

LESSON PLAN

Title: Small stories about big events

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Duration: 45 minutes

Student age: 14-15 years old

Learning objectives:

- Expanding students' knowledge of World War II by researching local history and ancestors during this period
- Strengthening students' awareness of the importance of cultivating a culture of remembrance
- Developing critical thinking by analyzing the consequences of World War II
- Connecting acquired knowledge with the present day in order to prevent the emergence of some potential conflicts

Main outcomes/students will be able to:

- State why personal and local stories are important in studying history
- Know how to express their views on the consequences of World War II and how they shaped the today's society
- Discuss how effectively a culture of remembrance can prevent conflicts today and in the future
- Create educational materials that foster and promote a culture of remembrance, that can be used and enhanced by future generations

Prerequisite knowledge of students:

- General knowledge about World War II (its causes, course and aftermath)
- Basic knowledge about the importance of historical sources, types of sources and how to use them

Methods:

- Discussion/debate
- Sources analysis (photos, testimony)
- Group work
- Research task

Additional material:

- Timeline and photos
- Table with columns for sorting facts about sources
- Last year's student's journal about their WW2 ancestors
<https://www.flipsnack.com/istorija/- .html>

MAIN PHASES OF THE LESSON:

1. Introduction to the topic, filling in the timeline, one extra photo (10 minutes)

The teacher introduces the topic and explains that he will divide the students into groups and give each group several photographs and a timeline so that they can arrange the photos chronologically correctly. Then, based on the photos, he renews with them the most important facts about World War II. Teacher discusses with the students whether they had any doubts about the photographs. Namely, the teacher deliberately gave each group one photo of a person who is not known to most. The goal is to further provoke and increase students' interest in class activities. This is also an introduction to the second activity, related to the discussion of the importance of testimonies about the events of the war.

2. Source analysis, group work with column tables and discussion (15 minutes)

The teacher begins a discussion and asks students how much they know about the past of their ancestors, whether any of them participated in the war, were in a concentration camp, lived under occupation...Teacher explains that the photo from the first activity shows an ancestor of one of the students and then reads his war experience, which was recorded in a journal that older students already wrote about their ancestors (<https://www.flipsnack.com/istorija/-.html>). Before the analysis, he distributes column tables to students in groups, on which students should write down what are the undeniable facts in the testimony, what are his opinions, and what are possible subsequent interpretations of the witness that arose after the end of the war. Teacher pointing out to them that one must be careful with such sources, although such testimonies are valuable for studying history and for the ancestor's descendants also. The teacher emphasizes that in history it is necessary to look at the broader context, but also that it is easier to identify with the stories of ordinary people and that it is important to take them into account. The teacher develops a conversation with students about the importance of preserving such memories and concludes that although some facts and their interpretation in eyewitness accounts do not match, it is necessary to cultivate a culture of remembrance. This is also the basis for the next activity in class.

3. Debate (15 minutes)

The teacher asks students to write 3 arguments each about why it is important to cultivate a culture of remembrance, what are the advantages of using local or personal stories in history, and why it is important for each of us to remember our ancestors. In the debate, students evaluate each other's arguments and draw conclusions about how important it is for them to know more about their ancestors. They also reflect on how much knowledge from history can prevent conflicts in today's society. Together, they look back on the importance of their merits for the liberation of the country 80 years ago.

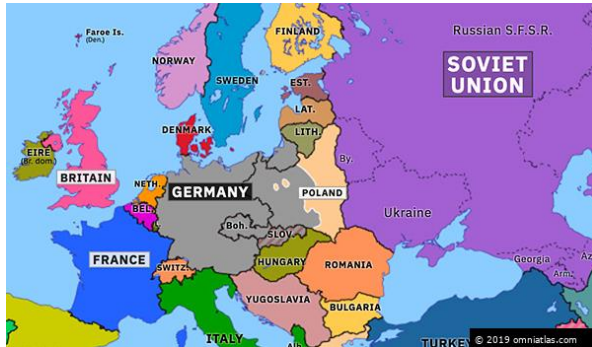
4. Homework assignment (5 minutes)

Finally, the teacher gives and explains a research task. Students should research the past of their families and write about their ancestors participated in World War II and what messages they passed on to their descendants. Students' papers should create a collection of testimonies that can be supplemented over time and be additional educational material for students, such as a journal used in class.

Additional material:

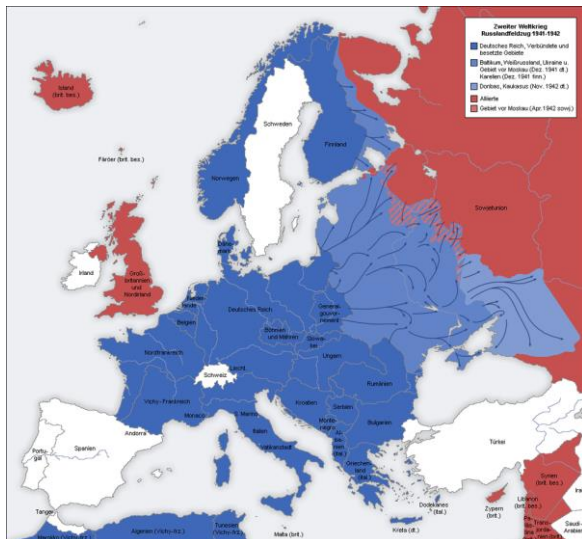
1. Timeline with photos

1939.



Europe at the beginning of World War II

1941-1942.



Europe during World War II 1941/1942.

1943.



Big Three meeting in Tehran

1944.



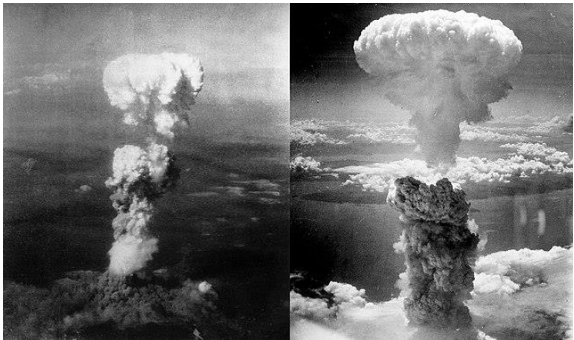
Liberation of Belgrade

1945.



Conference in Potsdam

1945.



Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki

?



The ancestor of the student

2. Testimony and an image that lacks a place



My great-grandfather worked as a cook before the war (...) My great-grandfather was briefly imprisoned during the occupation because he worked for the king. Since he was only a cook, he was released. (...) During the war, he and his family lived in occupied Belgrade. Many families lived in shared apartments at the time. Citizens had to show respect for the new authorities, the German occupiers. A curfew was introduced, and for a while there was no electricity or water. Citizens had to remove rubble from the streets, so that life could return to normal as soon as possible. It was very difficult to get food. They received food and firewood vouchers. They were forced to sell valuables and even furniture. (...) They lived very hard, but they stuck together, in order to make life under occupation easier. The camps were in Banjica and Sajmište. Jews and Roma were registered, their rights were taken away and they were taken to camps.

3. Table with columns for sorting facts about sources

Undeniable facts	Witness's opinion	Subsequent interpretations of witnesses
