



## The Eisenhower Farm: Leaving the Land Better Than He Found It! Lesson Unit Plan\*

The National Park Service *Teaching with Museum Collections* provides lesson plans for teachers to use National Park Service museum collections in student-centered educational activities. The collections tell the story of America: its peoples, cultures, varied habitats, significant events, and ideas that continue to inspire the world. *Teaching with Museum Collections* emphasizes the links between the 'real things,' the collections, and the sites where those collections were found, collected, or used. National Park Service collections include cultural objects, natural history specimens, archival documents and photographs. Lesson plans link to national education standards.

### A. Header

❑ **Lesson plan Title: The Eisenhower Farm: Leaving the land better than he found it!**

❑ **Developer[s] Name, Title, School Name and Location**

Jason Cross, Conewago Valley School District, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade American History  
Lyne Aurand, Gettysburg Area School District, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

❑ **Grade Level**

Intermediate, Middle School, or High School

❑ **Number of Sessions in the Lesson Plan, and Length of Sessions**

Four 45 minute lessons can occur over a four-day period.

### B. Overview of this Collection-Based Lesson Plan

Provide the following information:

❑ **Park name.** Eisenhower National Historic Site, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. [www.nps.gov/eise](http://www.nps.gov/eise)

❑ **Description**

The theme of this unit is the farm as a reflection of the life, interests, and values of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Listed below are the topics of the lesson plans the teacher will use to teach students about Dwight Eisenhower's value of soil conservation and the relationship of the Eisenhower Farm cattle business to his conservation efforts. Students will participate in many small group hands-on activities while exploring and understanding Eisenhower's recognition of the importance of soil conservation. Finally, students will create a classroom or school wide conservation project to conclude the unit using prior knowledge of soil conservation and the beef industry as well as content and concepts learned in this unit. The four lessons provide all sources and source locations needed to teach each lesson.



1. How to Read an Object: Soil Conservation
2. Cattle Operation
3. Character and Influence
4. Culminating Activity: School Wide or Class Conservation Drive

□ ***Essential Question.***

How is the farm in Gettysburg a reflection of the life, interest, and values of Dwight D. Eisenhower?

**C. Museum Collections Used in this Lesson Unit Plan**

Eisenhower National Historic Site in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. [www.nps.gov/eise](http://www.nps.gov/eise)  
[www.cr.nps.gov/museum](http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum) (National Park Service Museum site)

**D. National Educational Standards**

NSS-C. 5-12.5 Roles of a Citizen

- What are the responsibilities of a citizen?
- How can citizens take part in civic life?

NSS-C.5-12.5 OTHER NATIONS IN WORLD AFFAIRS

- How is the world organized politically?
- How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

**E. Student Learning Objectives**

Lesson 1: Students will be able to list ways that conservation has evolved from Eisenhower's era to today.

Lesson 2: Students will create a short presentation of the knowledge learned about one of the four aspects of Eisenhower's cattle operation.

Lesson 3: Students will label cities and states on a map of USA where Eisenhower won ribbons, awards, etc.  
Students will label countries represented by world leaders that visited Eisenhower farm using a world map.  
Students will locate a media news report regarding a current conservation program.



Lesson 4: Students will develop a conservation activity that utilizes information learned in the unit.

## F. Background and Historical Context

President and Mrs. Eisenhower owned only one home, their Gettysburg farm. Purchased in 1950, Eisenhower's goal was to improve the soil and to leave the land better than he found it. Consulting with experts Eisenhower implemented recommendations to improve the productivity of the soil. Some of the farm land was most suitable for pasture so he decided to raise registered Angus cattle. Other areas of the farm were suitable for growing crops so he grew hay, oats, barley and corn to feed the cattle. He also implemented the latest soil conservation techniques of contour plowing, strip cropping and crop rotation. Soil testing and fertilization with both manure and chemical fertilizers was implemented. Grass waterways were established at the edges of the field and in drainage areas to prevent erosion of top soil. Looking back on his farming efforts Eisenhower wrote, "This was a chance, I thought, to prove that careful husbandry could restore land to its original fertility....Although we haven't achieved the greatest success...there are enough lush fields to assure me that I shall leave the place better than I found it."

### Lesson 1: Introduction and Warm Up "How to Read an Object"

#### **National Standards:**

NSS-C. 5-12.5 Roles of a Citizen

- What are the responsibilities of a citizen?
- How can citizens take part in civic life?

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to list ways that conservation has evolved from Eisenhower's era to today.

#### **Essential Question Lesson # 1:**

How has conservation evolved from 1950s to today?

