

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title – Use of Persuasive Strategies to Analyze Historical Information- WWII Posters

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Grade – 9-12

Length of class period – four (4) 55 min. class periods

Inquiry – (What essential questions are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?) What are effective strategies to use for written and verbal argument or persuasion? How can we critically evaluate rhetorical strategies used in primary sources which have been used by others to persuade?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

- 1) Given a topic and based on what they already know, groups of students will formulate arguments designed to persuade others and present them to the rest of the class.
- 2) Presentations will be analyzed by the class to determine why they are or are not effective.
- 3) Given a list of terms, strategies, and definitions, students will be able to apply persuasion terms and strategies to written and oral activities.
- 4) Given a list of controversial topics, each student will select one and effectively use each strategy in a written essay.
- 5) Given oral presentations, students will be able to accurately identify strategies of persuasion being used.
- 6) Given World War II posters designed by the government of the United States to advance the war effort by use of persuasion, the student will accurately infer the poster's message, purpose, originator, intended audience, perceived effectiveness and persuasive strategies for each poster.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

- 1) Petit, A., Soto, E., Already experts: showing how much they know about writing and reading arguments, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45, no.8, May 2002, pp 674-681.
- 2) Persuasive Essay Collection
<http://home.earthlink.net/~jhholly/persuasive.html>
- 3) Powers of Persuasion
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion_home.html

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

- 1) After Petit and Soto (2002), groups of students (in competition) use strategies of persuasion already known to them to persuade the class that their group deserves to win the prize (which should be highly desirable). A recorder for each group takes notes to be used later. Each group makes their presentation and the class members cast their votes for the most persuasive presentation (and which group receives the prize).
- 2) Group presentations are discussed and analyzed for effectiveness. Specific strategies are linked to examples used by different groups. Specific strategies are identified, named and defined. A list of argument terms are presented and defined. (Petit & Soto,2002)
- 3) Students are given the list of topics from the “Persuasive Essay Collection”. Each student selects a topic and writes a persuasive essay incorporating each strategy. The first draft is collected, commented on by the teacher and returned to students for further writing.
- 4) Readings, transcripts or recordings from primary sources are introduced to students for analysis and evaluation of persuasive strategies; each followed by a discussion of results.
- 5) Students are divided into small groups. Each group is given a different collection of World War II posters depicting images which attempt to be persuasive about an aspect of the U.S. war effort. Students are asked to infer the poster’s message, purpose, originator, intended audience, perceived effectiveness and persuasive strategies that are employed. Each group will then present their conclusions to the entire class.
- 6) Second draft of the individual student’s persuasive essays is collected either for final grade or further revision.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- 1) By the successful completion of the individual persuasive essay activity (at least 85% accuracy and completeness) using a rubric jointly constructed with the students.
- 2) Successful completion (85% correct) of a written individual assessment which determines whether or not students can accurately use terms, definitions and names of strategies related to persuasion (Objective #3).
- 3) Individual student participation grade for group activities based on teacher observation of participation.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- Evaluate data within the historical, social, political and economic context in which it was created, testing its credibility and evaluating its bias.
- Use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives.
- Identify various parties and analyze their interest in conflicts from selected historical periods.
- Display empathy for people who have lived in the past.