

Northwest History Consortium

The Fate of the Enola Gay

Amy Caldeira
10th – 12th Grade
National Standard

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945) / Standard 3

Standard 3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

Standard 3A: Analyze the factors contributing to the rise of fascism, national socialism, and communism in the interwar period. [Analyze multiple causation]

Analyze the reasons for the growing tensions with Japan in East Asia culminating with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. [Marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances]

Standard 3B: Explain the major turning points of the war and contrast military campaigns in the European and Pacific theaters. [Draw upon data in historical maps]

Evaluate the decision to employ nuclear weapons against Japan and assess later controversies over the decision. [Evaluate major debates among historians]

Explain the financial, material, and human costs of the war and analyze its economic consequences for the Allies and the Axis powers. [Utilize visual and quantitative data]

Describe military experiences and explain how they fostered American identity and interactions among people of diverse backgrounds. [Utilize literary sources including oral testimony]

Standard 3C: Evaluate the war's impact on science, medicine, and technology, especially in nuclear physics, weaponry, synthetic fibers, and television. [Utilize quantitative data]

Evaluate how Americans viewed their achievements and global responsibilities at war's end. [Interrogate historical data]

Montana State Standards

(Grades 9-12)

Content Standard 1: Student access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

Content Standard 2.6: Students analyze and evaluate conditions, actions and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among groups and nations (e.g., current events from newspapers, magazines, television).

Content Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

Content Standard 6.6: Analyze the interactions of individuals, groups and institutions in society (e.g., social mobility, class conflict, and globalization).

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

"Her (Enola Gay's) place in history has been dealt with unfairly by those who decry the inhumanity of her August 6th mission. Ladies and gentlemen, there is no humanity in warfare."

–General Tibbets, General and Commander of the Enola Gay on August 6, 1945

"[I]n being the first to use it, we . . . adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children."

–Adm. William D. Leahy, President Truman's Chief of Staff

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Problem:

Was the United States' use of atomic weaponry a necessary military operation against Japan during World War II? Should the artifacts of that era be celebrated, or are they a reminder of merciless act that should have been avoided?

SCENARIO

By July of 1945, \$2 billion had been spent on the Manhattan Project, which resulted in the development of the atomic bomb. With the war in Europe concluded, the United States was focused on the war against Japan. Although the Japanese military was beaten down, the United States knew that they would not surrender willingly. President Harry S. Truman was given the task of deciding the fate of countless Americans and Japanese people. After much deliberation with military and economic experts, Truman ordered the Enola Gay to drop the atomic bomb named "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, followed by another drop on Nagasaki by the plane named Bocks Car.

Late in the 20th century, the Smithsonian Institution chose to exhibit the Enola Gay, the plane which dropped the first atomic bomb. While this appeared on the surface to be a typical historical display, it soon created a major public debate. Many felt that the choice to drop the atomic bomb had been a poor one which led to the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians that initiated a nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union. Truman, they argued, could have made other choices. Others, particularly soldiers, pilots, and others involved in the war itself, believed that the display would inform its visitors about an important event in world history. These individuals believed the Truman decision made was a logical and necessary one.

TASK

You have been hired by the Smithsonian Board of Regents to investigate the situation and develop a recommendation of whether the Enola Gay exhibit should be made public or be canceled. Your team must consider Truman's rationalization for using the bomb, as well as the appropriateness of the potential display. Your recommendation must provide facts and support to substantiate your conclusion.

Develop a PowerPoint and be prepared to deliver an oral presentation addressing the audience as the Smithsonian Board of Regents. Keep in mind that your recommendation will be heavily considered by the Board.

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RESOURCES

Internet

Alperovitz, Gar. "Enola Gay: Was the bomb Necessary?" from *Miami Herald*, 14 Dec. 2003. ©2003. Common Dreams Organization (commondreams.org). ©1997 – 2010. Portland, ME. 26 April 2010 <<http://www.commondreams.org/scriptfiles/views03/1214-06.htm>>.

Dannen, Gene. "Atomic Bomb: Decision." 9 Aug. 2003. Dannen.com. ©2000 - 2010. Corvallis, OR. 26 April 2010 <<http://www.dannen.com/decision>>.

"Enola Gay." Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum (nasm.si.edu). 2010. Washington, DC. 26 April 2010 <<http://www.nasm.si.edu/exhibitions/gal103/enolagay>>.

