

Other Considerations and Suggestions for a Balkan History Lesson:

Other Considerations to add to powerpoint/discussion activity:

- Detailed ppts over Serbian and Bosnian history (possibly even Bulgarian, Slovenian, Montenegrin, and Albanian) see detailed Croatian history ppt for examples

- Specific activity over: Balkan Wars, Serbo-Croatian War, Bosnian War

- Have students research the history of each of the following regions (from origin-Ottoman Rule) and present findings to the class
 - Republic of Venice
 - Albania
 - Bosnia
 - Bulgaria
 - Croatia
 - Romania
 - Serbia and the Kingdom of Serbia
 - Montenegro

- Watch the film *No Man's Land* after learning about the Bosnian war. Have students discuss what they saw in the film that reflected what they have learned so far in class

Group study, presentation and discussion:

Group Work:

Divide students up into groups

Give each group a country of the Balkans to research

- Bosnia/Herzegovinian
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Montenegro
- Greece
- Macedonia
- Serbia
- Romania
- Slovenia
- Turkey

- Have students research the history and culture of these countries (language, way of making a living, important art/literature, religion)
- Have students identify the years country was in conflict (what the conflict was about, what started it and what brought about its end and how it affected the people's everyday lives in their country, especially how it affected ethnic relations)
- Students should also be able to identify the times that their country was at peace and what other nations/ethnic groups that they worked or cooperated with when they were at peace (will they later fight and have conflict with these same people and why?)

Presentation

- Students should do a presentation on their country's culture and history
- During the presentation have students chart their country's times of conflict and peace on a large timeline for the whole class to see (each country should be done in a separate color, times of turmoil/war should be marked with stars)

Discussion (big concept goals of the lesson)

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to identify whether or not their country was largely a peaceful or war-like country.

Balkan Concepts:

Students should also be asked to examine and discuss why the Balkans have been identified historically as a 'powder keg' to war and turmoil? (real reason versus stereotypical)

- Real reasons the conflict (which isn't constant) occurs in the Balkans
 - geographic
 - result of shifting power and conflicts of larger empires (Roman & Byzantine, Ottomans and Hapsburgs, ect.
 - natural differences that allowed to exist, again aided by geography (actually due to acceptance and tolerance of the region): lang., religion, clash of eastern and western cultures
 - leaders using an area's differences to gain power (from the Romans to the present, esp. during the Yugoslavia years but also through their countries history)
- possible motives of large empires for portraying/stereotyping the region this way:
 - ignorance
 - "otherness mentality"
 - justification for take over: warlike people need a bigger, stonger, more civilized empire to govern then and keep them in check and a
 - justification for violence-it's not us its them mentality
 - Empires/great powers blame the Balkans for WWI even many of the problems in the Balkans were consequences of those empires/great powers themselves?
 - (more modern motives) as motive to interfere/help during and after the cold war (as anti-communism/pro-capitalism propaganda)
 - as an excuse to not get involved in the Serbo-Croatian War, Bosnian war and the conflict in Kosovo

Global Concepts

-Students should also be asked to think about the idea of 'otherness' and how often that is used even today to divide people?

- Why would people/leaders/governments do this?
 - (gain power, comforting sense of belonging to have others that are outside of your group-united by a common enemy-is that the source of a good, lasting bond?, it is easier to focus on differences/tragedies in life-use example of a car wreck everyone slows down to look)
- Overall, is it good or bad (in other words, should we focus on our differences or our similarities w/ other people?)

Current Events/self reflection/application

-Also students should be asked to consider whether history is usually taught from the perspective of war-war or peace-peace. How could this change our perspectives of those people? Ask students to record the history of U.S. conflict, internal and external, and ask them if outsiders would think of Americans as violent blood thirsty people and ask them to compare that with what they personally experience living in this county.