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UNIT TITLE: WORLD WAR 2

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SETTING: CLASS

AUDIENCE: GRADE 8 STUDENTS

DURATION OF UNIT: +/- 6 WEEKS

SUMMARY: THIS UNIT, PART OF THE COURSE ON MODERN WORLD HISTORY, AIMS TO BRING STUDENTS TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS: WHO WAS TO BLAME FOR THE HOLOCAUST? HOW CAN STUDYING THE CAUSES, PROGRESS, AND EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR 2 HELP US TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF MODERN CONFLICT? HOW CAN A POLITICAL OR SOCIAL GROUP BECOME A DANGER TO DEMOCRACY? ARE NUCLEAR WEAPONS NECESSARY? A PARALLEL OBJECTIVE LIES IN ENSURING STUDENTS HAVE THE FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE TO PERFORM WELL ON STANDARDIZED TESTS RELATED TO THIS PERIOD IN WORLD HISTORY.

GENERATIVE TOPIC:

What is your Generative Topic? How can we justify war?

CRITERIA for a GENERATIVE TOPIC [GT]:

1. **Centrality:** (In which discipline do you see your topic as central, and why do you believe this topic of central importance to your discipline?)

An understanding of how wars have been justified is central to the discipline of history. Wars are important historical events that cause broad changes in populations and the political geography of entire regions. It is important for students to realize that all stakeholders in a conflict can have logical justification for war, and that those justifications can conflict. How can we differentiate just causes for war from causes driven by avarice, vanity and other human vices? How can nations claim the moral high-ground in a war? Can war even be considered moral? Is the loss of human life as a result of armed conflict ever justifiable? These issues are central because we still live in a world at war.

2. **Engagement:** Why will it interest you and your intended audience (learners)--or have the potential to become interesting? How might you make it interesting to your intended audience?

Teaching about war as a mere sequence of battles leading to an outcome can be insufferably drab and awful for teachers and learners alike. More interesting is the challenge of detaching oneself from the subjectivity of patriotism--"my country right or wrong"--in order to evaluate in a more objective way the merits of waging war. In weighing reasons for war students will engage in difficult ethical decision-making and realize that such decisions are not only a matter for the past, but for the present as well.

3. **Accessibility:** What are 2-3 specific examples of resources related to the topic that are available?

- 1) The film "Why We Fight" by director Eugene Jarecki explores financial motives for war.
- 2) An earlier series of films entitled "Why We Fight" was directed by Frank Capra and used by the war department to convince Americans they had just cause to go to war.
- 3) "The War Prayer" by Mark Twain--unpublished before his death--is an interesting indictment of war, especially in regard to religious justifications.

4. **Connections:** How does the topic relate to other topics in the discipline, to other disciplines, and beyond the disciplines to life in the world at large?

The study of history is laden with the study of wars. Understanding the calculus of war is essential, and realizing that wars are carried on as much by ideas as by weapons is an important understanding. Further, students can expand on what they come to know in this unit by applying it to any situation in which the justification of belief is important.

5. **Challenges:** Describe what may be potential "troublesome knowledge"-- challenges for your intended audience in understanding this topic and how you might design the project/unit to address likely challenges.

The biggest hurdle I foresee is in students applying various points of view to topics that most already have a firm opinion about. For some it may seem unpatriotic to question their government or its established take on a historical conflict. It is through just such questioning, however, that students can come to take an active role in democracy--the unit must be designed to stress this idea.

YOUR SUMMARY REFLECTION:

Any unit on World War 2 must take into account the factual knowledge surrounding key battles and decisions by leaders on both sides. Without some sort of connective tissue, however, the discussion of such events can quickly devolve into mere memorization and recitation by rote. The justifications employed by the stakeholders in WW2 changed over time, and the war unfolded as much through ideas and propaganda as through armed conflict. Many of the key events of the war--its causes, the holocaust, Japanese internment, etc.--were ideologically driven. When students engage in the dissection of the ideology behind these actions they take an active role in the interpretation of events in the past and present. For this reason, I believe the topic provides a generative entrée to the study of war.

UNIT/PROJECT-LEVEL UNDERSTANDING GOALS [UGs]—(Write three or four goals specific to your particular unit/project. Your unit/project Understanding Goals will eventually lead you to design three to five... Performances of Understanding aimed to help learners reach your Understanding Goals).