#### **Vocabulary:**

conservation – the preservation or restoration from loss, damage or neglect.

agriculture – the science, art and business of cultivating soil, producing crops, raising livestock and farming

core sampler – a collection of land used to determine the minerals and nutrients in soil

#### **Resources:**

Printed copy of picture core sampler EISE # 5767 and soil bag # 6765 from this website

soil samplers from local garden center or soil agency, possibly 6 for 6 groups of students

empty and cleaned insecticide container

water faucet purifier or Brita pitcher



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empty and cleaned fertilizer container  
empty bottled water  
picture of soil retaining wall  
picture of fertilizer spreader  
Miracle Grow fertilizer hose attachment  
Any other resources available to teacher  
Student copies of "How to Read an Object Chart from this website"  
Student copies of Web Exhibit Text "Farm and Cattle Operation"

### Activity 1:

The teacher will instruct the students they will be looking at a picture of core sampler EISE # 5767 and soil bag # 6765 from the Eisenhower National Historic Site as a source of learning and information. Explain that they will learn to look very closely at a picture of a park museum object to deduce historical, cultural and social information and to draw inferences about President Eisenhower. Ask questions that draw on observational skills and powers of deduction, inference, and creativity in this introductory lesson.

Do the following with the students:

- Post the essential unit question that will guide student interactive learning and research at the front of the classroom: How was the farm a reflection of the life, interest, and values of Dwight D. Eisenhower?
- Next post Essential Lesson # 1 Question: How has conservation evolved from 1950s to today?
- Students will guess the use of the tool in the picture, core sampler EISE # 5767, and soil bag # 6765. (Teacher will need to print out the image of the museum object.)
- Teacher will instruct students to compare a modern day soil sampler to the 1950 soil sampler by providing students with soil testing kits from local garden center, soil conservation agency, etc. Teacher will use an overhead of a Venn diagram to record the students observations during a 3-5 minute class discussion.

### Activity 2:

- Teacher will lead students in a brainstorming activity to list in small groups on a web graphic organizer or paper, tools and products used to conserve resources today such as pesticides, water purifier, fertilizer, bottling water, soil walls, etc.
- Next, teacher will divide the class into small groups so that each set/group can analyze a product or tool provided by the teacher using the '*How to Read an Object*' chart. (Reference Elementary Grades chart.) This introduces students to the inquiry method as they discuss history, material, size, date, function, maker/manufacturer, place of origin, function and use, cultural significance of the selected object. It also engages students and introduces them to the idea of learning through museum collections.



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- Have groups write up their responses on the *'How to Read an Object'* chart and compare their responses.
- Students will list the problems that the products or tools address in a short brainstorming session. i.e. water purifier – filters and produces clean water
- Students will record their preliminary answers to the Lesson # 1 question at the end of the "How to Read and Object" activity paper. i.e. Many sources of conservation are used today such a water purifier, etc. Then ask students what additional questions they want to pursue after handling objects, specimens and photographs.

**Activity 3:**

- Teacher provides student copies of Web Exhibit Text: Farm: Overview, Soil Conservation and Cattle Breeding, Cattle Fitting and Showing. Groups read "Soil Conservation."
- After reading above text, teacher instructs students to pretend they interviewed Eisenhower and will write a short news article summarizing the information learned from the text explaining why soil conservation was important to Eisenhower.
  - What hobby interested Eisenhower?
  - Where did he pursue the hobby?
  - When did he develop his interest?
  - How was soil conserved on Eisenhower farm?

Teacher collects writing at end of class or as an assignment which may be used as an assessment.

**Lesson 2: Improving Soil Conservation through Beef Business**

**Standards:**

NSS-C. 5-12.5 Roles of a Citizen

- What are the responsibilities of a citizen?
- How can citizens take part in civic life?

**Objectives:**

Students will create a short presentation of the knowledge learned about one of the four aspects of Eisenhower's cattle operation.

**Resources:**

Student copies of Web Exhibit Text: Farm: Overview, Soil Conservation and Cattle Breeding, Cattle Fitting and Showing.

Eisenhower Historic Site (See list of pictures in lesson plan)

Post group questions for each of 4 groups (Questions are listed in lesson plan)

Art supplies needed for presentation (poster board, drawing supplies, etc.)

