

The Manhattan Project

World War II Era

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	150 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

What was the Manhattan Project? Is the use or stockpile of nuclear weapons necessary to maintain world peace?

Summary

Students examine primary and secondary source documents and photos surrounding the Manhattan Project. Using a close reading strategy, they will highlight and summarize important information found in the documents in their own words. Students will also analyze photos from the Manhattan Project. Students will then create a “newspaper” account with photos of the Manhattan project as if it were a current news story. The newspaper story will serve as the assessment.

Snapshot

Engage

Students are shown a movie clip of the detonation of a nuclear bomb. They are asked to write down the circumstances when the use of a nuclear bomb upon another country would be appropriate or a necessity or if they believe there is never a justification for the use of an atomic bomb.

Explore

Student groups examine two packets of artifacts about The Manhattan Project and complete a close reading strategy and write a summary from the packet information.

Explain

Based upon their notes and summary, students create a newspaper account with selected photos about the creation of the atomic bomb or of the detonation of the atomic bomb as if it is current news story.

Extend

With the proliferation of nuclear weaponry and warfare, students create a treaty with another "country" of students that defines the terms and use of using nuclear warfare against one another.

Evaluate

The student products can serve as assessments for this lesson. A rubric is provided for the newspaper assessment.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States History (9th through 12th grade))

USH.5.2: Analyze the series of events affecting the outcome of World War II including major battles, military turning points,and key strategic decisions in both the European and Pacific Theaters of operation including Pearl Harbor, the D-Day Invasion, development and use of the atomic bomb, the island-hopping strategy, the Allied conferences at Yalta and Potsdam,and the contributions of Generals MacArthur and Eisenhower.

USH.6.2B: Examine the impact of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the resulting nuclear arms race, the concept of brinkmanship, the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD), the launching of Sputnik and the space race.

Attachments

- Excerpts for SED at Los Alamos A personal Memoir - Spanish.docx
- Excerpts for SED at Los Alamos A personal Memoir.docx
- Leaflet to the Japanese people - Spanish.docx
- Leaflet to the Japanese people.docx
- Newspaper Rubric - Manhattan Project - Spanish.docx
- Newspaper Rubric - Manhattan Project.docx
- Photo Analysis Worksheet 2 - Spanish.docx
- Photo Analysis Worksheet 2.docx
- Photos for Manhattan Project Packet 2 - Spanish.zip
- Photos for Manhattan Project Packet 2.zip
- Press Release about the Atomic Bomb - Spanish.docx
- Press Release about the Atomic Bomb.docx

Materials

- Nuclear bomb video (Many versions of atomic bomb video clips exist.)
- Packet 1 of student materials about the Manhattan Project includes: memo to Americans explaining the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima by President Truman, leaflet to Japanese people, eyewitness accounts of secret workers working on Manhattan Project.
- Packet 2 of student materials includes photos and photo analysis sheet: photo of Fatboy, photo of Hiroshima, 2 photos of Los Alamos
- Newspaper article rubric
- Computer and internet access for students

Engage

Students watch a video clip of an atomic detonation. Place the question on the board, "Under what circumstances, if any, would you see the use of an atomic bomb as necessary?" Students are asked to write a response on a scrap or half sheet of paper to this question.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Aza-2wopCFY

Ask students to crumple their piece of paper and toss it into a box. Redistribute wads of paper to other students and call on students to randomly read these anonymous responses. Continue this for a few more rounds so that most or all of the responses are shared aloud. This is a Commit and Toss activity.

Teacher's Note: Commit And Toss Activity

For a Commit and Toss activity, students write their response on a piece of notebook paper, crumple it up, and toss it into the center of the room or in a box. Each student retrieves a random piece of paper, reads it, and then tosses it back in the box or in the center of the room.. Call on three or four volunteers to share an anonymous response and then have students toss the responses back. After several rounds, most or all responses will have been shared anonymously.

Explore

Students are divided into groups of no more than three and receive a packet of materials (primary and secondary source documents) about the Manhattan Project — the project that developed the atomic bomb in secrecy at Los Alamos, NM.

Teacher's Note: Suggested Organization Of This Lesson

Day 1: Students read primary source documents using close reading strategy and create summaries.

Day 2: Students analyze photos using photo analysis sheet and begin newspaper articles.

Day 3: Students finish newspaper articles. Students get new working groups and begin treaties.

Day 4: Students finish treaties and present their treaties to class.

Students groups will first read the primary sources--the first person accounts at Los Alamos, the memo by President Truman to the American people, and the Japanese leaflet, using the close reading strategy, CUS and Discuss.

Teacher's Note: Close Reading Strategy

Provide copies of the readings for all group members. Have the group work as a team to read the information together. One person or two may wish to read aloud while others listen. As they read, have ALL group members Circle 0 the main idea of each reading, Star * powerful words or phrases that support or emphasize the main idea, and place a Question Mark ? by ANY words or parts that are confusing to them. Ask student groups to create a brief summary of each document after they read it. If paper copies for every student are an issue, students can use post-it notes on the copies for the close reading strategy rather than writing directly on copies. On each post-it note, place a star, circle and ? Beside each symbol, write the statement(s) that fits the symbol from the document.

Student groups create a short summary after each reading and then reflect on what all the documents tell them about the Manhattan Project. Ask student groups to each share out their summary or conclusions about the Manhattan Project.

(Day 2) Student groups will examine the photos and discuss as a team how they support the readings. What does each photo emphasize, point out, or stress? How does the photo contribute to understanding what happened? A photo analysis sheet has been provided in the packet of materials for student groups to complete about the photos.

Explain

To demonstrate their understanding of the significance of the Manhattan Project, its impact, and its effect upon Americans and the Japanese, student groups will create a newspaper account set during the time of the detonation of the bomb. Pass out the newspaper rubric first, discuss expectations from the rubric, and let student groups collaboratively write their "story". These stories can be shared with the class or simply turned in as an assignment. They will be graded with the rubric.

Extend

Regroup students into new working groups. Have students visit the Nuclear Weapons – The Facts or show this link on a projector screen for the class. Other news videos and articles exist about different countries creating nuclear weaponry. To make this assignment current, you may wish to show something from the news currently that is about nuclear weaponry advancement by different countries in addition to the above link.

Based on the information presented on the link, assign one country to each student groups of about 2 to 3. Ask 2 groups with countries of similar nuclear capability and possibly in close proximity to each other to create a treaty that would be beneficial to both countries regarding the use and proliferation of their nuclear warheads. Groups may wish to research their countries' previous stance on the use and proliferation of nuclear warheads before making a treaty. The treaty should answer the essential question:"Is the use (and stockpile) of nuclear weapons necessary to keep world peace?"

Countries present their treaties and rationales for the treaty requirements to the class.

Evaluate

The student products (group document summaries, photo analysis, the newspaper story, and the treaty presentations) can serve as the assessments for the lesson.

Resources

- BOBR. (2013, Apr. 5). Effects of a nuclear bomb [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aza-2wopCFY
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Commit and toss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/119
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and discuss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162