

Inside Art, Fall 2019— *Return of the Real*

Title

Return of the Real: Truth, History, & Chernobyl

Estimated Time for Completion of Lesson

3 class periods

Concept/Main Idea of Lesson

In this lesson plan, students will examine the complexity of truths, realities, and perspectives of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Students will analyze Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, Soviet propaganda, and artifacts to examine the relationship between the Chernobyl disaster and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Intended Grade Levels

Grades 6-12

Infusion/Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Social Studies

Curriculum Standards

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

- Visual Arts:

VA.912.C.1.2: Use critical-thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme.

VA.912.C.1.4: Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.

- Social Studies:

SS.6.G.5: Understand how human actions can impact the environment.

SS.7.G.5: Understand how human actions can impact the environment.

SS.8.G.5: Understand how human actions can impact the environment.

SS.6.W.1: Utilize historical inquiry skills and analytical processes

SS.7.C.3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.

SS.912.H.2.1: Identify specific characteristics of works within various art.

SS.912.H.2.3: Apply various types of critical analysis (contextual, formal, and intuitive criticism) to works in the arts, including the types and use of symbolism within art forms and their philosophical implications.

SS.912.W.1.3: Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources.

SS.912.W.8.5: Identify the factors that led to the decline and fall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

National Standards for Arts Education

Visual Arts Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols,

and ideas.

National Council for the Social Studies

Culture

People, Place, & Environment

Power, Authority, & Governance

Individual, Groups, & Institutions

Science, Technology, & Society

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Instructional Objectives

The student will:

- Define and apply Gorbachev's Soviet policy of glasnost;
- Define and apply challenges created by the Chernobyl explosion to the policy of glasnost;
- Analyze the use of Soviet propaganda to distort the impact of the Chernobyl explosion;
- Evaluate the extent to which artifacts from the Chernobyl explosion challenge Soviet Chernobyl propaganda.

Learning Activities Sequence

Day 1:

Attention-Getter: Activate the Sway presentation found here:

(Note: as an alternative you can also download a pdf version of the Sway presentation)

<https://sway.office.com/lHe6EGUiZlis6UsW>

Be sure to view Instructional Guide A: How to use Sway for presentation assistance.

Distribute Worksheet A: Brainstorming.

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 1: The Role of Chernobyl* and project the quote by former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Give the students a moment to read and think about Mikhail Gorbachev's view of the Chernobyl disaster.

Advance to the next slide and project "Let's Brainstorm." Click through the brainstorm cards and have students discuss, "How could a nuclear disaster challenge the power of the state?" Introduce students to the main research question, "Do you agree with Mikhail Gorbachev? Could the realities of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster have contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union?"

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 2: Setting the Stage: Policies of Mikhail Gorbachev*. Introduce students to the vocabulary term glasnost. As you move through the cards have students brainstorm how elements of glasnost could challenge the state (see Worksheet A: Brainstorming.)

Learning Activity 1:

So, what happened at Chernobyl?

This learning activity can be completed individually, in groups, or as a class.

Distribute Worksheet B: Data Gathering.

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 3: So, What happened at Chernobyl?* Students will watch Video Clip 1 (an Introduction to Chernobyl) and begin recording what happened at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant according to the Americans versus the Soviets. Students will watch Video Clip 2 (*ABC Nightly New 4/28/1986*) and continue to record what happened at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant according to the Americans versus the Soviets. (*Note: it is not necessary to complete the entire 22 minute clip. Teachers may stop the clip at 12:00 minutes if needed.*)

Day 2:

Learning Activity 2:

Data Gathering

This learning activity can be completed individually, in groups, or as a class. Please see Instruction Guide A for ideas.

For Day 2, students will be researching primary sources for data gathering. At the beginning of class review the main research question with students. Students will navigate through the resources presented through the Sway presentation and gather data on the appropriate Worksheet B: Data Gathering.

Teachers may choose to have students' navigate through all 3 aspects of the Chernobyl disaster or jigsaw the 3 aspects of the Chernobyl disaster.