Media supplies, if available for presentation (video camera, tape recorder, lap or desk computers)



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Resource books (textbook, encyclopedia, etc.)  
Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (reference for teacher)  
[Picture EISE # 7132 Sign \(Lineage\)](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5768 Nursing Bottle](#)  
[Picture EISE # 6870 Booklet 1958](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5635 Breeding Calendar](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5525 syringe](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5527 hypodermic needle](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5631 medicine](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5800 medicine](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5802 medicine](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5812 medicine](#)  
[Picture EISE # 5826 medicine](#)

***Essential Lesson 2 Question:*** Why did Eisenhower connect the improvement of the cattle breeding at his farm with soil conservation?

**Vocabulary:**

brucellosis – contagious disease causing the inability of female cattle to produce young  
Angus – black, stocky, small Scottish cattle made popular in the USA  
monitoring – to watch or observe carefully  
cattle fitting – the act of getting cattle ready for show  
sire – the male parent of animal  
offspring – the descendants of person, animal, or plant  
breeding – to produce or give birth to  
disease – illness  
purebred – being of one origin  
Ankonian (See Booklet EISE #6870) - name of Eisenhower's prize Angus bull used to sire his herd

**Activity 1:**

Teacher leads whole group of students to brainstorm for 3-5 minutes use of soil in a positive (productive) way. After brainstorming, teacher tells students Eisenhower decided to use some of the farm's soil to graze Angus beef cattle. Next, teacher instructs students to brainstorm in small groups for 3-5 minutes listing all products made from cattle to understand the impact of beef cattle on everyday lives. i.e. leather, hamburger, etc....

Small groups share and create a class list to be posted.

\* Optional: Assign students the task of bringing in an example of any of these products found in their home to help understand that raising beef cattle is a huge business that was considered in the 1950s as a positive way to conserve soil. i.e. food wrapper (not food products) , shoes ...



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\* Optional: Research differing views of the use of land for cattle farming and its effects on soil conservation today.

Teacher explains to students that Eisenhower, as well as being interested in soil conservation, was interested in the improvement of cattle breeds. (Adapt discussion to the level of the students)

Teacher will lead class in discussion of why the improvement of cattle might be useful and list student ideas on a web graphic organizer (or graphic organizer of teacher's choice) using an overhead. i.e. better food, more food, better immunity to disease, leaner meat, etc...

### **Activity 2:**

Teacher explains that Eisenhower's Angus cattle business required much attention and care. Students will learn about the Eisenhower cattle business in small group activities. The teacher divides the class into 4 groups that will become experts on the 4 different aspects of the Eisenhower farm cattle business. Each group will be given picture examples from Eisenhower National Historic Site website (reference picture numbers in lesson plans), short reading, access to encyclopedias and computers, and questions to guide student presentation. Presentations can be created using multiple intelligences. i.e. song, skit, picture book, power point, etc... Below are listed the 4 topics to study. Each group is assigned one topic to research and find answers to questions in class using Web Exhibit Text: Farm and Cattle Operation, encyclopedias, computers, etc.

#### Group 1: Testing and Monitoring Cattle: Milk to Beef

Pictures of objects: EISE 5525 syringe, 5527 hypodermic needle, 5631 medicine, 5800 medicine, 5802 medicine, 5812 medicine, 5826 medicine

Reading: Web Exhibit Text: Farm, Overview and Cattle Breeding

Questions:

Why test and monitor cattle?

List and describe items used to test and monitor cattle?

What cattle did Eisenhower first have on his farm?

What are some cattle diseases and effects?

How do cattle diseases affect humans?

#### Group 2 Angus and Breeding

Pictures of objects: EISE 6870 Booklet 1958, EISE 5635 Breeding Calendar

Reading: Web Exhibit Text: Farm: Cattle Breeding

Questions:



What is an Angus?  
Why was Angus chosen as a second type of cattle?  
What is a purebred?  
How does breeding improve beef?  
Why was Ankonian (picture # 3551) purchased?

### Group 3 Feeding and Care of Cattle

Picture of object: EISE 5768 Nursing Bottle

Reading: Web Exhibit Text: Farm, Cattle Breeding

#### Questions

What was the object (Picture of object: #EISE 5768) used for?  
Why were certain cattle separated from others?  
List the ways promising cattle were treated differently?

### Group 4 Cattle Fitting

Pictures of objects: EISE 7286 Brush, 7287 & 7289 Combs, 7307 Aerosol Can, 7308 Jar, 53 Cattle Vac, 5857 Hoof Trimmer

Reading: Web Exhibit Text: Cattle Fitting and Showing

#### Questions:

How are cows prepared for show (Picture #: EISE 7286 Brush, 7287 & 7289 Combs, 7307 Aerosol Can, 7308 Jar, 53 Cattle Vac, 5857 Hoof Trimmer) using these objects?  
Why are cattle shows important?

