

Assignment Description (For Teachers)

Title: War and Remembrance: How Countries Interpret the Meaning of a Conflict

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Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum: This lesson is designed for high school Social Studies or English classes; it thus meets numerous World History, Government, and Geography standards as well as Language Arts standards in reading and viewing/presenting. The lesson also encourages students' critical thinking skills: asking them to interpret, read about, explain, and ultimately create commemorations of significant historical events. Students will learn through this lesson that cultural and political values – and sometimes pressures – affect how history is remembered and that history is often interpreted differently by different sides in a conflict. It asks them to reflect not only on the nature of propaganda but also on how we are influenced by the visual symbolism around us.

Overview: The lesson begins with a discussion of how to interpret visual memorials (Powerpoint pictures and explanations included) using two case studies: memorialization of the Armenian genocide in Armenia and of the Vietnam War in both Vietnam and the U.S. Then, students are divided into groups and directed to research (very briefly) a specific Middle Eastern conflict or event. Next, they examine how that event has been commemorated by a population who has participated in it and, finally, design a memorial for a different audience. The group shares its work with other students in one of several ways: creating websites (not connected to the internet), making a very short documentary, or giving an oral presentation using either a powerpoint or a poster as illustration. To extend the lesson, the student groups could look at a recent conflict, such as the one in Iraq or in Afghanistan, and develop plans for two different memorials of the same war: one to stand in the Middle Eastern country (Iraq or Afghanistan), one in the U.S.

Grade Level: High School/College.

Time: 3 days (depending on how much is completed as homework)

Objectives: Students are expected to: analyze/interpret visual images, conduct research and share their findings, and develop a greater understanding of Middle Eastern history and culture.

Targeted Skills - Based on Arizona State Standards:

High School Social Studies: Geography Strand:

- Concept 2: Places and Regions. PO 1 – Identify the characteristics that define a region – with specific reference to human processes such as religion and political

organization. PO 4 – Analyze the differing political, religious, economic, demographic, and historical ways of viewing places and regions. PO 6 – Analyze how a region changes over time.

High School Social Studies: World History Strand:

- Concept 1: Research Skills for History. PO 3 – Formulate questions that can be answered by historical study and research. PO 4 – Construct graphs, tables, timelines, charts, and narratives to interpret historical data. PO 5 – Evaluate primary and secondary sources. PO 7 – Compare present events with past events.
- Concept 9: Contemporary World. PO 2 – Explain the roots of terrorism: c. background of modern Middle East conflicts (e.g., Israeli – Palestinian conflict, Persian Gulf conflicts, Afghanistan). PO 5 – Connect current events with historical events and issues using information from class discussions and various resources.

High School Social Studies: Civics and Government Strand:

- Concept 5: Government Systems of the World. PO 1 – Compare the United States system of politics and government to other systems of the world (e.g., monarchies, dictatorship, theocracy, oligarchy, parliamentary, unitary, proportional elections)

High School Language Arts: Reading - Strand 3: Comprehending Informational Text:

- Concept 1: Expository Text. Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the purpose, structures, and elements of expository text.
- Concept 3: Persuasive Text. Explain basic elements of argument in text and their relationship to the author's purpose and use of persuasive strategies.

High School Language Arts: Standard 4 – Viewing and Presenting:

- VP-P1. Analyze and evaluate visual media for language, subject matter and visual techniques used to influence attitudes, decision making and cultural perceptions
- VP-P2. Plan, organize, develop, produce and evaluate an effective multimedia presentation, using tools such as charts, photographs, maps, tables, posters, transparencies, slides and electronic media.
- VP-P3. Analyze and evaluate the impact of visual media on the intended audience

Suggested Procedures

- Day 1: **Required: Means of showing the PowerPoint presentation to the class.**

1. Opening Question: If you were teaching children about why the Civil War is important in American history, what would you tell them? What (if any) differences would there be in your perspective if you are from the North than if you are from the South?

2. Using the PowerPoint presentations and teacher's notes (documents #2a and 2b), lead students in a discussion of how we commemorate important events in history.

- Day 2: **Required: Access to internet and/or library resources; copies of document #4 for each student – NOTE: Before copying the document, you might want to amend the assignment description (top part) to include your specific directions and grading criteria. For example, if students are creating powerpoint presentations, how many slides do they need? Etc.**

1. Divide students into groups of 2 or 3 and assign each group a Middle Eastern conflict (document #3). (Keep a master list for yourself in case they forget or lose their sheet.)
2. Direct each group to research the war and how it is commemorated within countries that participated. Is the conflict memorialized by one side but not by another? Why? If it is memorialized by different sides, how is the emphasis or viewpoint different? (Handout/research guide – document #4.)
3. Have each group create a poster or powerpoint/film presentation on their topic.

- Day 3:

1. Give the students an opportunity to view each other's displays or hear the oral presentations and discuss them.
2. Debrief.

Extending the Lesson:

Assign ½ the student groups the recent conflict in Iraq and ½ the recent conflict in Afghanistan. Have each group design and sketch two memorials: one that will stand in Iraq or Afghanistan, the other that will stand in the U.S. (Be sure to have them attach a very short explanation of the symbolism they used.)

Then, set up an exhibit of the work and explanations. Have the students compare their ideas with their classmates' and also compare the differences between the memorials designed for Middle Eastern audiences and the ones designed for American audiences.