

Casey Matthews

Ninth Grade English: Thinking about the A-Bomb

Lesson Summary: Persuasive writing/developing an argument: Students will read Hiroshima by John Hersey and decide whether or not the United States was justified in dropping the atomic bomb.

Estimated Duration: 3 weeks- Students will read the book; students will read a variety of artifacts/articles and make a decision based on articles; students will craft a persuasive paragraph (with concessions)

Commentary:

Pre-Assessment: Students have covered WWII and the atomic bomb previously in world history. Teacher will question the student to determine what they know about Hiroshima/Japan prior to WWII.

Post-Assessment: Students will submit a persuasive paragraph, 1.5-2 pages in length arguing whether or not the US was justified in dropping the atomic bomb. Students will also include three concessions and counter arguments.

Scoring Guidelines: Students will be scored in strength of argument, how well the students argue against their concessions, the strength of concessions, and spelling/grammar

Instructional Procedures:

- 1) Read Hiroshima by John Hersey
- 2) Read the following articles: “The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb”- Selected Case Studies in American History; “Paul Tibbets, 92, Enola Gay pilot”- New York Times; letter from Albert Einstein to President Roosevelt; “Exposing the Rape of Nanking”- Newsweek 12/1/1997; “Discomfited Japan: Japan’s Wartime Sex Slaves”- The Economist 12/16/2000; “Truman’s Motivations: Using the Atomic Bomb in the Second World War” by John W. Cooper- www.johnwcooper.com
- 3) Students will decide whether or not the US should have dropped the atomic bomb and will collect data/arguments from the previously mentioned texts
- 4) Students will outline three concessions based on date and then develop their three arguments based on their concessions. (For example: students may believe that the atomic bomb was unnecessary, but should still develop a concession admitting its arguable utility. “While the atomic bomb ultimately killed xxxx number of Japanese citizens, the war, had it continued, would have killed and estimated xxx.”

- 5) Students are required to use one logical, ethical, and emotional appeal-
<http://papyr.com/hbp/appeals.htm>
- 6) Students will write a rough draft/conference with the teacher
- 7) Students will write a final draft

Differentiated Instructional Support

Large class discussion, study guides for the novel, writing rubrics/outlines; some advanced students may due their own research in teacher approved databases

Interdisciplinary Connections

US History/World Studies; Science (radiation exposure)

Technology Connections

Online databases

Resources needed:

Please see the above articles listed under #2- this list is by no means exhaustive and any credible article can be used in this process.