Gallagher, Edward J. "The Enola Gay Controversy." History on Trial (digital.lib.lehigh.edu). 2010. Bethlehem, PA (Lehigh University Digital Library). 26 April 2010 <<http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/enola>>.

"Harry S. Truman." 15 April 2010. Harry Truman Library and Museum. 2010. Independence, MO. 27 April 2010 <<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/library.htm>>.

Long, Doug. "Hiroshima: Was it Necessary?" 25 July 2005. Doug Long (www.doug-long.com). ©1995 – 2010. Michigan. 27 April 2010 <<http://www.doug-long.com>>.

"The Manhattan Project: Making the Atomic Bomb." Atomic Archive (atomicarchive.com). ©1998 – 2010. San Diego, CA. 27 April 2010 <<http://www.atomicarchive.com/History/mp/index.shtml>>.

Morton, Louis. "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb." U.S. Army Center of Military History (www.history.army.mil). 2010. Washington, DC. 27 April 2010 <http://www.history.army.mil/books/70-7_23.htm>.

"Potsdam Proclamation." 26 July 1945. HyperWar Foundation (biblio.org/hyperwar). 2001 - 2010. Lafayette, CO. 27 April 2010 <<http://biblio.org/hyperwar/PTO/Dip/Potsdam.html>>.

Sublette, Carey, et al. "Eyewitness Accounts of Hiroshima/Nagasaki Survivors." 3 July 2007. The Nuclear Weapons Archive Organization (nuclearweaponsarchive.org). 26 April 2010 <<http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/Japan/Eyewit.html>>.

Tibbets, Paul W., Brigadier General. "Statement offered by Brigadier General Paul W. Tibbets [USAF retired] upon the acceptance of the Freedom Award." 9 June 1994. B-29's Over Korea (b-29s-over-korea.com). 2 April 2010. 26 April 2010 <http://www.b-29s-over-korea.com/Enola/Enola_03.html>.

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Journals/Magazines

Hamby, Alonzo L. "The Decision to Drop the Bomb." Journal of American History 84:2 (September 1997):1-7.

Maddox, Robert James. "The Biggest Decision: Why We Had to Drop the Atomic Bomb." American Heritage May/June 1995:1-6.

ASSESSMENT

Oral Presentation Rubric

| CATEGORY | 4 Highly Proficient | 3 Proficient | 2 Emerging Success | 1 Novice |
|----------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Comprehension | Student is able to clearly take a position and support it in a convincing manner using facts. | Student is able to take a position and support it using facts. | Student is able to take a position, but support is vague or absent. | Student is unable to take a clear position. |
| Preparedness | Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed. | Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals. | The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking. | Student does not seem at all prepared to present. |
| Props | Student uses Power Point, which shows informative work/creativity and which make the presentation its best. | Student uses Power Point, which shows considerable work/creativity and which make the presentation better. | Student uses Power Point, which provides information to make the presentation better. | The student uses no Power Point, or a Power Point which detracts from the presentation. |
| Oral Delivery | Speaks clearly and distinctly with enthusiastic voice and eye contact, and mispronounces no to few words. | Speaks clearly and distinctly with appropriate voice and eye contact, and mispronounces no to few words. | Speaks somewhat clearly and distinctly with sporadic voice and eye contact. Mispronounces more than a few words. | Often mumbles or can not be understood, lacks voice skills, eye contact and/or mispronounces enough words to detract from the presentation. |

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

- ALTEC. "Rubistar: Create Rubrics for you Project-Based Learning Activities." 4Teachers.org. 2009. Lawrence, KS. Advanced Learning Technologies Consortia (ALTEC) at the University of Kansas. 23 June 2009 <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=CustomizeTemplate&bank_rubric_id=4§ion_id=1>. Adapted by Amy Caldeira for the Northwest History Consortium with permission.
- Caldeira, Amy. "The Fate of the Enola Gay." NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 30 March 2010 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/8.3_FateofEnolaGay.Caldeira.10-12.pdf>.
- "History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 21 May 2009 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5>>.
- OPI. "Montana Standards for Social Studies." Montana Office of Public Instruction. 2009. Helena, MT. 30 March 2010 <<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/Standards/ContStds-SocSt.pdf>>.