



Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan Gunpowder and the Explosion of World War

Subject

World History

Grade level

6-8

Duration

Two class periods

Materials

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Computer with Internet access
- *Gunpowder and the Explosion of World War* video and VCR

Objectives

Students will

- discuss what they know about war technology used during 20th-century conflicts;
- research three historical events; and
- write an essay that describes the role war technology played in these events and that speculates about the course of history under different circumstances.

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking students: How were the wars of the 20th century fought? What technology and tactics were used? Write their ideas on a sheet of newsprint. Possible suggestions include the use of
 - trenches during World War I,
 - the atom bomb to end World War II in the Pacific,
 - guerilla tactics in the Vietnam War, and
 - air power in the recent conflict in Iraq.
2. Explain that the way battles are fought often determines which side is victorious, in turn changing the course of history. Tell students they will have an opportunity to research three historical conflicts. Then, they will describe how the winning side affected subsequent events and speculate about how history might be different if the other side had won. Give students these conflicts:

- The Battle of Crécy
 - The Ottoman takeover of Constantinople
 - Hernán Cortés' conquest of Mexico
3. Set the stage for students' research by showing a few minutes of the video *Gunpowder and the Explosion of World War* so they visualize what at least one of these conflicts looked like.
 4. Students can work in small groups or in pairs to complete this activity. Give them time in class to conduct their research. If needed, have students finish the research at home. The following Web sites offer relevant information.

Battle of Crécy

<http://www.chronique.com/Library/Knights/crecy.htm>

<http://www.archeryweb.com/archery/crecy.htm>

<http://members.tripod.com/~midgley/crecy.html>

<http://acasun.eckerd.edu/~oberhot/crecy.htm>

Ottoman Takeover of Constantinople

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/08/waa/ht08waa.htm>

<http://ragz-international.com/ottoman%20empire.htm>

<http://classes.yale.edu/99-00/hist325b/ConsDocs/DoukCh40.htm>

Hernán Cortés' Conquest of Mexico

<http://www.tcr.org/mexico.html>

http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/PRESCOTT/bk02_ch03.html

http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/PRESCOTT/bk02_ch08.html

<http://www.prodigyweb.net.mx/jrossow/History/Conquest/ConquestBook2Chap3.htm>

<http://www.millersv.edu/~columbus/papers/richart.html>

5. As students investigate the conflicts, ask them to consider these six questions:
 - How did the weapons used affect the conflict's outcome?
 - How did military strategies affect the outcome?
 - What was the short-term result of the conflict?
 - What were the long-term results of the conflict?
 - How did the outcome affect the course of history?
 - What might have happened if the opposite side had won?
6. During the next class period, have students write an essay that addresses the six questions. If time allows, give students an opportunity to share their work.
7. Conclude the lesson by discussing the conflicts and why the winning side in each was victorious. Ask students: What role did weapons play in the victories? What is the relationship between war technology and the course of history?

Extensions

1. Have students pick a 20th century conflict, such as World War II or the Korean War, to research. Ask them to consider how war technology determined the outcome. What would the world look like today if the opposite side had won?
2. Ask students to imagine that they were sent back in time to one of the conflicts studied during this lesson. What do they think daily life would have been like? Students can use the Web sites given in Step 4 as a starting point for their research.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students researched the topic carefully and thoroughly; developed a creative and comprehensive essay; actively participated in class discussions.

2 points: Students researched the topic; developed a competent essay; participated somewhat in class discussions.

1 point: Students did not complete their research; developed an essay with gaps and misunderstandings; did not participate in class discussions.

Vocabulary

Battle of Crécy

Definition: The first decisive battle of the Hundred Years War, in which the English were victorious over the French

Context: The Battle of Crécy, which took place in 1346, was a key battle because the English longbow defeated the French knights, leading to changes in the way battles were fought.

conquistador

Definition: Spanish for conqueror; a leader in the Spanish conquest of the Americas, especially Mexico and Peru during the 16th century

Context: Hernan Cortés is considered one of the great conquistadors of the 16th century.

Hernan Cortés

Definition: Spanish conquistador who defeated the Aztecs in 1521

Context: By fighting battles on horseback and using guns, Hernan Cortés defeated the Aztecs in 1521, two years after he arrived in Mexico.

longbow

Definition: A long, hand-drawn bow that was used vertically; favorite weapon of the British from the reign of Edward II

Context: The longbow could shoot arrows up to 200 yards—a much greater distance than the crossbow—which helped ensure an English victory over the French at the Battle of Crécy.

Mehmet II

Definition: Considered the true founder of the Ottoman Empire, he completed the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by storming Constantinople in 1453

Context: Using his supergun, Mehmet II and his troops were able to overcome the walls that had protected Constantinople for centuries.

Ottomans

Definition: Turkish-speaking people from Central Asia who captured Constantinople and created an empire that extended into Syria, Egypt, and across North Africa

Context: The Ottomans brought Islam into the countries they conquered and depended on their military leaders to ensure control over their growing empire.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following curriculum standards created by the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Culture
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Global Connections

Credit

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