

**NCTA Seminar 2019**  
**Bob Wilson**

**Lesson:** Hiroshima as Seen Through the Prism of Japanese Pop Culture (Anime and Manga)

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Estimated Time:** Two-Three Class Periods / 90-120 Minutes

**Special Note:** The sources used in this lesson present graphic images of Hiroshima and Japan during WWII. Please review sources before using with your students.

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**Related State of Ohio Standards**

**U.S. History**

**Topic:** THE COLD WAR (1945-1991)

The United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) emerged as the two strongest powers in international affairs. Ideologically opposed, they challenged one another in a series of confrontations known as the Cold War. The costs of this prolonged contest weakened the U.S.S.R. so that it collapsed due to internal upheavals as well as American pressure. The Cold War had social and political implications in the United States

**Content Statement:** Use of atomic weapons changed the nature of war, altered the balance of power and began the nuclear age.

**Modern World History**

**Topic:** The first half of the 20th century was one of rapid technological advances. It was a period when the tensions between industrialized nations resulted in World War I and set the stage for World War II. While World War II transformed the balance of world power, it was the most destructive and costly war in terms of human casualties and material resources expended.

**Content Statement:** World War II devastated most of Europe and Asia, led to the occupation of Eastern Europe and Japan, and began the atomic age.

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**Objectives:** By the conclusion of this lesson students will:

- Better understand the physical and material impact of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- Better understand the social impact of the use of atomic weapons in Japan
- Better understand the emergence of Anime and Manga in post WWII Japan
- Demonstrate their ability to locate and interpret how popular culture reflects a unique perspective of social history

**Pre Assignment-** Read pages 241-284 of Barefoot Gen Volume 1.

**Outline of Instruction:**

- 1.) Have students read pages 241-284 of Barefoot Gen Volume 1 from the link provided.

This covers the dropping of the atomic bomb and the aftermath of the blast.

- 2.) At the beginning of class have students complete a 5-10 minute free write responding to the following prompt: Does Barefoot Gen offer a historically sound account of physical and emotional impact of the atomic bomb on the people of Hiroshima? Discuss students' responses to the prompts.

- 3.) Lead a group discussion on the use of the atomic bomb on Japan in WWII. (Teacher's will want to make sure students have read about or had some background instruction on this topic prior to this lesson.)

- 4.) Optional: Show students the short clip "Was it Wrong to Drop the Atom Bomb on Japan?" After watching the clip, ask to students if their opinion on dropping the bomb is the same or different. Have students discuss with partners and share their thought with the class.

- 5.) Show students the anime clip of Barefoot Gen (12 minutes). As they watch, have them consider how watching the anime has a different impact than reading the magna version of Barefoot Gen.

- 6.) Conduct a brief lecture on the development of Manga and Anime leading up to and following WWII in Japan. Be sure to discuss how popular culture allows societies to share ideas about traumatic and difficult events in a unique and effective fashion.

- 7.) Group Pair Share: Have students discuss with a smaller group ways in which popular culture is used in their world to convey ideas that are socially unpopular. (You can use the example of the Harlem Renaissance as a time when minorities safely shared their views of the world through music, poetry, art, and media.)

**Lecture / Discussion-** A lecture covering the development, utilization, and impact of the atomic bomb should proceed reading and or viewing Barefoot Gen.

**Post Assessment:** After reading and viewing the bombing sections of Barefoot Gen, students will explore pages 1-240 of the Barefoot Gen Manga and do the following: Find another example of how World War II impacted the people of Japan. Write a half page to page reflection describing how the war impacted Japanese society and how this example is depicted in the manga. Be sure to discuss whether you believe the manga is a good source of historical knowledge. (potential topics include: rationing, lack of food / medical care, air-raids, Fire Bombing of Tokyo, POW camps, Japanese opposition to the war, etc...)

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**Resources Needed:**

- 1.) MANGA: Barefoot Gen Volume 01: [https://archive.org/details/manga\\_BarefootGen-v01/page/n35](https://archive.org/details/manga_BarefootGen-v01/page/n35)
- 2.) Anime: Barefoot Gen (1983) - Atomic bomb on Hiroshima  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYicqammozc>
- 3.) Optional Resource: Was it Wrong to Drop the Atom Bomb on Japan?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmIBbcxseXM>