



Turmoil in 20th-Century Europe

The focus of this lesson plan is clues that have pieced together the story of the Titanic disaster.

Subject

Geography

Grade level

6-8

Duration

Three class periods

Objectives

Students will

- review basic facts about the Titanic disaster;
- research materials that have helped piece together the story of the Titanic; and
- create Titanic scrapbooks.

Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- Print resources about the Titanic
- Sturdy paper for their scrapbook (10 per student)
- Materials to create scrapbook pages (markers, paint, colored pencils, glue, scissors)
- Stapler, three hole punch and string, report folder, or other items to attach scrapbook pages
- *Turmoil in 20th-Century Europe* video and VCR (or DVD and DVD player)

Procedures

1. After watching *Turmoil in 20th-Century Europe*, review some of the basic facts about Titanic. Why was this ship so impressive? (*It was one of the largest, fastest, and most opulent ocean liners ever built; it was thought to be unsinkable.*) When did it sink? (*April 14, 1912*) Where did it sink? (*North Atlantic Ocean, south of Newfoundland*) Where was the Titanic sailing? (*from England to the United States*) What incident caused the disaster? (*It hit an iceberg that pierced the steel hull.*) Why did so many people perish? (*There were lifeboats for only half the passengers.*) Who discovered the wreckage and when? (*Geologist Robert Ballard discovered the Titanic in 1985.*)

2. Ask students to discuss how experts have pieced together the story of the Titanic. (*They have found personal diaries and letters; testimonies of survivors; photographs and diagrams of the ship; artifacts found on the Titanic; underwater excavations of the sunken ship.*)
3. Tell students that they are going to explore some historic documents, images, and personal testimonies about the Titanic disaster, and they will work in small teams to create a Titanic scrapbook. Their pages should include any images and text that help tell the story of the Titanic such as personal quotes from survivors, photographs of the ship and its passengers, headlines or excerpts from newspaper articles, printouts of telegrams or letters, pictures of discovered artifact, or lyrics from songs sung aboard the ship. Each item should be clearly labeled.
4. Divide the class into teams of about three students and give 10 pieces of sturdy paper to each team; these will be their scrapbook pages. Teams can fill the pages with sketches, writing, printouts or cutouts from Web pages – anything that tells the story of the Titanic. They should also create a cover page with a title. Encourage students to be creative; they might also include a picture of the ship, a quote from a survivor, or a message of memory.
5. Allow students to use print and online resources in their research. They may also want to have each team member use a different resource, so one student chooses images, another choose quotes from survivors, and a third chooses samples from other resources. The following Web sites provide a wealth of historic documents, images, and music:

I Survived the Titanic (personal account)

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/media/world/9607/titanic.html>

Account of Passenger on Carpathia

http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/documents/people_blackmarr_f_sb.shtml

Titanic's Lifeboats (quotes, photos, pictures)

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/9989/intro.html>

Titanic Files (SOS message, letters, witness testimony, and other documents)

<http://www.thesmokinggun.com/titanic/titanic.html>

All Things Titanic: Reproduction of Documents

<http://www.abratis.de/sources/pictures/scans.html>

Images from Maryland Newspapers

<http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/stagser/s1259/121/7589/html/0000.html>

Newspaper Coverage of Sinking (headlines, misleading news, cartoons)

<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whoware/exhibits/titanic/titanic1.htm>

Titanic Exhibit (story through images)

http://search.eb.com/titanic/01_PORT/pict_01.html

All Things Titanic: Ship Images
<http://www.abratis.de/ship/>

Titanic Artifacts
<http://www.titanic-online.com/titanic/expeditions/artifacts.html>

Preserving Titanic Artifacts
<http://www.titanichistoricalsociety.org/articles/preservation.asp>

Items from Titanic Museum Collection (artifacts and documents)
<http://www.titanichistoricalsociety.org/museum/museumcollection.asp>

Music Played on the Titanic
<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/misc/music.shtml>

6. Allow teams one class period to research and collect materials and a second period to create their scrapbooks. Remind them to clearly label each item. To attach the pages, students can use a staple, a three-hole punch and string, or a report cover.
7. Have teams share their scrapbooks; then discuss what they learned as a class. What were some of the most powerful images or words? Which personal stories, images, or documents do they think they'll remember? How do resources provide different sides to the story? Are all the materials reliable sources for understanding the facts? Why or why not? If not, why are they still important?

Extensions

For the "Ultimate Survival" segment: As a class, review what you learned about the ghettos established by the Nazis in occupied Poland. Why were they established? Who lived in them? What happened to many of the people who lived there? Challenge students to learn more about life in the Warsaw ghetto, which held 400,000 people. Use this Web site as a good starting point with background, images, and links: <http://www.fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/timeline/ghettos.htm>.

For the "Down Came the Wall" segment: Have students explore the history and politics of the Berlin Wall and the how the news differed in East and West Berlin; visit the Newseum's site: <http://www.newseum.org/berlinwall/>

For the "Accidental Fallout" segment: Review basic facts about nuclear energy with the class. Have students research the risks and benefits of nuclear power. To understand the dangers of nuclear accidents, have students compare Chernobyl with the 1979 accident at Three Mile Island in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. How did each happen? What were the short-term effects? What have been some long-term effects?

For the "Clearing the Land" segment: To learn more about the issue of landmines, see "Schools Demining Schools," the United Nations Web site: <http://www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus/banmines/index.asp>. You'll find background material, personal accounts, and other resources. Students can also join the project to interact with experts, survivors, and students at schools that are being demined. They can also join one of several campaigns to raise consciousness and funds.

Evaluation

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

3 points: Students were active in class discussion; could cite several details about the Titanic from the video; created at least 10 scrapbook pages (including a cover); pages included several types of resources (images, historic documents, personal quotes); and materials came from many sources.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions; could cite some details about the Titanic from the video; created fewer than 10 scrapbook pages (including a cover); pages included a few types of resources; materials came from a few sources.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; could cite few or no details about the Titanic from the video; created an incomplete scrapbook, with only one or two types of resources; materials come from one source only.

Vocabulary

artifact

Definition: An object produced or shaped by human craft, especially a tool, weapon, or ornament of archaeological or historical interest

Context: Underwater excavations have yielded significant artifacts from the Titanic.

ocean liner

Definition: A large passenger ship

Context: The Titanic was the largest ocean liner ever built.

testimony

Definition: Evidence or statement given by a witness

Context: The testimony from Titanic survivors shed light on the disaster.

Academic Standards

The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) provides 18 national geography standards that the geographically informed person knows and understands. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncge.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following NCGE standards:

- Human Systems
- Environment and Society

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of the NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Science, Technology, and Society

Credit

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