

Fulbright-Hays Curriculum Project 2014

Author: Clara Webb, Boston Public Schools

Rationale

When did World War II start? Dutiful students of Western history would say 1939, or more specifically, on September 1st, when Nazi troops invaded Poland. But World War II started in China—not Europe—in 1937, when Japanese troops crossed the Marco Polo Bridge into Beijing, or even in 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria. This discrepancy of dates and places is not a trivial fact or question of perspective; it represents a major blind spot in our understanding of the war and its impact on modern China. China was not only a “forgotten ally” whose contributions to defeating the Axis are often overlooked; but World War II also fundamentally altered the destiny of the Chinese nation, the national identity of its people, and its relationship with other world powers, none more so than Japan.

After 70 years, Europe has largely healed from the wounds of the Second World War; the Cold War is over and former enemies France and Germany are forging political and economic cooperation through the European Union. In contrast, the memories of the war are still bitterly contested in Asia and reconciliation between China and Japan remains elusive. During my month in China, I read story after story in *China Daily* and other newspapers demanding justice for victims of the war, calling on Japanese leaders to apologize for war crimes, and condemning Japan’s recent move to revoke its constitutional ban on military self-defense. Why does the past still hold such power? This unit centers on historical memory – what it is, where it comes from, why it is contested, and how it both shapes and is shaped by the concerns of China today.

The first lesson in this unit examines the Nanjing Massacre, introduces the concept of historical memory, and asks students to research other unresolved World War II issues between China and Japan. While most students are familiar with the horrifying extent of Nazi atrocities in Europe, the devastation and loss of life in the Asian theater are less well known. Japan’s military occupation of China, Korea, Singapore, and the Pacific Islands was made possible by widespread forced labor, sexual slavery, abuse of POW’s, and mass execution. Although some of these issues are disturbing and difficult to read about, this lesson will help students develop empathy for Chinese war victims, understand the particular issues in dispute, and identify obstacles that have prevented reconciliation.

The second lesson asks students to examine the current relationship between China and Japan, and conflicts such as the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Students are asked to consider what role historical memory plays in fueling these conflicts, and how these conflicts might affect historical memory. Students will learn that competition for regional supremacy is a complicating factor that makes leaders less willing to pursue reconciliation, and that historical memory is often intertwined with nationalism. The 14 years of Japanese occupation, and prior to that, the decades of Western imperialism, form a period in Chinese history that is now remembered as “The Century of Humiliation.” Whether one agrees or disagrees with China’s stance on Tibet, Taiwan, or the tiny islands, being aware of historical memory makes it possible to understand why issues related to sovereignty and territorial integrity are of such great importance to China.

The third lesson examines the role of the Chinese government in the reconciliation process. By this point in the unit, students may feel that Japan bears total responsibility for the lack of reconciliation between the two countries, but that is not entirely accurate. Students will consider what the Chinese government stands to gain or lose by promoting reconciliation. To fully appreciate the nuances of this issue, it will be important for students to have an understanding that World War II was a direct contributing factor in the establishment of a Communist Party-led People's Republic of China. The Communists emerged as the leading force in the struggle against Japan, which ultimately helped them triumph over the Nationalists in the civil war that followed World War II. During the Mao years, the struggle against both Japan and the Nationalists became crystalized into a heroic David and Goliath epic of national liberation. The Mitter and Oi articles do an excellent job of explaining why the Chinese government still has a vested interest in shaping historical memory of World War II and why the "official" memory has become more anti-Japanese in recent years.

This lesson also features images from my visit to the Marco Polo Bridge and Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall in Beijing. While the war museum featured an extensive collection of images and artifacts, including a graphic exhibit about the Nanjing Massacre, I was struck by the fact that there was only a single mention of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with no indication of civilian losses. The museum's goal is to cherish peace while not forgetting history, and yet this omission of Japanese war victims made it impossible to see any common bond of human suffering between the Chinese and Japanese people. This experience was the inspiration for this unit and for the final assignment.

The fourth and final lesson requires students to apply what they have learned in these lessons to completing an authentic assessment task: to design a war memorial that promotes reconciliation between China and Japan. These student-designed memorials will attempt to answer the overarching question for this unit: How do we remember horrific events in our past while avoiding the cycle of dehumanization and anger that makes violence possible in the first place? This is a difficult question with no simple answers, and yet it is important that students grapple with it, both in terms of global conflicts and interpersonal relationships. Coming to terms with the past is and will be a prerequisite for long-term peace.

