The War in the Pacific

Teaching with Primary Sources

By: William Roesner

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I. Pennsylvania Standards

1.6.5.E – Conduct Interviews: Reading, Writing, and Speaking.

8.1.8.B – Compare and contrast a historical event, using multiple points of view from primary and secondary sources.

8.1.U.C – Analyze, synthesize, and integrate historical data, creating a product that supports and appropriately illustrates, inferences, and conclusions drawn from research.

II. Inquiry Based Learning Model

Questioning – The teacher will provide each student with an entrance slip and they will have to answer the question provided on the board.

Researching – The teacher will provide a copy of the transcript of a World War II veteran. They will read along with me about firsthand experience during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Discussing – The teacher will lead a class discussion about what Pearl Harbor meant to the United States in relation to the Army, people at home, and the soldiers as individuals.

Creating – The students will create a letter to their parents/guardians describing the attack on Pearl Harbor and what rumors are about the War with Japan.

Reflecting – The students will listen to each other’s letters as they read them out loud to the class.

Assessment – The students will be assessed based on facts from the events that happened in Pearl Harbor.
III. Description

This action plan describes a lesson based on the Attack on Pearl Harbor that would be taught in my tenth grade United States History class. At the start of the lesson, the students will be given a small sheet of paper. They will then see a short question on the board relating to the Pearl Harbor attacks (such as: Do you think that the United States would have entered WWII if the attacks did not happen?)

After a short discussion to get the students on task, I will provide a copy of the transcript “Interview with Richard Adams”, which is provided on http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.27608/transcript?ID=sr0001. I will read to the students while they follow along. This will provide a firsthand example of the Attack on Pearl Harbor. After we read the part out loud, they will continue to research the transcript for other ways Richard Adams or other soldiers felt about the Pearl Harbor Attacks. We have been discussing World War Two in class for a few days and we just discussed the Pearl Harbor the day before. The students are aware of the attack and will now see how this attack impacted the troops stationed there.

After the class has read the transcript, we will begin a class discussion. I will bring out an over head projector and put images of the attack up on the screen during the discussion. I will provide a base question and I will let the
students respond based on what they feel happened or what they felt about the attacks. I will lead discussions about the attack itself, how it impacted the war effort, and how families back home felt about the attacks.

After the discussion has ended, the students will be directed to create a short one page letter to a parent/guardian back home. They will pretend that they are a soldier that survived the Pearl Harbor attacks. They are to use facts that they have learned about during their research step. For example, in the transcript, Richard Adams says he believed a sub had breached Pearl Harbor. The students should reflect this belief in their letters home (even though a sub may or may not have been there). They should also be able to state who it was that attacked them and for what reasons (politically/economically). They should provide at least five facts based on the attack and the transcript.

Towards the end of the period, the students will reflect on their work by listening to other student’s letters. They will listen to how each person saw the same event, yet can describe it in many different ways. If time permits, the students will get into small groups and share each other’s letters at a personal level. They will read each other’s and come up with at least three questions for the other student about the Pearl Harbor attack.

The students will also be assessed on their letter. I will collect them at the end of the period for a grade. They will be graded based on the rubric that is provided below. There is a total of twenty-five points based on five different descriptors: Sentences & Paragraphs, Ideas, Content Accuracy, Length, and Spelling & Grammar.
IV. Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentences &amp; Paragraphs</td>
<td>Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well-constructed and of varied structure.</td>
<td>All sentences are complete and well-constructed (no fragments, no run-ons). Paragraphing is generally done well.</td>
<td>Most sentences are complete and well-constructed. Paragraphing needs some work.</td>
<td>Many sentence fragments or run-on sentences OR paragraphing needs lots of work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about.</td>
<td>Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better.</td>
<td>Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about.</td>
<td>The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Accuracy</td>
<td>The letter contains at least 5 accurate facts about the topic.</td>
<td>The letter contains 3-4 accurate facts about the topic.</td>
<td>The letter contains 1-2 accurate facts about the topic.</td>
<td>The letter contains no accurate facts about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>The letter is 1 page or longer.</td>
<td>The letter is less than one page but more than 3/4's of a page.</td>
<td>The letter is longer than half but no longer than 3/4's of a page.</td>
<td>The letter is under a half a page long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; spelling</td>
<td>Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.</td>
<td>Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.</td>
<td>Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling</td>
<td>Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling. (conventions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>