

Lesson Plan: “Shanghai 1937: Where World War II Began””

Recording Sheet and Research Activity

Subject

The Japanese aggression in Shanghai, its context in the lead up to World War II, and the question of the muted reaction of the rest of the world.

Estimated Time

One class period, plus homework for Research Activity

Grade Level

9-12

Essential Question

Why didn't the European countries or the United States pay more heed to what was happening in Manchuria?

Materials

1. Handout 1: Recording Sheet
2. Handout 2: Timeline Activity
3. Handout 3: Research Activity: Small Town USA in August, 1937
4. Computer, projector and screen for the showing of “Shanghai 1937: Stalingrad on the Yangtze”

Objectives

- Students will watch the film actively, notating the major events of the Battle of Shanghai.
- Students will create record the events in the World and US Timeline
- Students will research headlines and events in small town USA in August, 1937, using the website <https://newspaperarchive.com>

Main Activity

- Distribute Recording Sheet, “Shanghai 1937: Where World War II Began.”
- As you show the movie, stop at key points for recording dates on the Recording Sheets.

- Students then fill in the events they have recorded beneath each line of the Timeline handout.
- Discussion: Which events in Europe and the United States overshadowed the importance of the Japanese invasion of China, especially for average citizens?

Extension Activity

<https://newspaperarchive.com/san-antonio-light-aug-14-1937-p-1/>

This is one page of hundreds of small town newspapers collected at this website.

Students will choose a *different* newspaper to examine, maybe one in their own home town or a nearby one. Encourage thinking about issues like those bullet pointed below.

What were other concerns for San Antonio readers, from this front page?

- Headline was about the Battle of Shanghai, but read “4 Americans Die in Shanghai Air Raids.” Do Americans still see world tragedies strongly in terms of how many US citizens are involved?
- A “negro” attacked a restaurant cashier and was apprehended. Racism is obviously rife in San Antonio, Texas, although it’s not in the deep South.
- FDR’s choice of Hugo Black to serve on the Supreme Court appears to have no trouble in confirmation.
- There is a search for six Soviet airmen who crashed their planes.

If students are interested, they can continue to back pages and look at ads, sports, entertainment, etc.