

Title: Why Am I Here?...Truman's Decision To Drop The Atomic Bomb

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Course: US History

Time Frame: 2-3 days

Subjects:

Atomic Bomb, World War II

Grade Levels:

10, 11, 12

Classroom/Homework Activity to be performed:

This lesson will allow students to reflect in relation to how events in history have a direct impact on their existence. I will be the subject of exploration. (My dad was a Marine during WWII. He was island hopping toward a possible Japanese invasion. Had there been an invasion...would I be here today???) Through cooperative learning and interaction...students will examine how our past can have a real impact on our existence. This lesson will incorporate technology (the use of the internet) and various primary and secondary sources. And, this lesson will challenge students with an individual assignment that will allow each student to evaluate...Why Am I Here???...and...how might current events impact me directly in the future???

Rationale:

I am utilizing this lesson to challenge students to go beyond just reading about history. I would like to see students investigating history to see how it has a direct bearing on their lives. Additionally, I would like to provide students with a real life example so that they can continue to see the importance of history...on our lives.

Lesson objectives - the student will:

Complete background reading in relation to President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb.
(Text...The Americans, Unit on World War II, excerpts from Richard

Frank's book Downfall)

-Listen to my story...in relation to the dropping of the bomb.

-Evaluate how the decision of President Truman to drop the bomb has had an impact on my existence.

-Evaluate the consequences of decisions made by people in powerful positions.

-Evaluate how people in powerful places arrive at the decisions they make.

-Read primary and secondary documents in relation to the decision that was made by President Truman to drop the Atomic Bomb.

-Evaluate these documents and bridge the decisions made to their own lives.

-Speculate how decisions being made today in the world are impacting directly their lives...and perhaps...their existence.

District, state, or national performance and knowledge standards/goals/skills met:

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.01 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.02

- Identify and analyze characteristics, causes, and consequences of an event, issue or problem.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.01 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.03

-Analyze and evaluate the historical backgrounds which have led to the present day civilizations.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.01 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.04

-Systematically employ critical inquiry to analyze and interpret the past.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.02 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.02

-Identify and analyze characteristics, causes and consequences of an event, issue or problem. Explain the major historical events that occurred during a time period.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.02 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.03

-Analyze and evaluate the historical backgrounds which have led to the present day civilizations. Analyze patterns historians utilize.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.02 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.04

-Systematically employ critical inquiry to analyze and interpret the past.

Analyze the ways in which a society deals with the introduction or influence of another society's culture.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.04 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.03

-Analyze and evaluate the historical backgrounds which have led to the present day civilizations. Analyze the actions of individuals and groups in the development of historical events. Identify significant individuals who have affected historical development in positive or negative ways.

-Iowa Common Core: SS.09-12.H.08 and MISIC Code: SS.09-12.02.05

-Analyze and explain how historical backgrounds have led to the present developments of various systems of government.

*MISIC=Mid Iowa School Improvement Consortium

Secondary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed:

-Textbook: The Americans (Unit on World War II will be examined prior to and following this lesson).

-Video Clips from the internet...in relation to the dropping of the atomic bomb...found by students (We have a one on one computer program at our school...I like for students to search for and investigate sites relating to what we are examining).

-Notes from the 7-14-2015 presentation of Richard Franks at the 12th Annual Truman Library Teachers Conference. (These notes were collected by Tim Gallagher...an attendee at the conference.

-The book Downfall by Richard Frank. Parts of chapters 16-18 will be shared (depending of student discussion and questions)

-Newspaper clips of the dropping of the Atomic Bomb displayed at the Truman Museum (News pictures that have been blown up so that they can be visually examined)

-A picture (that can be blown up to be visually examined) of the timeline involved with regard to the dropping of the Atomic Bomb. This picture was taken at the Truman Museum.

Primary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed:

-CSPAN Video of Richard Frank discussing his book Downfall...Filmed 7-14-2015

-Pictures found in the Truman Museum relating to the dropping of the Atomic Bomb.

-Pictures of artifacts in the Truman Museum relating to the dropping of the Atomic Bomb.

-Pictures of letters in the Truman Museum relating to the dropping of the Atomic Bomb.

-Website for the Truman institute...Teacher Resource Links- Atomic Bomb (The Decision to Drop the Bomb page). These are all notes and letters.

-Henry Stimson to Harry S. Truman, April 24, 1945

-Diary Entries, June 1, 1945

-Petition to the President of the United States, July 17, 1945

-Henry Stimson to Harry S. Truman, with handwritten Truman reply on reverse, July 30, 1945

-Draft of statement on the dropping of the bomb, July 30, 1945

-Henry Stimson to Harry S. Truman with attached draft press release, July 31, 1945

-Press release by the White House, August 6, 1945

-Translation of leaflet dropped on the Japanese, August 6, 1945

-Telegram, Richard Russell to Harry S. Truman, August 7, 1945

-Correspondence between Harry S. Truman and Samuel Cavert, August 11, 1945

Full description of activity or assignment:

-Day One: My students and I will read about the decision of the U.S. to drop the atomic bomb. We will discuss various resources that will be made available. We will then evaluate the significance of this decision...and...

look at consequences and impact.

Following the review of several secondary reading resources...

I will have students utilize primary sources in groups of 3. I will have students examine these resources and evaluate how the decision was made to drop the atomic bomb (We have a 1 to 1 computer school...so each student will have access to the sites and documents). I will have each group discuss the merits of the decision. Following this, I will have each group share their insights in relation to why the decision was made to drop the bomb with the whole class.

In groups, I will then have students create a position in relation what they would have done and why.

We will then again share and process group responses and debate the merit of the group decisions.

-Day Two: Reflecting upon the title of this lesson...Why Am I Here??? (I will tie in day one's lesson to the realities of me)

I will then have students discuss how decisions of the past have a real impact on our lives.

We will then log on to the NET to Examine "current events". The focus...How will what is going on today potentially directly impact your lives. As a springboard to our NET investigations, I will have students

read about current topics that are being highlighted by the press.

I will have students complete an essay describing an event taking place presently...and...I will have them evaluate how it may impact their lives in the near and long term future. I will also ask them to create two questions for which they would like the answer.

-Day Three: I will have students share their topics and essays and discuss the impact that history (or events in history) might have in our lives in the future. I

will allow student questions and interaction following each presentation.

This time will allow for students to generate further learning and further questions to investigate.

I will then, wrap up this lesson by coming back to the decision by President Truman years ago. Here I Am! :-). (Share Oppenheimer quote)

I will follow this up with an evaluation of this lesson/activity. A focus of this evaluation will center upon student understanding in relation to how decisions in history can directly impact our lives today.

Full explanation of the assessment method and/or scoring guide:

This lesson is part of a larger unit on WWII...I will use this lesson to assist with the

transition to the impact of decisions made during the Cold War.

-I will utilize an essay...as described on day two above.

-I will incorporate elements of this lesson into a future test. Essay questions will be used to allow students to share with me what they have learned and how they intend to apply this knowledge.

-Objective evaluation...I will observe students as they grasp the focus of this lesson during groups and investigation sessions...are they getting it? Based on listening to and watching students I will be able to evaluate the learning taking place.

-Additionally, student evaluation feedback will give me insights about the effectiveness of this activity...and the learning that has taken place.