

TEACHING MANUAL

EU PIONEERS: MEET THE FOUNDERS OF THE UNION

I. Introduction – EU Pioneers: Meet the Founders of the Union

This module invites students to discover reimagined social media accounts of the women and men who stood at the beginnings of European integration. Students will explore the early days of European integration through the personal lens of its founders, and through interactive exercises, they will also understand why these stories are relevant for Europe today and for each student personally. To learn how to get started on the learning platform, please refer to the “Teacher Manual: Getting Started” at the beginning of the module.

II. Objectives of this Module

In this module, students will:

- Understand the historical context the EU pioneers lived in and recall relevant key events of their lives.
- Identify pivotal events in the EU pioneers’ lives that shaped their political action.
- Collect relevant personal values, skills and qualities of the EU pioneers.
- Understand relationships and connections between the EU pioneers.
- Create personal and community connections by relating the pioneers' experiences to students' own lives.
- Connect the EU pioneers to contemporary European and global issues.
- Develop a deeper understanding of essential leadership qualities through the study of the EU pioneers.

III. Structure & Duration of the Module

This module is designed to meet diverse needs. You can use it to structure a series of lessons around it, to dedicate one single lesson to it, or just use some parts to complement your own materials. It can support history, civic education, geography teachers but also language teachers as the entire content (text & audio-visual materials) is available in 24 languages with subtitles. You can also use this module as homework or to prepare or follow up a visit to the House of European History.

The **recommended learning path** consists of several steps where students:

1. Reflect on leadership qualities
2. Discover the reimagined social media profiles of one or more EU pioneers
3. Reflect on their relevance to the world, students’ communities and themselves
4. Create their own social media post based on their reflections
5. Identify new leadership qualities based on the lives of the EU pioneers

The **duration** of the module depends on the level of detail you wish to cover, but we recommend allocating at least one 50-minute lesson for steps 1–3, and one 50-minute lesson to follow up on steps 4–5 (see recommended learning path below). Based on teachers’ feedback who tested the module in their classrooms, you might find this overview helpful:

Time spent	% of teachers	Additional information:
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More than 90 minutes	25%	Two lessons (90+ minutes) for full completion & in-depth discussions.
60–90 minutes	24%	Sufficient for more thorough engagement and explanations.
45–60 minutes	15%	One lesson with brief discussions.
30–45 minutes	17%	Quick session, covering selected content but not in full.

IV. What is the Visible Thinking Method and how to Implement it?

The [Visible Thinking Method](#) is a student-oriented approach that centres on their questions. It externalises the thought processes, enabling students to better grasp them. Through a simple set of questions, students develop critical thinking skills that deepen their understanding. This approach not only conveys historical knowledge, but also helps learners understand its relevance today.

Since the topics discussed can be personal, consider whether the classroom atmosphere feels safe and whether you can ensure that learners will treat each other respectfully. Discuss this point with the class if you think it might be necessary.

The method used in this module: The Three Whys*

Purpose:

This routine helps students understand the significance of the EU pioneers at global, local, and personal levels through a set of three questions:

1. Why might this person matter to me?
2. Why might this person matter to the people around me?
3. Why might this person matter to the world?

Application:

In this module, we use the social media posts of the EU pioneers to anchor students' thinking. We recommend using this routine to explore the lives of the EU pioneers, helping students become aware their far-reaching impact and consequences at the local and European levels. Additionally, the routine is designed to foster a personal connection to the EU pioneers, who might initially seem remote.

Launch Tips:

Ensure that students clearly understand the essential points of the analysis using examples:

- **Why might this pioneer matter to me?** Invite students to think about connections between themselves and the pioneer, including their values, challenges, achievements, origins, and upbringing.
- **Why might this pioneer matter to the people around me?** Encourage students to expand their thinking by discovering connections between the pioneer and e.g. their classroom, friends, sports teams, families, or even their city or country.
- **Why might this pioneer matter to the world?** In the final step, invite students to consider why the pioneer is relevant on a European or global level. How did the pioneer contribute to European integration, better understanding among countries, or peace?

For example, you might introduce the routine by asking, "Why might understanding Simone Veil's life as a woman in politics matter to the people around you?" instead of, "Why might her Instagram profile matter?" Invite students to work on one step at a time. If they attempt to work on all three questions simultaneously, nuances and distinctions between the personal, local, and

global perspectives may be lost. If time permits, compare and group students' thoughts to identify shared motivations and rationales.

Example:

Why might Simone Veil matter to me?

Simone Veil matters to me because my grandmother is also a Holocaust survivor and I found her stories of that time extremely touching. It is intriguing to see she shares this experience with Simone Veil as an early EU leader.

Why might Simone Veil matter to the people around me?

I think it is important to give visibility to Simone Veil and know about her life because there is a lot of populist talk in my local football team about women in politics and the current role of Jews. Knowing about examples like Simone Veil can counter that.

Why might Simone Veil matter to the world?

