

Perilous Fight Lesson Plan 1

Learning from WWII and Connecting it to the Present

Subject Areas: Secondary social studies, history, communication arts, journalism, or film study classes.

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. compare and contrast WWII to the current situation between the U.S. and Iraq.
2. share their opinions and use reasons, facts, and examples to support their point of view.
3. use notetaking and research skills to develop a presentation about a topic related to WWII.
4. present their topic to their peers using appropriate presentation skills and factual information.
5. use expository writing skills to summarize what they have learned from their study of WWII.

Materials:

television

vcr

copy of *The Perilous Fight: America's World War II in Color*

Internet access for students

access to library resources

Handouts: Anticipation Guide

Viewing Guide

Research Topic List

Research and Presentation Plan Guide

Response Activities

assorted art supplies (optional)

Procedures:

Part 1: Creating Student Interest and Connecting the Past to the Present

1. As America teeters on the brink of war with Iraq, there are comparisons that can be made to create student interest in the film. The teacher should gather the following materials ahead of time to display around the classroom before the film is introduced:
 - Newspaper/magazine headlines/clippings focused on the conflict with Iraq and the possibility of going to war, pictures and stories of soldiers being activated and sent overseas for duty, letters to the editor regarding the conflict and potential war with Iraq
 - Videotaped clips of soldiers being sent to the Middle East, stories focused on the effects of having a family member in the face of danger, and current news stories

about the continuing conflict in Iraq

2. As students enter the classroom, have the items from step one prominently displayed. Encourage students to look at newspaper items and have the videotaped stories playing quietly, if possible.
3. Begin class by asking students to complete the Anticipation Guide that is provided. Stress that there are no correct answers, but that students should be able to support their opinions using reasons, examples, and facts if possible. Give students 7-10 minutes to complete the Anticipation Guide.
4. After the Anticipation Guide has been completed, facilitate a class discussion/debate about the statements on the guide. Encourage all students to participate in the discussion (i.e. offer participation/discussion grades, make a point to call on every student to speak, etc.). There will be a number of differing points of view. Be sure these are heard and discussed so that students can see that the decision to go to war and be actively involved in war efforts is not easy.
5. Next, draw attention to the specific materials gathered in the classroom. Give students an opportunity to view the videotape that you have made. Read selected newspaper/magazine clippings to students. Discuss the various articles and clips you have chosen. Close the discussion by telling students that we can learn from other historical conflicts and perhaps avoid similar mistakes by studying these events.

Part 2: Viewing the Film

1. Ask students to think about how people communicated 60 years ago. Use a group brainstorming session to list various forms of communication that were available to most people. The list will probably include radio, telegram, newspaper, letters, and telephone. Next, discuss how this is different from the way we communicate today using email, cell phones, faxes, overnight delivery services, etc.
2. Next, explain to students that these old forms of communication are an important link to our history because they provide us with personal accounts of what life was really like. Using letters and print as primary means of corresponding creates a permanent record that can be saved and archived. While that can be done with email today, most information is shared verbally through telephones, and this form of recorded history is not as common today.
3. Introduce the film by telling students they will be hearing the stories of two, possibly three generations ago. Their grandparents or great grandparents probably remember the events that will be shown in the film, even though they have probably never seen the footage. Their memories come from radio broadcasts, newspaper headlines, and their own family stories. While the film tells about the historical significance of the war, the real focus of the story is the effect of the

war on the common person. As they watch, ask students to take notes using the Viewing Guide so they can discuss the impact of WWII and prepare for a project following the viewing of the film. (NOTE: Offering a completion grade may encourage students to be more accurate and involved in notetaking.)

4. Watch selected portions of the film *The Perilous Fight: America's World War II in Color*. Suggested segments from each episode are listed below.
 - Introduction/film opening
 - Part 1: 38:40 to 44:30 Pearl Harbor
50:26 to end Midway
 - Part 2: Beginning to 9:21 Army life, role of women, internment
20:50 to 22:18 Psychological effects
23:30 to 26:25 Life on the Home Front
36:15 to 44:17 Women in the workforce, military, and WASP's, German war atrocities
 - Part 3: Beginning to 10:55 Dday planning and invasion
14:45 to 18:25 One family's story, Italian front
28:45 to 31:15 One family's story
34:18 to 35:36 Concentration camps
36:12 to 37:54 Concentration camps
39: 40 to 41:05 VE Day
 - Part 4: Beginning to 10:00 Pacific front, life at home, psychological effects
11:40 to 12:25 Saipan
22:40 to 23:50 Importance of letters
28:15 to 29:15 Importance of letters
34:50 to 36:20 One family's story
37:50 to end of film Final victory
5. After viewing is completed, discuss the information students recorded on the Viewing Guide. This could be done as a class or in small groups. Encourage students to ask questions about each of the topics/ideas presented.

