



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

WORD CLOUDS

By Jim Bentley

Activity Description

Students will create “word clouds” or “wordles” using primary-source documents, the Internet, and the free website <http://www.wordle.net> in order to evaluate text in a unique way. Afterwards, students engage in rich discussion. Since words that appear most frequently are given greater prominence, this allows students to draw conclusions on themes present in a document or the tone the author(s) of a document express when writing. Also, words’ prominence can help students predict or reflect on the primary focus of any given document.

Suggested Grade Level

Elementary through high school

Estimated Time to Complete

Varies

Objectives

Students will

- read primary source documents;
- analyze vocabulary found within primary source documents;
- draw conclusions, evaluate a theme, and identify the tone of primary-source documents.

Materials Needed

- Computers with Internet access
- Primary-source document text
- Printer (if wordles are to be printed)

Activity Procedures

1. To get started, the teacher can take students online to access primary-source documents which are to be incorporated into instruction. Examples of documents might be: the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, amendments 11–27, the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, selected speeches, etc.
2. Once the text is found, students can copy the text from the primary source document and then paste it into the Wordle.net website. (See brief how-to; PowerPoint screen appears below.)