Unit Title: A Bitter Peace: Memories of World War II & Sino-Japanese Relations

Grade Level: High School; grades 11-12 or grades 9-10 with modifications

Essential Questions

- What is historical memory and how is it different from history?
- Who or what has been the main obstacle to reconciliation between Japan and China?
- How do current events influence historical memory? And, how does historical memory influence current events?
- How can we remember wartime atrocities without continuing the cycle of hatred, revenge, and dehumanization that causes such acts of violence in the first place?

Learning Goals

CONTENT - Students will develop an understanding of:

- The effects of Japanese occupation on China during World War II
- The unresolved issues between China and Japan related to World War II
- Current conflicts between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands
- The role of the Chinese and Japanese governments in shaping historical memory
- How World War II is remembered in China and Japan and how/why this understanding has changed over time

SKILLS - These lessons can be used to address the following standards:

Common Core Standards – Grades 11-12

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1](#)
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3](#)
Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6](#)
Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7](#)
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

AP World History Historical Thinking Skills:

- Skill 1: Crafting Historical Arguments from Historical Evidence
- Skill 3: Comparison and Contextualization

- Skill 4: Historical Interpretation and Synthesis
- For more information:
<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/WorldHistoryHistoricalThinkingSkills.pdf>

Assessment

- Journal entries and discussions
- Graphic Organizers
- Summative Assessment – Design a Memorial

Sequence

- Lesson 1 – Why is World War II still a source of conflict between China and Japan?
- Lesson 2 – How does historical memory shape current conflicts between China & Japan?
- Lesson 3 – What is China's role in conflict and reconciliation?
- Lesson 4 – How can we promote peace while remembering the past?

Lesson Plan 1 – Why is World War II still a source of conflict between China and Japan?

1) Opener – Nanjing Museum Image Analysis

- Show images from Nanjing Massacre Museum. This could be done as a gallery walk, from an overhead projector, or digitally on individual student devices.
- Images can be found on the Museum Website (<http://www.nj1937.org/>) and Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanjing_Massacre_Memorial_Hall).
- Ask students to write/discuss the following four questions. These four questions can be broken down into more specific sub-questions as noted in parentheses.
 1. **What** is being remembered? (*What people and events are represented?*)
 2. **How** is it being remembered? (*How are exhibits designed and presented? How are people and events portrayed? What is the central focus or theme?*)
 3. **Why** is it being remembered? (*For what purpose? Who is the audience and what is the intended impact?*)
 4. Who or what is **missing**? (*Are there any relevant people, perspectives, information, or events that are not represented in the exhibit?*)

Responses should include: Exhibit focuses on civilian victims (women, children) not soldiers. Enlarged faces, hands show pain, suffering, anguish. Meant to make an emotional impact on Chinese viewers and tourists - elicits compassion, sadness, horror at inhumanity. We don't know the context or the point of view of the Japanese soldiers – how/why could they carry out such atrocities?

- At the end of the discussion, tell students that the images are from China's Nanjing Massacre Museum.

2) Mini-lesson: Nanjing Massacre

- This article describes the Nanjing Massacre and mentions that the Japanese government has resisted full acknowledgement: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/223038.stm>.
- *How to use it:* The article could either be assigned as the previous night's homework and reviewed in class or read in class / summarized in a brief lecture after viewing the images. The first option would give students background information before looking at the images. The second option would make the image analysis more of an inquiry.

3) Discussion:

- Ask students to discuss the following questions, citing specific evidence and examples from the Nanjing Massacre, other historical events, and/or personal experience.
 - What purpose does remembering serve?
 - What are the potential downsides of remembering? Why might it be avoided?

- What might account for differences in the ways that China and Japan remember World War II?

4) Define “historical memory”

- Ask students: What is historical memory and how do you think it is different from history?
- Write a shared definition using student commentary and the following points:
 - *Historical memory is what people remember about the past versus what actually happened.*
 - *Historical memory is sometimes selective and unreliable. Memory can change over time. People might forget, exclude, or distort aspects that are painful or shameful.*
 - *Historical memory can vary by individuals, depending on their experiences and connections to the events.*
 - *Historical memory can also be shaped by powerful institutions – governments, schools, textbooks, popular culture, film – for certain purposes: patriotism, nationalism, unity, political agendas.*

5) Wrap up and explain HW assignment: to conduct further research about issues related to World War II and historical memory

HOMEWORK: Research more China-Japan World War II issues using the George Washington University (GMU) Memory and Reconciliation Website.

