

US Firebombing – Why can't we find it?

Subject: American History, 10th Grade

Lesson Goal: The goals of this lesson are to allow students to develop an understanding of the following state benchmarks:

- **History** - Analyze the impact of US participation in World War II, with emphasis on the change from isolationism to international involvement including the reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor.
- **Social Studies Skills and Methods** – Determine the credibility of sources by considering the following: the qualification and reputation of the writer, agreement with other credible sources, recognition of stereotypes, accuracy and consistency of sources, and the circumstances in which the author prepared the source.

Objective/Concept: Students will understand better the actions between the US and Japan during World War II. Students will be looking at the event from a different perspective, that of someone in Japan at the time. They will do this through the primary source reading of the firebombing and viewing of the movie *Grave of the Fireflies*. Both accounts will lead them to question why the devastation of the firebombing is limited to a brief sentence in their textbooks. The desire is for students to realize that a single event can affect multiple parties in many different ways.

Activities:

Day One

1. Students will have fifteen minutes to search pages 554-557, 578-587 of *The Americas* textbook. During those fifteen minutes they will be looking for and documenting US and Japanese actions with each other during WWII, beginning with Pearl Harbor and ending with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
2. As a class we will then work on completing a timeline of their interactions on the whiteboard. Students will fill in any events they missed on their own papers. This should take about fifteen minutes.
3. Pass out "The Tokyo Fire Raids, 1945" to students. Give ten minutes to read the eyewitness account. When they are finished they will have the rest of class to answer the questions that accompany the text, what is not finished in class can be finished as homework.

Day 2

1. As students walk in, they will be handed the Bellringer for the day:
 - What is firebombing? What mention of it is there in the book? Why do you think it is covered as much as it is?
2. From here we will start the movie *Grave of the Fireflies*.

Day 3

1. Watch *Grave of the Fireflies*.

Day 4

1. Finish *Grave of the Fireflies*.
2. Class discussion of the movie.
 - What did you think? How do you think the author feels about the war? What message do you think he is trying to convey?
3. Pass out essay prompt and guidelines. Discuss requirements and ideas for essay as a class. Begin brainstorming.

Materials/Resources:

Primary source reading and questions for each student,

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/tokyo.htm>; Bellringer on half sheet of paper; DVD *Grave of the Fireflies* (88 minutes long); essay prompt and requirements.