#### **Closing Activity:**

Assign students to determine what Picture of object # 7132 is using information learned from Lesson 2. Explain each word and number as to the significance to Eisenhower's cattle operation. Students list on paper: Line 1, Line 2, Line 3, Line 4, and Line 5 and for the assignment write a short description next to each Line.

Line 1 – Cattle Name and number  
Line 2 – birth date  
Line 3 – father  
Line 4 – mother  
Line 5 - owner

### Lesson 3: Character and Influences





**Standards:**

NSS-C.5-12.5 OTHER NATIONS IN WORLD AFFAIRS

- ❑ How is the world organized politically?
- ❑ How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

NSS-C.5-12.5 ROLES OF THE CITIZENS

- ❑ What are the responsibilities of citizens?
- ❑ How can citizens take part in civic life?

**Objectives:**

Students will label cities and states on a map of USA where Eisenhower won ribbons, awards, etc.  
Students will label countries represented by world leaders that visited Eisenhower farm using a world map.

Students will locate a media news report regarding a current conservation program.

**Resources:**

Pictures of objects:

[EISE # 4968 Plaque](#)

[EISE # 4755 Orangeburg, South Carolina](#)

[EISE # 4689 Harrisburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 5041 Bloomsburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 5054 Chicago, IL](#)

[EISE # 5079 Harrisburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 5095 Timonium, MD](#)

[EISE # 11753 Harrisburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 4975 Harrisburg, PA](#)

USA map to label cities and states

World map to label countries

Graphic organizer or chart (teacher choice)

**Essential Lesson 3 Question:** How can students “be like Ike” by practicing conservation today?

**Vocabulary:**

Chancellor – chief minister of a state, not highest authority

Premier – another name for Prime Minister

Prime Minister – chief minister appointed by a ruler or elected

conservationist – someone who preserves or restores land from loss, damage or neglect.

**Activity 1:**



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Go over lesson 2 closing activity sharing information about cattle breeding sign from previous day's lesson. See lesson 2 for key: Explanation of sign EISE 7132

**Activity 2:**

Vocabulary Review, i.e. matching, Jeopardy, Memory, etc...

**Activity 3:**

Geography of Victory

Resources: U.S. World map, Chart, see Appendix A Historic Furnishings Report

Eisenhower Farm 2, Instant Expert Guide, Table of Content: Eisenhower Farm and Home, Guests to the Eisenhower Farm

Vocabulary: Conservationist, Prime Minister

Part A

Teacher explains to students that through the cattle business Eisenhower was able to use his influence and inform other people of the importance of soil conservation. The cattle on the Eisenhower farm were show cattle and competed in shows throughout the United States. Students will work in groups to label cities and states where Eisenhower's cattle won ribbons and certificates.

(Use this activity to illustrate Eisenhower's influence on improving the quality of beef cattle)

Pictures:

[EISE # 4968 Plaque](#)

[EISE # 4755 Orangeburg, South Carolina](#)

[EISE # 4689 Harrisburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 5041 Bloomsburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 5054 Chicago, IL](#)

[EISE # 5079 Harrisburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 5095 Timonium, MD](#)

[EISE # 11753 Harrisburg, PA](#)

[EISE # 4975 Harrisburg, PA](#)

Once they have recorded the ribbons on the map, give the students Appendix A and have them map the rest of the cities that they have not already recorded.

Optional: Students research the number of cattle farm or ranches in their state today.

Part B

Students will work in groups to label the countries represented by the world leaders that visited Eisenhower's cattle operation to demonstrate Eisenhower's influence. (Optional) Chart: name, title, country, time period, major event. Teacher may go over correct answers in class or collect maps which may be used as an assessment.



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List of People to be included on the map:

Winston Churchill - United Kingdom  
President Charles DeGaulle - France  
Chancellor Konrad Adenauer - West Germany/Germany  
Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev - U.S.S.R./Russia  
Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru – India  
Prime Minister Harold Macmillan- United Kingdom  
President Adolfo Lopez Mateos – Mexico  
President Alberto Lleras Camargo - Colombia, South America  
President Ayub Khan – Pakistan  
Vice President Chen Cheng – Taiwan  
President Ferdinand Marcos - Philippines  
King Zaher and Queen Homeira– Afghanistan  
King Mahendra and Queen Ratna - Nepal

**Closing Activity:**

Teacher presents choke collar picture of object EISE # 11954 with 35 news correspondents, demonstrating another example of Eisenhower's influence.

