

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT – 2009-2012

Lesson Title - "What would you do?" from Nichole Veach

Grade - 11th grades

Length of class period – 45 Minutes (2 classes are needed to complete)

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

Had you been in Harry Truman shoes would you have made the decision to drop the Atomic Bomb?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

1. Students will be able to analyze primary sources from the 1940's
2. Students will be able to understand the context of the documents
3. Students will continue to develop historical understanding through the use of empathy

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

1. Newspaper articles
2. Diary entries
3. Firsthand accounts of the events
4. PowerPoint
5. Letter from Truman
6. Scientific Reports
7. Accounts of the aftermath

*All of these materials can be found at

http://chnm.gmu.edu/loudountah/activities/Extended_Truman_PSA.pdf :

Classroom Version of Primary Source Activity – Truman. (n.d.). Retrieved November 27, 2008,

This site also has a variation of the assignment, it is also the link the primary source documents that are used in the activity that students will be participating in, in class.

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

Bellwork: How do you go about making important decisions in your own life?

First 25 minutes of class: The war in the Pacific (see attached PowerPoint and discussion points)

Next 10 minutes: Discuss what the student already know about the dropping of the Atomic Bomb

- * Discuss the Manhattan Project
- * "Fat Man and Little Boy"

* Be sure to make clear that the decision to drop the bomb was not that of FDR but the recently appointed President Truman

Next 5 minutes: Students will be given the materials in packet form. (See attached)

* Each packet will contain:

1. Copy of each document
2. A highlighter (if deemed necessary)
3. One work sheet that student's notes are to be based on
4. An assignment sheet

* review the packet with students:

1. This would be when a model would be useful so that students are aware of what is expected when they are reading

Final 5 minutes: Questions from students and recollect the packets (if you feel it is necessary)

Day 2:

First 40 minutes of class: Students will be reading the documents and taking notes as they read.

* When they students have finished they can begin to write their persuasive essay about their decision to drop the Atomic Bomb

* remind students to use examples from the text to support their arguments

* remind students about proper citation of material.

Final 5 minutes of class: Allow student to gather all materials

* Inform students that what they have not finished in class is homework.

* Students will be given 3 days to complete their essay.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

1. The notes that the students are taking while reading
2. The essays that the students produce. (See attached rubric)

Connecticut Grade Level Expectations-

~formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources;

~describe, explain and analyze political, economic and social consequences that came about as the resolution of a conflict;

~describe and analyze, using historical data and understandings, the options which are available to parties involved in contemporary conflicts or decision making;

The War in the Pacific

PowerPoint topics for discussion during the class.

Slide 3

- What event caused the United States to declare war on Japan and eventually Germany and Italy?
- The territories that Japan took control of were Philippines, Hong Kong, Wake Island, British Malaya and Thailand. This stopped the trade routes between China and Burma and crushed the British Military.
- China officially joined WWII on the sides of allies on December 9, 1941
- The people of the places that they took over were subjects to the British and France governments so few of the islands inhabitants were willing to fight back.

Slide 4

- Within that time the United States was able to stop Japan's empirical expansion.
- May 8 and 9 the United States and Japan engaged in an aerial fight in which the US stopped a Japanese threat to Australia.
- Battle of Midway: thanks to intelligence officers that were able to break the Japanese code, knew where the Japanese were planning to go and where to attack. The US sank four vital aircraft carriers, and hundreds of planes. With this one attack the US ensured the safety of Hawaii and the West Coast.
- Island Hopping → moving from Island to Island and engaging the enemy when they were encountered.
- June 1944 ~ another decisive naval battle between the US and Japan where Japan lost most of its naval force.
- Following battles Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle in history and led to the US victory in the Philippines.

Slide 5

- The battle at Iwo Jima ~ US Marines took control of the Island which became a critical base for the United States.
- In total approximately 27,000 people died in Iwo Jima and in the Philippines in total more than 100,000 civilians lost their lives and left the country devastated

Slide 8

- At the bombing of Hiroshima 80,000 people were killed and 80,000 were wounded
- Nagasaki 40,000 people were killed and 40,000 wounded
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki were 2 of four potential targets: Kure and Niigata were also targets because they were strong military holdings in Japan.
- Kure was meant to be the second target but due to weather it was spared an atomic attack.
- After the bomb was dropped many US citizens agreed with the dropping, many wished that the war had not ended so that more bombs could have been dropped.
- Why do you think that the citizens of the US had such an opinion?

Name: _____

The dropping of the Atomic Bomb

You and your partner have in front of you several primary source documents from various months in 1945. These documents all have to do with President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. You and your partner need to analyze the primary sources. Please answer the following questions as you are reading.

1. What surprised you?
2. How does each document relate back to the decision to drop the atomic bomb?

There will a discussion about the documents so be prepared to answer questions and to possibly propose questions to your classmates.

Part II:

Now that you have read all of the documents it is time for you to decide.

Would you have made the same decision as President Truman in regards to the Atomic Bomb?

Your response is to be at least five paragraphs long persuading your reader to make the same decision you made.

Things to remember:

1. State your thesis
2. Use materials from the documents to support your thesis
3. CITE your sources!!!!

What Would You do Rubric

	2506429	Excellent :D	20	Excellent	25064 :D 15 pts
Organization 2506433 The essay contain	The essay contains a logically developed introduction, body, and conclusion. All paragraphs have smooth and effective transitions.				The es Most p 25064
Content 2506437 Essay effectively	Essay effectively argues a position and contains effective, detailed and relevant arguments. Both positions are acknowledged.				Essay argum 25064
Thesis 2506441 Essay provides a	Essay provides a meaningful thesis, which clearly states the writer's opinion and position on the topic to be discussed.				Essay and pc
Support 2506445 Body paragraphs	Body paragraphs logically and effectively support the thesis and main arguments with convincing detail and examples.				Body] with s]
Grammar ✗ Essay contains f	Essay contains few, errors.		✗	✗	Essay