**THE CLASSROOM SOAPBOX**

*What is a Soapbox and why is it important in history?*

A soapbox is a raised platform used to make an unofficial speech, usually about a political issue. It originates from the days when public speakers would elevate themselves by standing on a wooden crate originally used for shipment of soap or other dry goods. Hyde Park in London is best known for its Soapbox Speakers who have assembled at Speakers’ Corner since 1872 to discuss religion, politics, and other important topics. Today, many people use online blogs to publish their opinions regarding historical issues. This process is important because the exchange of ideas is one of the most effective ways to bring about change in our world.

*The Soapbox in Room 177*

We will use our soapbox to spark a classroom conversation about how historical issues are relevant to our own lives. We will participate in the process of public speaking to discuss past and current issues that are important to us. In order to use the Soapbox, this is what you have to do:

- Find something about the history we are learning that you think is interesting, surprising, and/or confusing. You can use the internet, classroom books, your textbook, etc.
- Sign-up on the “Soapbox Sign-up List” at least one day in advance to share your findings with the class
- Check-in with me to get permission for the content you will be sharing. Let me know if you will be sharing something on the computer.
- Bring your findings to class on the day you signed up for. Stand on the soapbox and using no more than 5 minutes you must:
  1. Summarize what you found and why you chose to share it
  2. Ask your classmates a question. For example, you could ask the class, “Do you think this is fair?” “Why do you think this happened?”
  3. Facilitate class discussion by calling on classmates who raise their hand to respond to your question.
- You will receive 10 points extra credit to be used on either a test or project.
- You can only sign-up to use the soapbox once a month