<p>UG 1 Question: Who was to blame for the Holocaust? Statement: Students will understand how the Holocaust unfolded, the impact of the Holocaust on those involved, and the importance of preventing genocide in the future.</p>	<p>UG 2 Question: How can studying the causes, progress, and effects of World War 2 help us to understand the nature of modern conflict? Statement: Students will understand how World War 2 was waged through propaganda to advance ideological goals, how the war lifted nations out of economic depression, and how it set the stage for the Cold War.</p>	<p>UG 3 Question: How can a political or social group become a danger to democracy? Statement: Students will understand the rise of Nazism, and how the rise of extremist organizations is linked to social and economic conditions.</p>	<p>UG 4 Question: Are nuclear weapons necessary? Statement: Students will understand the circumstances surrounding the first use of nuclear weapons, the political, social, and human effects the use of those weapons had, and the importance of diplomacy in a nuclear world.</p>
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PERFORMANCES OF UNDERSTANDING [PoU]..... AND..... ONGOING ASSESSMENTS

<p><u>UNDERSTANDING GOALS</u></p>	<p><u>PERFORMANCES OF UNDERSTANDING</u></p>	<p><u>ONGOING ASSESSMENTS</u></p>
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1,2,3,4

Introductory: In groups, students are given one stack of 15 iconic WW2 images and another stack of accompanying descriptions/captions. First, students try to match each image to the correct description. Second, students try to arrange the images in chronological order. Third, students try to explain the content of the images. Finally, students work to arrange the images into categories based on whether they have primarily political, economic, social, cultural, religious or military significance. At the end of class, the teacher will pass out a handout showing the correct placement of the cards (to be used in the guided activity below). **Image cards revisited: The image cards can be used as a warm-up activity each week. Have the students make human time-lines; each is given a card and works with the other students to decide on their place in the human time-line. When the time-line is formed, students speak for 30 seconds each without stopping about the event on the card they have. Vary the card distribution each week.**

Image cards: Hitler in front of the Eiffel Tower; USS Arizona sinking at Pearl Harbor; Stalin, Churchill, and FDR at Yalta; Raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima; Soviet soldiers hoisting the red flag over the Reichstag; Chamberlain and Hitler shaking hands in Munich; Battle of Britain air observer with St. Paul's Cathedral in background; Stalin shaking hands with Ribbentrop; Deportation of Hungarian Jews; Soviet statue of children playing from Stalingrad; Fat Man mushroom cloud; Rommel in the desert; Hitler awarding the Iron Cross to boys; Allies evacuating from Dunkirk; German soldiers cross Prague's Charles Bridge during the occupation of Czechoslovakia.



Who? Teacher, peers

Where? The teacher observes the progress made by each group, but does not reveal too much until the end of the lesson.

How? Informally

What? Prior knowledge regarding important themes we will approach in the unit.

High level-work criteria as an introductory assessment: 1) Students stay on task, contribute to their group, ask questions, and follow instructions.

High level-work criteria as a recurring assessment throughout the unit--by the end of the unit, TSW: 1) Be able to speak meaningfully about the events on each of the 15 image cards and their significance, 2) Be able to arrange the image cards into a time-line with an accuracy of at least 85%, 3) Be able to categorize the cards as having political, economic, social, cultural, religious, or military significance with an accuracy of 100%.

1,3	<p>Introductory: With a partner, students discuss what is worth fighting for, what is worth dying for, and whether they have ever blamed someone for something they themselves were responsible for. Afterwards, partners share their ideas during a class discussion while the teacher adds them to an idea web on the white board.</p>	<p>Who? Teacher Where? Teacher listens to the ongoing student conversations and the content of the class discussion. How? Informally What? As an introduction to the GT, the teacher seeks to get a sense of student ideas concerning the notions of scapegoating and a "just war."</p> <p>High level-work criteria--TSW: stay on task, share meaningful experiences with their partner, ask clarifying questions of their partner, take sufficient written notes to enable participation in the class discussion, participate in the class discussion, copy the class idea web into their notebooks, be able to draw comparisons and contrasts between what they feel is worth fighting/dying for and what the belligerents in WW2 felt was worth fighting/dying for, be able to explain the meaning of scapegoating and understand how Hitler scapegoated Jews.</p>
2,3	<p>Guided: To investigate the differences between totalitarianism and a democratic system, students work in small groups to devise their own fictional totalitarian states. Students invent a name for the state, identify its location, make up a name for the dictator, create a propaganda specimen for the nation, and list the effects of totalitarianism on individual lives. Each group writes a detailed description of the state and includes how the leader or regime went about transforming the country into a totalitarian state. In presenting their states to the</p>	<p>Who? Teacher, Peer Where? At group work in progress, the written report, and the presentation to the class. How? Informally (group work), Formally (written work and presentation). What? The understanding that totalitarian states are founded on 7 essential principles: ideology, state</p>