Part 3: Sharing the Lessons of WWII using Individual Projects and Presentations

1. After viewing the film, students should have a broad understanding of the people, places, and events that are WWII. In addition, they have heard the stories of those who lived it through letters, diaries, and stories from the film. They will now examine a part of WWII that they are interested in learning more about. They will then create a project that they can share with their classmates or a broader audience.
2. The *Perilous Fight* website is organized into four main themes. Each theme contains sub-themes focused on a specific aspect of the war. Letters, photos, maps, and video are included for each of these sub-themes. This should be used as a primary resource for research. In addition, students can search other sites such as those listed below for additional information.

War Letters

www.warletters.com

What did You do During the War, Grandma?

http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html

American Experience: War Letters

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/warletters/letters/index.html>

Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/afcphtml/afcphtmlhome.html>

WWII resources and documents

www.ibiblio.org/pha

The Drop Zone—a virtual museum for IIWW

www.dropzone.org/

The Minerva Center—documents women in the military

www.militarywomen.org/

Dday Memorial Foundation

www.dday.org

WWII Vets—dedicated to WWII veterans offering resources and links

www.ww2vet.org

The Merchant Marines

www.usmm.org

U.S. Army Center of Military History

www.army.mil/cmh-pg/

The Pacific War

www.microworks.net/pacific/

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

www.nara.gov

Japanese American Museum

www.janm.org

The Holocaust Museum

www.ushmm.org

WWII Memorial
www.wwiimemorials.com

Veterans History Project
www.loc.gov/foldlife/vets/

3. Assign or ask students to volunteer to focus on a specific topic they would like to learn more about. A Topic List has been provided as part of the lesson plan. It is not all inclusive. Once students have chosen a topic, they should conduct research about it using the Internet, the *Perilous Fight* website, and library resources. Explain to students that they will be creating a presentation about their topic and they will share it for the class. Remind students that a strong presentation will include who, what, when, where, why, and how. In addition, students will want to make what they are talking about interesting by providing visual aids (pictures, video, sound bites, maps) and personalized accounts (diary entries, letters, first hand accounts/reports, etc.) related to their topic. Finally, encourage students to be unique in their presentation approach by doing something out of the ordinary to make their topic memorable. This might include using technology to create a multi-media based presentation, recruiting and working with 1-2 actors to bring an event or scene to life, presenting the topic as if he/she was actually that person (i.e. a soldier on the front lines, a woman working in a factory, a Japanese American in an internment camp, etc.), or anything else that will keep an audience's attention. Encourage students to use the Research and Presentation Plan Sheet to gather appropriate information.
4. Once projects are completed, each student should share his/her work with the class. They should present what they have learned, and if time permits, field questions about their specific topic.
5. As a final activity, students should complete the *Perilous Fight* Response Activities to evaluate what they have learned and make connections to current world events.

Assessment Suggestions:

1. Students could be assigned participation or completion grades for being actively involved in class discussions and completing the Anticipation Guide and Viewing Guide.
2. Teachers could create a checklist, scoring guide, or use authentic assessment to evaluate the quality of each student's individual project and presentation.
3. An accuracy grade (letter or percentage) could be assigned for completing the Response Activities.

Extension Activities:

1. Encourage students to hone their presentation skills and share what they have learned by conducting their presentations with students studying WWII in another class within the school or with younger students studying similar content.
2. Gather a group of panelists/guest speakers from the WWII era and allow students to ask them questions about WWII after they have viewed the film and have chosen their topics for research and presentations. When research and presentations are finished, invite the panelists back to the classroom to see and hear the students' work. Ask them to provide students with feedback about their presentations.
3. Ask students to interview family members who experienced WWII and have recollections about life during that time. Have students record these interviews on audio or video tape to share with their classmates.
4. Encourage the class to spearhead a class or school-wide letter writing campaign to men and women currently serving in the armed forces and deployed to hotspots around the world.

