



## Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan World War II

### Subject

U.S. History

### Grade level

9-12

### Duration

One to three class periods

### Objectives

Students will

- research daily life for women in either Britain, the United States, or Germany;
- write a fictional account of daily life based on their research; and
- compare cultural attitudes during this time period among these three countries.

### Materials

- Paper and pencils
- Computer with Internet access
- *World War II* video and VCR

### Procedures

1. Ask students what they know about World War II. Did their grandfathers fight in the war? What did their grandmothers do during World War II?
2. Tell students that they are going to find out about the role of women during World War II. They have the option of researching daily life of women in either Germany, Britain, or the United States. Tell students that they may work alone or in pairs to do their research. Make sure that about a third of the class focuses on women from each country.
3. Give students time in class to complete their research. These Web sites are a good starting point for beginning their work.  
[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Women\\_Nazi\\_Germany.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Women_Nazi_Germany.htm)  
<http://www.macksites.com/PRT1.htm>  
<http://home.freeuk.net/elloughton13/wwar.htm>  
[http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII\\_Women/WomenInWWII.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/WomenInWWII.html)  
[http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII\\_Women/Everybody'sWar.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/Everybody'sWar.html)  
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0001.html>  
<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~cg3/intropage.html>

<http://www.fortunecity.co.uk/meltingpot/oxford/330/mwindex.html>

4. After students have completed their research, tell them to write a fictional story about a woman living in one of these countries during World War II. Students should base their story on the research they just completed. To help students get started, suggest that they answer the following questions in their stories:
  - What did women do during World War II?
  - Did most women work? If so, why?
  - Did women and men at home have to make any sacrifices during the War? What about children and older people? If so, what were they?
  - Do you think life was hard or easy for those at home during the war? Give evidence to support your ideas.
5. Give students time in class to work on their stories. During the next class, ask for volunteers to share their stories with the class. Try to include at least one example from each country.
6. Conclude the lesson by discussing the similarities and differences of daily life for those at home during World War II. In which country or countries did women work? In which country or countries did women stay at home? What does women's role in society during the war say about each country's overall values?

### **Evaluation**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

**3 points:** Students participated actively in class discussions; researched the topic thoroughly and completely; wrote a highly creative and informative piece about daily life during World War II.

**2 points:** Students participated in class discussions; researched the topic; wrote a competent piece about daily life during World War II.

**1 point:** Students participated little in class discussions; did not complete their research; did not complete their piece about daily life during World War II.

### **Extensions**

- Show students the *In Memoriam: Holocaust* segment of the video. Ask students for their reactions. What lessons do they think can be learned through remembering this tragic time in our history?
- The period beginning with the Great Depression and ending with World War II offers many examples of how positive changes can emerge from difficult times. Watch the *Days of Dust* segment of the video to see some of the positive changes that arose out of the Dust Bowl. Have students keep a list of all the ways the world changed for the better after World War II.

### **Vocabulary Blitz**

**Definition:** The bombing of Britain by the Nazis that began in September 1940 and continued through May 1941

**Context:** The bombings that took place during the Blitz affected daily life and caused much ruin throughout the country.

### **daily life**

**Definition:** The day-to-day functioning of people, including what they do, what they eat, and how they spend their spare time

**Context:** For women in the United States and Great Britain, daily life during World War II changed; many had to go to work because so many men were gone.

### **cultural values**

**Definition:** The attitudes of a society that permeate many aspects of that society, including how men, women, and children are treated, how the society is portrayed in the media, and how the society makes political and economic decisions

**Context:** During World War II, the fact that women in Germany were expected to stay home and raise the next generation of perfect Germans says a great deal about Germany's cultural values at this time.

### **Great Depression**

**Definition:** A period of worldwide economic downturn that began in 1929 and extended into the early 1930s, characterized by unemployment, poverty, hunger, and despair

**Context:** Many historians think that the hardship brought on by the Great Depression contributed to the onset of World War II.

### **rationing**

**Definition:** A policy of limiting the amount of food or supplies available to people, usually instituted during lean times when there is not enough to go around

**Context:** Rationing of many foods, including sugar, coffee, and chocolate, during World War II was a way to spread out the meager supplies among more people.

### **World War II**

**Definition:** A war that was fought from 1939 to 1945 between the Allies (Great Britain, United States, Soviet Union, and many other countries) and the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan, and other countries); the Allies wanted to stop the Germans from overtaking Europe and Japan from taking over the islands in the Pacific.

**Context:** The defeat of the Axis powers at the end of the World War II meant that the world had become a much safer, democratic place.

### **Academic Standards**

This lesson plan addresses the following curriculum standards created by the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Culture
- People, Places, and Environments
- Power, Authority, and Governance

### **Credits**

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