World History](#)

**Day One**

Step 1: Hook. Project images of Toussaint L'Ouverture (slide 1 in presentation), and tell class that we are not sure which most accurately represents the man. Opening questions:

- If he was so important, and he was, why might we not know what he looked like?
- How can we find out who Toussaint L'ouverture was?
- How should Toussaint L'ouverture be represented in history books?

Step 2: Establish context and importance with short presentation on Haitian Revolution

Step 3: Read documents. Group students into heterogenous (by reading ability) groups of four. Give each student a reading, with the Constitution as an extra reading for students to examine if they finish early. Documents are of uneven difficulty; assign them based on student reading level.

- Based on the source have students predict how their document will portray TL, they can write this on the document
- Students read and mark up the documents: underline key ideas, writing summary statements and questions in the margin, and circling ideas that need clarification
- Create a source card/sheet with:
  - Information about the source, who wrote it
  - Sourcing analysis: how the source's social position or document type may have influenced the content. Put another way, what about the author or the type of document may have influenced its conclusions.
  - The source's main ideas that has about TL
  - Supporting quotations or paraphrase for each idea
  - Based on this source: Who was TL?
- Collect these and quickly read before day two to check for any problems or missing features; alternately, scan student work while they are working; Some students will experience difficulty interpreting the documents.

**Day Two**

Step 4: Brief meetings in expert groups: Students with the same documents go over the information on their cards in groups of people with the same documents.

Step 5: Students move back into their home groups. Students share their interpretations of the sources, and discuss the sourcing analysis. Students record information in a chart that includes a sourcing analysis.

Step 5: Groups decide who Toussaint L'ouverture was and what the main idea will be for their profile.

Step 6: Construct the profile, modeled on profiles in text books, including:

- Main idea: who was Toussaint L'ouverture?
- Supporting evidence:
  - Quotations
  - Historical events
- Headline
- Visual with caption that includes rationale for picking that visual
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Students could be given individual responsibility for different pieces of this project. Roles:

- **Researcher/recorder:** records and analyzes group input; locates additional resources
- **Copy writer:** primarily responsible for the text of the profile
- **Editor:** oversees project; edits profile; writes title for profile
- **Graphic Designer:** lays out the page, places the visual, finalizes the caption wording

Extension: Students compose a recommendation regarding inclusion of the profile in their textbook. Individually, students will write one paragraph recommending to the publisher either that their profile of Toussaint Louverture appear in the text. If they recommend inclusion, they must indicate what they would leave out from the relevant section of the text.

Handouts, links, and information at: <http://www.ebeckman.org/toussaint-lesson>