

JAPAN – Overview of Japanese War Crimes of the Sino-Japanese War and World War II

Purpose:

- To expose students to war crimes committed by the Japanese military from 1937-1945.

Central Questions:

1. What is a war crime?
2. What war crimes did the Japanese commit in Nanjing?
3. What was Unit 731 and why is this not common knowledge today like the Holocaust is?
4. Who were the comfort women and what is their story?

Rationale:

- Most high school students can tell you what the Holocaust was and the fact that it was such a horrific part of WWII. However, most high school students know very little of the atrocities that the Japanese committed from 1937-1945 in China and throughout the Japanese Empire during WWII. These are only three elements of Japanese atrocities committed during the war. There were many more including the treatment of POWs.

Ohio Content Standards:

- Analyze the results of political, economic and social oppression and the violation of human rights
- Axis expansion during WWII (Japan)
- Consequences of WWII
- Civilian and military losses of WWII
- Analyze one or more issues and present a persuasive argument to defend a position.

Grade Level:

- 9th grade Modern World History

Time Period:

- 2-3 days depending on depth of assignments and activities

Background:

- Before completing this lesson, students would benefit from learning about the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials. This would provide background knowledge that would help students in acquiring this new information. Depending on the textbook, students may not have had any mention of these events.

Procedures:

1. Discuss with students the definition of a war crime and what the Germans did to the Jews during WWII that constituted a war crime. Students should recall the forced relocation of Jews, concentration camps, mass killings, firing squad killings, medical experiments conducted at Auschwitz, attempts at preventing births among the Jewish population, death marches and forced labor.

2. Present PowerPoint to class. Presentation is divided into 4 sections. After each section are discussion questions to use with the class. I am also providing a list of websites that I found to be useful in putting this together.
 - a. Rape of Nanjing
http://www.centurychina.com/wiihist/njmassac/nmintro.htm#njm_index
<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9712/13/remembering.nanjing/>
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/223038.stm>
 - b. Comfort Women of Korea and China
<http://research.unc.edu/endeavors/win97/comfort.html>
<http://www.comfort-women.org/Unfinished.htm>
<http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~soh/cw-links.htm>
 - c. Unit 731 – includes hyperlink to PBS.org to show a 10 minute clip from the series American Experience, The Living Weapon. Show chapter 6 as it pertains to Unit 731.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weapon/program/index.html>
<http://www.ww2pacific.com/unit731.html>
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/08/28/1030508070534.html>
<http://www.centurychina.com/wiihist/germwar/731rev.htm>
3. Culminating assignment:
 - a. Congress is debating measure to put pressure on Japan to accept responsibility for the war crimes committed by its military during WWII. Students will write a persuasive letter to their congressman encouraging them to vote for the measure. Students should use information from the presentation as well as information from other resource. Links for each item can be provided to students. Teacher may wish to collaborate with Language Arts Department on writing persuasive letters.
4. Assessment:
 - a. Student letters should include facts based from the lesson or from internet research using the links above or other sources of information. Teachers should preview other sources of information that they wish to include for students use due to the graphic nature of these horrific events.

A rubric similar to this may be used to evaluate student letters.

| Letter Elements | Score | | | | | |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Letter contains “thesis” from which the student generates details to support | 5 | | | | | 0 |
| Letter contains accurate use of facts to support thesis | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Letter uses language to persuade recipient to act accordingly | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Correct use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics | 5 | | 3 | | | 0 |
| Total | 30 | | | | | |
| Teacher Comments/Feedback | | | | | | |