	<p>class, students may choose from the following options: a poster, a game, a short story, a PowerPoint, a song, a dramatic performance, or another mode of their choosing if approved by the teacher.</p>	<p>control of individuals, indoctrination, enforcement, state control of society, one-party rule, and a cult of personality surrounding the leader.</p> <p>High level-work criteria--TSW understand and demonstrate through their presentations that: 1) Ideology is used to provide a social glue for the population and justify acts that might otherwise be seen as unjustifiable (e.g., the Holocaust), 2) Totalitarian states maintain power by compelling individuals to behave in proscribed ways and monitoring their compliance, 3) Indoctrination, especially of the youth, is employed by totalitarian states to ensure future loyalty and stability (e.g., the Hitler Jugend), 4) Totalitarian states use force and surveillance to keep people in line (e.g., the Gestapo), 5) State control of society at all levels is necessary to prevent uprisings in a totalitarian system, 6) Totalitarian states do not allow opposition parties in government (e.g., the Nazis), 7) The leader of totalitarian states create a persona that is larger than life, near-godlike, and paternal (e.g., Stalin, Mao, Hitler).</p>
1,2,3,4	<p>Guided: In groups, students construct a WW2 time-line. They must use the 15 events from the introductory activity above, and (after conducting group library research) supplement it with an additional 15 events that the group determines are especially significant. The format students choose to employ must divide events into categories, based on whether they had primarily political, economic, social, cultural, religious or military significance. Students must include at least two events in each category and use original illustrations for each event. Students will be given significant latitude regarding the final form of the time-line (poster, PowerPoint, etc.) as long as it addresses the criteria on the rubric. Rubric categories are listed under ongoing assessments; specific criteria for success within each category will be developed in consultation with the students.</p>	<p>Who? Teacher, peer and self-assessments Where? At the supplementary events chosen by each group and the final product How? Formally, guided by a rubric What? The ability to recognize, categorize, and rank events in terms of their importance and future implications; understanding of key WW2 events; criteria to be provided on a rubric.</p> <p>High level-work criteria--TSW: 1) Be able to rank events of WW2 in order of importance, and justify their selection of events on the time-line through cogent argument, 2) Be able to classify events of WW2 into groups of political, economic, social, cultural, religious or military significance, 3) Be able to order their chosen events chronologically with an accuracy of at least 85%, 4) Explain why the final form of their time-line complements its function, 5) Be able to summarize the nature and significance of 85% of the events on their time-line, 6) Demonstrate an attempt at creativity in the production of their time-line.</p>

1,3	Guided: Students will go on a guided field-trip to the Holocaust Museum in Vilnius to read first-hand accounts of people affected by the holocaust in Lithuania. Later in the day, we will travel to the site of Paneriai where 1000's were executed by the Nazis. Students will write a reflective journal entry describing the experience.	<p>Who? Teacher Where? At the journal entry How? Informally What? The student is able to understand the ethical magnitude of genocide and begin to comprehend its true horror.</p> <p>High level-work criteria--TSW understand and demonstrate in their journal entry that: 1) No one has ever accepted blame for the Holocaust, 2) Totalitarianism enabled the Holocaust, 3) Thousands of Jews were executed at Paneriai for ideological reasons, 4) The items in the Holocaust Museum belonged to real human beings that were brutally and systematically murdered.</p>
1,2,3,4	Culminating: Students film and edit a documentary on WW2 with the question forms of the understanding goals as sections.	<p>Who? Teacher, Peer, Self Where? At the resulting film How? Formally What? The ability of students to engage critically with the content of the understanding goals and express their understanding in a creative medium. The statement form of the goals will be used in crafting the rubric for this project.</p> <p>High level-work criteria--TSW understand and demonstrate through their film that: 1) The Holocaust unfolded slowly, beginning with certain restrictions before evolving ultimately into violence and the death camps, 2) The Holocaust was an unspeakable and inhuman horror, especially for its victims, 3) Events such as the Holocaust diminish all humanity, 4) World War 2 was waged through propaganda to advance ideological goals, 5) The war ended the Great Depression, 6) The divisions among the Allies at the end of WW2 created an environment of distrust that led to the Cold War, 7) The rise of the Nazi Party was linked to the failure of the German economy, 8) The Nazis used the German humiliation post-Versailles, hyper-inflation, and the scapegoating of Jews to create a popular movement that evolved into a totalitarian state, 9) The USA dropped atomic bombs on Japan to bring the war to a swift close, 10) Nuclear weapons result</p>

		in unequal devastation and carnage, and make lands uninhabitable, 11) Why nuclear bombs should never be used again, and why the United Nations was founded to prevent further war in the nuclear age.
1,2,3,4	Culminating: Take-home essay exam. Students are given one week to complete an extensive series of essays documenting their understanding of each of the unit goals.	<p>Who? Teacher, Self Where? At the written essays How? Formally What? The ability of students to cogently engage the questions posed in the understanding goals. The level of understanding to be evaluated using a rubric.</p> <p>High level-work criteria--TSW: 1) Demonstrate cogently in written form their understanding of the high-level criteria outlined in the previous ongoing assessment, 2) Use expository writing efficiently and correctly, 3) Use appropriate references and provide a bibliography.</p>