- 1) **Read** the Mission Statement: <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/aboutus/mission.html>
- 2) **Take notes in the graphic organizer (Handout 1.1)** about each of the following “ISSUES” in the graphic organizer – *These readings can also be divided up among students and shared the next day.*
 - a. P.O.W./Forced Labor: <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/pow-forcedlabor/index.html>
 - b. Comfort Women: <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/comfortwomen/index.html>
 - c. Weapons: <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/biochemweapons/index.html>
 - d. Atomic Bombing
 - §□ Overview: http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/Hiroshima_NagasakiA-Bomb/index.html
 - §□ Hiroshima Peace Museum: <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/museums/Hiroshima.html>
 - e. Textbooks - <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/textbooks/index.html>
 - f. Memorials -- Yasukuni Shrine: <http://www.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/museums/Yasukuni.html>

Day 1 - Handout 1.1

Homework: Graphic Organizer – Unresolved World War II Issues

	What is the issue? <i>Describe it</i>	What has done (or not done) so far to address this issue?
P.O.W.'s/Forced Labor		
Comfort Women		
Weapons		
Atomic Bombing		
Textbooks		
Memorials – Yasukuni Shrine		

Lesson 2 – How does historical memory shape current conflicts between China & Japan?

1) Opener – Journal Entry: Ask students to write a one paragraph response to one or both of the following questions and use specific evidence from the homework readings to support their claims.

- Should today’s generation bear the responsibility for past mistakes?
- Who or what do you think has been the main obstacle to reconciliation between Japan and China?

2) Discussion: Ask students to discuss their journal entries in small groups, then as a class. Some students are likely to focus all blame on the Japanese government; others may think that China should “get over it.” Tell students that historical memory is powerful and not easily “gotten over,” because it is still being made by current generations (e.g. visiting the shrines, publishing textbooks, constructing museums and monuments, and making—or not making—apologies).

3) Mini-Lesson: Current Issues in the Sino-Japanese Relationship

- **Introduction**
 - Pose questions: How do current events influence historical memory? And how does historical memory influence current events?
 - Today’s lesson will focus on how historical memory shapes the present relationship between China and Japan and vice versa.
 - **Show map of East Asia and the Pacific:** Ask students: Today, none of current Chinese or Japanese leadership lived through World War II, yet the bitterness between China and Japan lives on. What other factors do you think might contribute to this conflict? *Students should point out the potential for geopolitical, economic rivalries.*
- **Sino-Japanese Relations since World War II**
 - This BBC website summarizes the main points of conflict between China and Japan, including both historical and contemporary issues.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/asia_pac/05/china_japan/html/introduction.stm
 - *How to use it:* Use the information from this website to provide a brief lesson on the economic and political conflicts between China and Japan and have students take notes in graphic organizer (Handout 2.1) **OR** assign students to read the information in small groups and takes notes together in the graphic organizer:
- **The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands**

- **Show video clip (1 ½ minutes):** This video comes from NTDTV (New Tang Dynasty TV, a New York based television station, founded by Falun Gong practitioners, that purports to broadcast uncensored news about China). It offers a very brief overview of the conflict over the Senkaku Islands:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFUw4DPFv4I>

4) Discussion – Ask students to write about and/or discuss the following questions:

- What do you think is at the root of the current conflicts between China and Japan? How much do you think these conflicts are related to World War II versus completely distinct?
- Do both countries seem equally responsible? Or is one country fueling the fire?

5) Wrap Up and explain HW: Much of our focus has been on the Japanese government and its role in contributing to disputes over historical memory. These articles and images will raise important questions about the role of the Chinese government – we will discuss this topic tomorrow.

Homework:

- 1) Read and annotate article(s) and view images of 2012 Anti-Japanese Protests in China:
 - “China and Japan: Seven Decades of Bitterness”
<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25411700>
 - Images of Anti-Japanese Protests in China 2012:
<http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2012/09/anti-japan-protests-in-china/100370/>
 - “Anti-Japanese Protests Flare in China Over Disputed Islands”
<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-09-17/anti-japanese-protests-flare-in-china-over-disputed-islands>

Lesson 2 - Handout 2.1

Graphic Organizer –Contemporary Conflicts Between China and Japan

	What is the issue? <i>Describe it</i>
History	
Economic Competition	
Strategic Balance	
Cultural Issues	

Lesson 3 – What is China’s Role in Conflict and Reconciliation?

1) **Opener – Journal Entry:** Ask students to write a one paragraph response to one or both of the following questions and use specific evidence from the homework readings to support their claims.