Although we live in the 21st century, women are still underrepresented in politics and do not have the same chances as men when it comes to positions of power. Simone Veil is a stunning example of what is possible for a woman, especially back in the days of the 1970s.

** The 3 Whys thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.*

V. The Recommended Learning Path Step by Step

Students will need instructions for each step and guidance on how much time to spend considering the learners' level and the time available.

Lesson 1 (~50min)

1. Three Qualities of a Leader [10min]

Leadership is a central concept throughout the module. Students begin by writing down three qualities to reflect impartially on leadership (e.g. "determination", "empathy", "decision-making"). This activity serves as a "warm-up". Keep this segment brief, to allow more time for discussion at the end of the module. You can quickly collect and group some answers at this stage or review them at the module's conclusion.

2. Exploring EU Pioneers' Profiles [20min]

You can assign one or more pioneers to discover for each student or group of students to explore or let them allow them to freely choose one or more EU pioneers' social media profiles. The social media posts are arranged chronologically and highlight important milestones in the pioneers' lives. Each visual is paired with a two-part text. Note for language teachers: The spoken text in the videos often, but not always, matches the first part of the written text. This feature can be helpful if students do not have access to audio devices to play the videos with sound. At the end of some posts, students find comments from other EU pioneers, linking the different profiles. We recommend reviewing all posts of a profile, but at least six should be explored before moving to the next activity.

3. Answering the Three Whys [15min]

After exploring a leader, students answer the Three Why questions. Once students submit their answers, teachers can view them on the platform. This is a good moment to invite students to present their answers. Are the answers

similar or different? Encourage students to elaborate and exchange ideas. Alternatively, this can be assigned as homework, providing an excellent way to revisit the topic in a follow-up lesson.

Lesson 2 (~40min)

4. Creating a Social Media Post [30min]

To apply their analyses, students are invited to create a social media post either in small groups or individually. They can create or upload audiovisual material and use emojis, hashtags, etc. You are free to decide what kind of post your students should create. Here are a few examples:

- **An "as if"-post:** Students assume the role of an EU leader and create a post about a contemporary topic (e.g. Louise Weiss on the role of journalism; Jean Monnet on the role of economics in today's world).
 - **A personal post by students based on the Three Whys:** Students reflect on their answers from the previous activity and create a post illustrating their reasoning (e.g., why value-driven politics are important today and why Alcide de Gasperi might be a role model).
- Once the posts are submitted, you can invite some students or groups to present their posts to the rest of the class.

5. Identifying New Leadership Qualities [10min]

Conclude the module by identifying three new, additional, or complementary leadership qualities based on what students have learned. Teachers can view students' submissions on the platform. Invite students to present their new qualities, elaborate on whether their perception of leadership has changed, and discuss the role the lives of the EU pioneers played in this process.

VI. Further Links and Materials**

About the Visible Thinking Method

- [Find out more](#) about the Visible Thinking Method developed by Harvard University's "Project Zero" (EN).

Materials about the EU Pioneers

- Konrad Adenauer
 - [Konrad Adenauer House](#) (DE, EN, FR)
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
 - [Konrad Adenauer Foundation](#) (DE & EN)
- Joseph Bech
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
- Johan Beyen
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
- Alcide de Gasperi
 - [Alcide De Gasperi House](#)
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
- Jean Monnet
 - [Jean Monnet House](#)
 - [Jean Monnet Institute](#) (FR & EN)
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
- Robert Schuman
 - [Robert Schuman House](#)
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
 - [Robert Schuman Foundation](#) (EN, DE, FR, ES, PL, UA)



- [Audiobook about the EU pioneers](#)

House of European History & European Parliament

- Paul-Henri Spaak
 - [The Founding Fathers of the European Union](#)
- Simone Veil
 - [Simone Veil: Holocaust survivor and first female President of the European Parliament](#)
 - [Simone Veil: Survivor, activist, feminist, politician](#) (EN, FR)
- Louise Weiss
 - [Musée de Saverne \(Louise Weiss collection\)](#) (FR)
 - [Louise Weiss: lifelong champion of European values and women's rights](#)
 - [Louise Weiss: a committed European](#)
- [House of European History Website](#)
- [Euroscola](#): Become a member of the European Parliament for a day! The Euroscola programme in Strasbourg brings together students from all over Europe for a hands-on experience of European parliamentary democracy.
- [European Parliament Ambassador Schools](#) (Learning materials & European Community)
- [Parlamentarium in Brussels](#)
- [Parlamentarium in Strasbourg](#)
- Visit the Hemicycle of the European Parliament: [Brussels](#) & [Strasbourg](#)
- European Parliament Liaison Office [Dublin](#) & [London](#)
- To connect with like-minded people and engage in European democracy <https://together.eu/>

** All materials are available in the 24 official EU languages, unless indicated otherwise.

In case of any questions regarding the content or methodology of the Digital Toolbox, please email us: historia-learning@europarl.europa.eu