



## Lesson Procedures

### **Materials Included in this Lesson**

Background Essay

Document Set

Evidence Organizer

“Answering the Question” assessment and rubric

Access to the net for the video clip links in this lesson.

### **Lesson Preparation**

Print packets for students including: background essay, document set, evidence organizer, assessment and rubric.

### **Suggested Lesson Procedure**

→ Hook: Ask students to respond to the following prompt:

◆ *“What do you know and want to know about World War II?”*

→ Introduce World War II by reading the background essay. Have students react to what they read and have a class discussion. Have them think about what they know and want to know and see if they can answer any questions they had. Have them write this down.

→ Watch <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor/videos/japanese-diplomats-arrive-in-us?m=528e394da93ae&s=undefined&f=1&free=false> This is a clip showing the talks before Pearl Harbor with Japan as well as scenes from the invasion and Franklin Roosevelt addressing Congress.

→ Read Document 1 from the book World War II Researching American History by Discovery Enterprises, Ltd.

◆ Additional discussion point: Why did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor? What set off the events that led to the invasion?

→ Preview Evidence Organizer/Evidence Log. Students will be looking at primary sources gathered from the Truman Presidential Library Archives in order to decide if it was a good decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan or not based on the evidence provided from the Truman Library and other locations. In the evidence log, students will identify arguments that could be used from each source to decide if the dropping of the atomic bomb was necessary or not.

→ Preview “Answering the Question” assignment. Students will write a letter from the president to Bess Truman stating why they as the president choose to drop the bomb or not. Students will use evidence in the sources and any additional information they find to make their argument. After the letters are written and turned in, the students will have a class debate on the decision. They can change sides as long as they have a reason from new evidence they hear or think of.



- Before releasing the students to work, watch this clip so they get a better understanding of the bomb and the time of war.
- Begin investigating document set. Students may work individually or in pairs. Students should take the following steps with each source:
  - ◆ After reading source, decide whether the evidence promotes the argument for the decision to drop the bomb or not.. Write “in favor” or “against” at the top of the source.
  - ◆ Answer the historical thinking questions at the top of the source. Recommend that students may want to read the source a second or third time to help answer these prompts.
    - Historical Tools Learning Goal: *I can evaluate the significance of events and historical trends.*
  - ◆ Add source information to the Evidence Log. Students should place the source in the “in favor” column or the “against” column, name the document, and write in their own words why that document can be used as good evidence.
    - Using Sources Learning Goal: *I can compare the point of view/perspective of more than one source.*
- Before beginning the letter to Bess Truman, students should brainstorm and discuss their perspectives on the situation. Remind them that there really isn’t ever one “correct” answer on the question of dropping the bomb. Instead, they should pick whichever side they feel has stronger evidence. Teachers may want to select a few thinking prompts from the following website to help students differentiate their opinions from those outlined in the sources:  
[https://ohiouswc.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/ire\\_templatessimple1.pdf](https://ohiouswc.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/ire_templatessimple1.pdf)
- After establishing which stance they will take, students may begin writing their letters to Bess Truman. See the rubric attached to the letter assignment for further information.
  - Communicating Conclusions Learning Goal: *I can create a claim or an accurate historical interpretation based on available evidence.*
- After students have written their letters, show  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxk3qS2TQ8>
- This video clip is of Mr. Truman explaining why he dropped the bomb.
  - ◆ Additional Recommendation: At this point, you have the option to explore Japan and the effects of the bomb on the nation years later.

## Answering the Question



Truman Presidential  
Museum & Library

*Because document-based activities begin with a question, the most natural way to assess students' learning is to have them answer the question. Typically this involves structuring and organizing evidence in order to complete a formal essay writing. While the informational essay is certainly an important skill in a social studies classroom there are also many other valid ways to have students create well-reasoned explanations based on available evidence. Consider the following options for students to answer the guiding question.*



- A. Allow students to use the [RAFT format](#), guiding them to select some or all of the following variables for student writing: Role, Audience, Format, Topic. Example:

It is late July 1945. You are at Potsdam and discussing issues with the Soviet Union and Italy and Britain. You receive word that the test bomb was a success. What do you do? Do you decide to drop the bomb or not? Use evidence from the sources and any information you choose to find. Write a letter to Bess explaining what you are going to do and why.

Be prepared to defend your decision in a class debate.

Role- President Truman

Audience- Bess Truman

Format- Choose a format relevant to your role (letter, memo)

Task- Try to explain to Bess why you as the president decided to drop the bomb or not.

- B. Write a letter from Bess to President Truman offering him advice using evidence on the decision.  
C. Direct students to write an argumentative essay based on the guiding question.  
D. Ask students to evaluate the documents provided in the activity, ranking the usefulness of each in answering the guiding question.



|                                                                     | 0                                           | 1- Below Basic                                                                                                                                                         | 2- Basic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3- Proficient                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 4- Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>History Tools:<br/>Historical<br/>Thinking<br/>Questions</b>     | I cannot demonstrate any part of this task. | I need help to understand the historical significance of each document.                                                                                                | I understand the historical significance of some of the documents, but I need help with the others.                                                                                                                                       | I can explain the historical significance of each source within historical context by thoroughly answering the Historical Thinking Questions with each source.                                                                                     | In addition to the requirements for a 3, I can also explain the arguments from both perspectives of the conflict.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Using Sources:<br/>Evidence Log</b>                              | I cannot demonstrate any part of this task. | I can complete my Evidence Log and write the arguments of the sources with help.                                                                                       | I can identify the argument within some of the sources on my own, but not the harder ones.                                                                                                                                                | I can compare the perspective a source by organizing the information into my Evidence Log and explaining the argument in my own words.                                                                                                             | In addition to the requirements for a 3, I can examine outside sources and add them as additional evidence to my Evidence Log. The sources must be in addition to those provided by the teacher.                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Communicating<br/>Conclusions:<br/>Letter to Bess<br/>Truman</b> | I cannot demonstrate any part of this task. | Claim is not stated<br>Lack of support for claim or irrelevant details<br>Source-based evidence is not cited plagiarized<br>no alternative claim or view acknowledged. | Claim is weak or not maintained<br>Limited support of claim using sources facts and details<br>Source-based evidence is cited inaccurately or incompletely (plagiarism)<br>Alternative or opposing claims inaccurate, irrelevant or weak. | Claim is clearly stated and maintained within the context<br>convincing support of claim using sources, facts and details<br>Source-based evidence is cited accurately to avoid plagiarism<br>alternative or opposing claims are clearly addressed | Claim is powerful with strong support showing unique insight into the topic<br>compelling support is credible relevant and accurate use of sources<br>facts and details go beyond obvious source-based evidence is cited accurately to avoid plagiarism<br>Alternative or opposing claims are fairly and objectively addressed. |