- Why is anti-Japanese feeling still so strong in China today? Who or what are the causes? What are potential consequences?
- *Responses should include: causes - it is promoted by the Chinese government to fuel nationalism/patriotism or distract from domestic issues; the Japanese government has made aggressive/nationalistic moves that are provoking China; economic rivalry between the two countries. Potential consequences – extreme nationalism; dehumanization; irrational hatred; war*

2) **Anti-Japanese War Museum Image Analysis:**

- Conduct this activity similarly to the Nanjing Massacre image analysis. This could be done as a gallery walk, from an overhead projector, or digitally on individual student devices.
- Images can be found in PDF that accompanies this unit.
- Ask students to write/discuss the following four questions. These four questions can be broken down into more specific sub-questions as noted in parentheses.
 1. **What** is being remembered? (*What people and events are represented?*)
 2. **How** is it being remembered? (*How are exhibits designed and presented? How are people and events portrayed? What is the central focus or theme?*)
 3. **Why** is it being remembered? (*For what purpose? Who is the audience and what is the intended impact?*)
 4. Who or what is **missing**? (*Are there any relevant people, perspectives, information, or events that are not represented in the exhibit?*)

3) **Write/discuss:**

- To what extent do you think the Chinese government shares responsibility for the current conflicts between China and Japan?
- What does the Chinese government stand to gain or lose through reconciliation with Japan?

4) **Wrap Up and Explain Homework:** This is a final article about remembering and forgetting. Tomorrow you will consider what concrete steps could be taken to promote reconciliation between China and Japan.

Homework:

1) Read and annotate: Mitter, Rayna. "Days in the Museums." *Index on Censorship*. Vol 43. No. 1. p 8-12. 8 March 2014. <<http://ioc.sagepub.com/content/43/1/8>>.

- NOTE: This article provides an excellent overview of historical memory of World War II in China, including how the Chinese memory of World War II has changed over time. This is a higher-level text that requires some background knowledge about World War II and the Chinese Civil War, so teachers should determine if students should read the entire article or excerpts.

Lesson 4 – How can we promote peace while remembering the past?

1) Opener: Discuss/write:

- What additional information or perspectives did you gain from last night's reading?

2) Memorial Brainstorming and Planning:

- Your final assignment is to use what you have learned to design a World War II memorial that promotes reconciliation between China and Japan.
- Have students think about and discuss the following questions. Questions can be posed to small groups and shared, or posted on large papers so that students can circulate the room and fill in their ideas. Possible student responses are listed below each question.

1. What have been the shortcomings of existing memorials and textbooks about World War II?

- *One-sided*
- *Do not acknowledge civilian suffering on the other side – no empathy; dehumanizes the other side*
- *Not fully aimed at reconciliation but at patriotism and support for government*

2. What should be the goals of a war memorial, monument, or museum exhibit?

- *Educate public, especially children*
- *Preserve history for future generations*
- *Promote honest dialogue between two countries*
- *Reconciliation of historical disputes*
- *Peace in the present and future – prevent future conflict and wars*
- *Promote empathy and compassion*

3. How could these goals be reflected in the design, content, location of a memorial?

- *Acknowledges loss of life and civilian victims on both sides – uses text, statistics, testimony, and images*
- *Shows multiple roles and points of view both within own society and “enemy” society – by-standers, collaborators, resisters, dissenters*
- *Contains a clear message of atonement from Japan*
- *Distinguishes between government, military, and civilians rather than conflating them all together under terms like “China” or “the Japanese”*
- *Distinguishes between current and past generations*
- *Strives for historical accuracy; does not gloss over uncomfortable truths and images*
- *Acknowledges ambiguity and disputed facts*
- *A shared location – in China and Japan*

3) Explain assignment: Design a World War II memorial that promotes Sino-Japanese reconciliation.

- Your memorial should include 1) an original design for a monument or museum exhibit and 2) explanatory text.
- The monument or exhibit should contain thoughtfully chosen symbols or images and a design that reflects the goals we discussed in class. In other words, your monument

should remember wartime atrocities while taking care not to dehumanize the enemy and thus perpetuate the cycle of conflict and violence.

- The text should explain the intentions of the memorial and a rationale for its content and design.
- You will present your memorial digitally or on poster board for public viewing and commentary.

Note: Additional criteria can be added to suit students and length of assignment.

Extension Idea: Find a public display area for student memorials – in the school community, at a local museum, or organization dedicated to World War II or Asian history

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