

Analyzing Propaganda: Illinois at War

By: Ryan Martin

Abstract: Over a period of three days my students will look at photos, written documents, and editorial cartoons to analyze the illustrators meaning of the pictures/documents. The students will then look at local primary sources to increase interest in history in general. These lessons will be covered during the Holocaust/WWII Unit.

Essential Questions:

How can we use local & national primary sources to understand a historical time period?

How can a picture without words persuade? What is the purpose of propaganda? What stereotypes are used in cartoons?

Is it more meaningful reading documents from citizens in your area about a time in history?

Has our local area changed? How? Are there things the same?

Can the students tie in the local activity to the national crisis of World War II? How are they connected?

Duration: Three class periods

Assessment:

The students will analyze photos and written documents. Their analysis of a local primary document will be demonstrated through analysis worksheets.

The students will also find editorial cartoons at home to bring in for discussion, Students will create their own editorial cartoon to share with class.

Setting the purpose:

Students will examine propaganda posters from national and local primary sources to examine history within these artifacts. Discussion following leading questions by the teacher will spark interest and build background. Students will also examine a letter from a local source that includes a cartoon. The analysis and discussion will lead to the connection between national and local history through actual documents written during the time period.

Analysis of local primary sources/Ties to National:

The teacher will bring in the school's laptop/projection cart to display propaganda posters. This is to spark interest and the initial conversation of defining the term propaganda. The students will also have copies of posters from "Images of Hate: Visual Propaganda Under Hitler and Stalin". (Background information about each poster is provided in the teacher's resource booklet.) Alternate website for posters:

The students will each receive a copy of Document 4 from "Illinois At War, 1941-1945: A Selection of Documents from the Illinois State Archives." This document contains a letter written from the Chairman of the Kankakee County USDA War Board, requesting farmers to donate old tractors for scrap metal. This document also includes a cartoon that states, "'SCRAP' to slap the Jap! Sure! We'll give 'em our scrap". This cartoon can be used to discuss American propaganda and the cartoon can be analyzed for stereotyping.

By looking at the different national and local sources the students will be able to see the purpose of propaganda and the different stereotypes. The sources can also show the role that the average citizen not fighting in the war could take locally.

Materials and Resources:

Laptop/projector cart to display a timeline of the era and to display photos and posters to spark interest

<http://usd230.k12.ks.us/espictt/timeline/timeline.htm>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2children/research/photos_and_posters/pandp_index01.shtml

Another Poster website

http://usd230.k12.ks.us/espictt/memorabilia/poster_memorabilia.htm

Copies of Document 4 from Illinois At War, 1941-1945: A selection of Documents from the Illinois State Archives. (Green Box) Each student should have their own document to analyze.

Copy of Written Document Analysis Worksheet

Copy of Photo Analysis Worksheet

Posters of World Wars I and II CD-ROM and Book