

Fulbright-Hays Curriculum Project: World War II: The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai

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Overview

This lesson broadens students' understanding of the complexity of World War II while focusing on the Jewish refugees of Shanghai and life in this community during wartime. This lesson can be included in larger study of the Second World War in either a Global History or U.S. History classroom involving students to look deeply at the impact of this war as well as the multiple perspectives needed to truly understand the events and outcomes of this time period. Through doing work in learning stations, students will gain insights into a few of the events of the war, the people affected and the governments, regions, and people forever altered. While this lesson is originally designed for a diverse high school population of English Language Learners and recent immigrants, some new to this historical topic, it can be altered to fit a mainstream class or a younger grade level.

Rationale

As part of a Humanities (history and English language arts) class project on World War II, students will explore this time period from a set of different perspectives to gain a fuller understanding of the war. Students will work to learn about the events leading up to the outbreak of the war in Europe, the rise of Nazi powers, the Holocaust, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. involvement in the war, and the Pacific Theater including the Japanese occupation of Korea and China, and the war between China and Japan. This lesson, a part of the World War II unit, brings in a look at a lesser known part of this history and enables students to not only further their understanding of the war, but the interconnectedness of people past and present.

Grade Level: High School; grades 9 – 12

Essential Questions

- What is the history and legacy of Jews in Shanghai, China?
- Why was Shanghai considered a safe haven for Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution and a more viable option than other countries?
- What struggles did Jewish refugees in Shanghai face during wartime?

Learning Goals

Content:

- The effects of Nazi persecution on Jews in Europe and their flight to Shanghai, China and living conditions thereafter
- An ongoing legacy of a Jewish community in Shanghai, China
- The effects of Japanese occupation of Shanghai on the Jewish refugees living there during WWII
- The political, military and governmental actions during WWII and their effects on Jewish people

Skills: This lesson will further enhance student knowledge of the following standards:

Common Core Standards

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.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

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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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Lesson Plan

Step One:

Introduce to the class that today we will be studying a lesser known part of World War II through a series of three stations. Pass out the activity guide for the stations, called "World War II: Jewish Refugees in Shanghai," to the students and read the introduction "West Meets East As A Safe Haven Is Formed" aloud to the class. Give the students a few minutes to annotate this text and then answer any clarifying questions for the group.

Step Two:

Ask a student to read the "Your Task" section aloud to the class. Divide the class into three groups and assign their tables a station for the activity. Explain to the students that they will have 15-20 minutes at each station to complete the task. They should work together as a group to view and discuss the videos and readings but are to answer the questions individually and in their own words. Small groups should begin at the first station that they are assigned to.

* Alternatively, set up six tables with stations (2 of each of the three stations) so that there are six groups that have a smaller set of students.

Step Three:

Timing the first station at 15 minutes (allowing for another 5 minutes if needed), have students begin working. Circulate around the room to answer any questions and assist students where necessary. After the designated time, ask groups to switch stations. The group at “Station #1” moves to “Station #2.” “Station #2” moves to “Station #3” and “Station #3 moves to “Station #1.” Do this until each group has visited all of the stations.

Step Four:

Give students additional time to finish up any lingering questions and/or revise work where needed. If there is still time, ask students to do a “Pair-Share” with a partner in their group.

Step Five:

Collect papers and review questions, facts and information with class as a whole.

Assessment

Upon culmination of the three stations in this lesson, students during the following lesson should sit in a circle, as outlined through Restorative and Learning Circles practices, and share what they learned from the stations. Upon a second go around students should share why they feel learning about this part of history is valuable.

As an alternative assessment, students should write a narrative from the viewpoint of a Jewish refugee fleeing Europe to Shanghai and should incorporate facts into their fictional narrative that they learned from the stations activity. This narrative should be historically accurate and embody the reality of the Jewish community of that time and place. Students should revise work with a partner and then be prepared to share their narrative with the class.

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