In the Sway presentation:

Chapter 4: The Evacuation (and corresponding Worksheet B)

Chapter 5: The Impact on Health (and corresponding Worksheet B)

Chapter 6: The Propaganda (and corresponding Worksheet B)

Day 3:

Learning Activity 3:

Materiality & Chernobyl

This learning activity can be completed individually, in groups, or as a class.

For Day 3, students will be analyzing the artifacts of Chernobyl and answering their main research question based on their data gathering.

Teachers may choose to have students' navigate through all 3 proveniences (locations) of Chernobyl material culture or jigsaw the 3 locations. Additionally, teachers may choose to explore only one location as a class if time is limited.

Location 1: The Pripyat Hospital

Location 2: The Middle & High School

Location 3: The Palace of Culture

Distribute Worksheet C: Analyzing Material Culture. (*Note: each worksheet is titled for the appropriate provenience (location)*).

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 7: Materiality: Using Artifacts & Art to Question What is Real*. Introduce the day by having students discuss, "How could artifacts (the material culture) help us understand what was "real" to the people experiencing the Chernobyl disaster?" In the next slide, introduce students to important archaeology terms by clicking through the cards, "As you analyze be thinking about".

In the next several slides, students will examine the materiality of Robert Lazzarini's "Chain-link Fence". Contemporary art installations such as Lazzarini's "Chain-link Fence" often use artifacts to challenge and distort perceptions of reality. As a class, have the students examine and explain the importance of materiality and provenience to understand what is "real".

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 8: Materiality: Using Artifacts to Determine What is Real*. In the next several slides, students will explore photographs of the material culture left behind in three locations 1) The Pripyat Hospital 2) The Middle & High School 3) The

Palace of Culture. (Note: the context is provided for each photo by clicking on this icon):



Students will record their notes in Worksheet C: Analyzing Material Culture. As they record, have students address the following questions:

- 1) What artifacts do you see in the photo?
- 2) Describe the provenience.
- 3) What do the “things” represent?
- 4) What does it all mean?

Learning Activity 4:

Conclusions

Distribute Worksheet D: Conclusions.

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 9: Conclusions*.

Reintroduce the main research question. In the next slide, have students compare similarities and differences in what was “real” according to the different perspectives of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Students could share and compare in their jigsaw groups, between pairs in the class, or as a whole class depending on the preference of the teacher and instructional design chosen for Learning Activities 3 & 4.

In the final slide, guide students through the conclusion cards as they answer their main research question, provide evidence, and connect the artifacts in Worksheet D: Conclusions.

Evaluation

Student engagement throughout the lesson, completion of worksheets, participation in small and whole-group discussions.

Optional Extension Activities

See Instruction Guide B and Worksheet E for middle school modifications to this assignment.

Materials and Resources

Sway Presentation: Return of the Real: Truth, History, & Chernobyl
Instruction Guide A

Day 2 Lazzarini Worksheet A: Brainstorming

Day 2 Lazzarini Worksheet B: Data Gathering

Day 2 Lazzarini Worksheet C: Analyzing Material Culture

Day 2 Lazzarini Worksheet D: Conclusions

All embedded documents are also available as handouts.

Day 2 Lazzarini Handout A: The Propaganda

Day 2 Lazzarini Handout B: The Evacuation of Pripyat

Day 2 Lazzarini Handout C: The Impact on Health

Day 2 Lazzarini Handout D: The Impact on Health

Computer
Projector
Screen
Pencils/Pens for writing

References

- Alexievich, S. (2005). *Voices from Chernobyl: The oral history of a nuclear disaster*. London: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Dobraszczyk, P. (2010). Petrified ruin: Chernobyl, Pripjat, and the death of the city. *City* 14(4), 371-389.
- Higginbotham, A. (2019). *Midnight in Chernobyl: The untold story of the world's greatest nuclear disaster*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Shcherbak, I. (1989). *Chernobyl: A documentary story*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- The Chernobyl Gallery. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.chernobylgallery.com>