Assign students to bring one example of their choice; newspaper/magazine article, short written summary of T.V. or radio report, or printed computer news article (I.e. from cnn.com) to share with class. The article or summary must be about a person or group that is working today to conserve or improve our resources. i.e. Midwest farmers and developing use of ethanol for cars, car manufacturers and development of hybrids, Bill Gates and the improvement of water worldwide

**Lesson 4 Wrap and Discussion:**

**Standards:**

NSS-C.5-12.5 ROLES OF THE CITIZENS

- ❑ What are the responsibilities of citizens?
- ❑ How can citizens take part in civic life?

**Objectives:**

Students will develop a conservation activity that utilizes information learned in the unit.

**Resources:**

Art supplies needed for presentation (poster board, drawing supplies, etc.)  
Media supplies, if available for presentation (video camera, tape recorder, lap or desk computers  
Resource books (textbook, encyclopedia, etc.)  
Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (reference for teacher)

**Essential Lesson 4 Question :** How can students “be like Ike” by practicing conservation today?



### Activity 1:

Share news assignment. See closing activity lesson # 3.

### Activity 2:

Develop a *classroom conservation project*. Possible topics would include; Have students, in groups developing one of the following:

- Educational Pamphlet
- Advertisement Campaigns
- Skits (radio news show)
- Commercial
- Conservation Plan (Recycling drive or day)
- Clean up day for classroom or school
- Present statistics to persuade audience (i.e. How many kids have recyclable items in their lunch? How many kids recycle at home?)
- Be creative!!!

Assessment: Use the following rubric to assess the conservation project.

### Extension and Enrichment Activities

Invite guest speakers: Local high school Future Farmers of America to share information about farming and showing beef cattle or other livestock.

Invite guest speakers: Local Agriculture Extension Office to present information on farming.

Invite guest speakers: Local Recycling Center to present information on recycling.

Invite guest speakers: Local 4 H leaders or students to speak about farming projects.

Visit local/state fairs

### N. Site Visit

The site visit includes a visit to the:

- Eisenhower National Historic Site or a similar site, such as a local county museum or historical society.
- Virtual museum exhibit.
- Pre-visit:*  
Before the visit, have students visit the institution's website for an overview or provide brochures and other written/visual materials about the site. Have each student come up with 2-3 questions to guide the visit. Work with park interpretive and museum staff to arrange the visit with challenging activities.
- Site visit:*



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At the site, have students select at least two objects on exhibit to analyze. Provide “*How to Read an Object*” sheets. It also includes an object sketch sheet (white space to make a detailed sketch of the objects). For younger students, use the ‘*How to Read an Object*’ chart for elementary school students together with a “scavenger hunt” object list to encourage close observation skills.



## Appendix A:

### Show Ribbons Awarded to Eisenhower Farms

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A note about show ribbons is warranted. The 1969 inventory lists 415 show ribbons—229 in a box in the tack room, 68 in a file cabinet in the office, and 118 in the display cases in the entrance hall. Mamie Eisenhower's 1973 Deed of Gift mentions that there are 503 show ribbons. The Eisenhower NHS artifact cards list 386 ribbons (won during the years 1958 to 1966 and cataloged EISE 4600–5000) as follows:

Ribbons	Event
25	Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania Fair & Pennsylvania State Aberdeen-Angus Show
18	Eastern Angus Futurity Show, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
46	Eastern National Livestock Show, Timonium, Maryland
19	Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Massachusetts
8	Great Atlantic Angus Bull Show and Sale, New Market, Virginia
22	International Livestock Exposition, Union Stock Yards, Chicago, Illinois
84	Maryland State Fair, Timonium, Maryland
27	Pennsylvania Livestock Exposition, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
9	Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
3	Great Bedford Fair, Pennsylvania
3	The Perth of America & State Fair of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia
2	Black Magic Show, Orangeburg, South Carolina
2	Great Atlantic Angus Show and Sale, Roanoke, Virginia
1	Black Magic Angus Show and Sale, Nashville, Tennessee
15	Display Case # 1 - Maryland State Fair, International Expo, Chicago, Illinois, Great Atlantic Show, Virginia, Eastern Show, Pennsylvania, Eastern States Expo, Massachusetts
27	Display Case # 2 - Bloomsburg Fair, Pennsylvania
45	Display Case # 3 - Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
30	Display Case # 4 - Pennsylvania Livestock Exposition, Harrisburg

The "Carcass Steer" category judged a steer "on the hoof" and then "on the rail" after it had been slaughtered. Eisenhower Farms had one of the first steers in the country to be "Grand Champion On-Foot" and then "on the rail." Steers rarely placed first in both categories.