National Standards:

Historical Understanding

Standard 2: Understands the historical perspective

United States History

Standard 25: Understands the causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

World History

Standard 41: Understands the causes and global consequences of World War II

Language Arts:

Writing

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Viewing

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

Thinking and Reasoning

Standard 1: Understands and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument
Standard 3: Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences

About the Author: Lisa Prososki is an independent educational consultant who taught middle school and high school social studies, English, reading, and technology courses for twelve years. Prososki has worked with PBS TeacherSource and has authored many lesson plans for various PBS programs over the past five years. In addition to developing materials for corporate clients and conducting workshops for teachers at various state and national conventions, Prososki has also worked as an editor and authored one book.

The Perilous Fight Lesson Plan: Anticipation Guide

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read each statement below carefully. Think about it. Decide whether you agree or disagree and mark the appropriate column. Provide reasons, examples, and facts to support your opinion for each statement. Be prepared to share your ideas in a class discussion.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Reasons, Examples, Facts
The United States should not engage in acts of war unless they are directly attacked.			
Americans should be prepared to make great sacrifices to preserve their freedom and protect the freedom and rights of other countries.			
People who do not willingly serve in the armed forces during times of potential conflict and war are unpatriotic.			
The United States developed and used weapons of mass destruction (the atomic bomb), so the U.S. government should allow other countries in the world today (Iraq and North Korea) to do the same.			
It is acceptable to limit the civil liberties of some groups of people in the name of increased national security.			
I would be willing to make personal sacrifices, serve in the armed forces, or volunteer to assist my country if we were faced with war.			

Europe:

North Africa:

The Pacific:

Japan:

The Psychology of War

1. Describe how Hitler and his allies terrorized the people of the countries they invaded.
2. Many people throughout the world were in disbelief about the German atrocities, particularly the extermination of the Jews. Explain why people did not believe eyewitnesses such as Jan Karski.
3. The war took a heavy mental toll on the men in the battlefields, particularly in the Pacific. Describe the hardships and war tactics that caused so many to suffer mentally.
4. What mental effect did the use of the atomic bomb have in WWII?

The Home Front

1. How did WWII help the U.S. benefit economically?
2. Why did many people in the U.S. support Isolationism?

3. What were the effects of WWII on U.S. industry?
4. In what ways was the typical family affected by the war?
5. How did Americans show their support for U.S. troops overseas?

Social Aspects of War

1. Describe how the role/view of each group below changed because of American involvement in WWII.

African Americans

Asian Americans

Women

2. Anti-Semitism was prevalent among some in America. Describe this group and the views they had regarding Jews.
3. Describe the role of Conscientious Objectors in WWII.

The Perilous Fight Lesson Plan: Research Topic List

Bombing of Pearl Harbor
The Doolittle Raid and the Battle of Midway
Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the atomic bomb
The Battle of the Bulge
African Americans in WWII
African Americans on the Home Front
Racism Against Asians in the U.S.
Women in the War
Women in the Military
American Industrialization
War Atrocities
The Isolationist Movement
American Anti-Semitism
Financing the War
The Kamikazes
Conscientious Objectors
The Mental Effects of WWII
The Code Breakers
Censorship During WWII
Volunteerism During WWII
The Pacific During WWII
Europe During WWII
Northern African During WWII

The Perilous Fight Lesson Plan: Research and Presentation Plan Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Answer the questions below in order to create an accurate and interesting presentation. Include as much information as possible to make constructing your project simpler.

Topic: _____

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

How:

Visual Aids I will include are:

Personalized Accounts I will include are:

Unique Presentation Technique(s) I will use:

How will get the audience's attention? (i.e. What is my opener?)

Besides the 5W's and the H, what other interesting and pertinent information will I include? (i.e. What do I want the audience to learn and take away from this presentation?)

How will I make my final impact on the audience? (i.e. What will I choose for a strong closing?)

Resource List: List all of the Internet sites, books, periodicals, or other resource materials you used to create your presentation. Be sure to include appropriate bibliographic information.

The Perilous Fight Lesson Plan: Response Activities

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Please answer each question below based upon what you learned from this study of WWII. Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Create a Venn Diagram or a T Chart that illustrates the similarities and differences between the conflicts associated with WWII and those associated with the current crisis in Iraq.
2. Thinking back to the Anticipation Guide and the opinions you had before viewing the film *Perilous Fight* and completing your research project, discuss how your opinions have changed or been reinforced by what you have learned from studying WWII.
3. Discuss one or two events from the film that had a strong impact on you intellectually or emotionally. Be sure to describe the portion of the film in detail and explain the effect it had on you, and why you believe this portion of the film had this particular effect on you.
4. Write 1-2 paragraphs that describe what you think are the important lessons to be learned and remembered from America's involvement in WWII.