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CEP 811
Evaluation of an Existing Webquest

The following webquest is an evaluation of what life was like during World War II, particularly for a teenager. One intention of the webquest is to use it as a supplement to the novel, <u>A Separate Peace</u>. I believe it could either be used alone (without reading the novel) or in a cross-curricular project with an English class who is reading it. The teacher guide lists the following as standards of learning:

1. Evaluate literature for historical significance and understand connections between culture and literary works.
2. Assimilate and synthesize information from various sources and convey it clearly to others.
3. Learn about the values and beliefs of a people.
4. Understand the close relationship between social and political systems.
5. Understand the use of propaganda and its effects.
6. Plan and organize ideas for writing.
7. Design and explain the significance of a propaganda poster.
8. Compose a letter for a specific audience.
9. Use inferential and critical thinking to create a response to a variety of texts.
10. Collect, evaluate, and organize information.

The Michigan Department of Education standards for teaching United States History include a few content expectations on not only the role of the US in WWII, but the impact the war had on American life and this webquest addresses each of these.

The primary focus of the pedagogical strategies being employed in this webquest is inductive. Students take on certain roles of individuals during the forties and are required to understand the concepts through that character rather than just simply reading about the facts. Scaffolding occurs throughout the webquest, where it starts with a basic introduction and search for basic information. It then proceeds into the specific character-based information. As students become these topic "experts" they are able to come back together and teach each other about their specific field of study.

This webquest is taking advantage of technology with its dependence on computers and the internet. It utilizes a student's basic technological understanding, without going too far to exclude students who may not have the fluency with technology of some of their peers.   I do not think it would be fair to say the pages could just be photocopied for use, as there are a lot of links and different activities associated with them. This could, however, be considered "change without difference" given that a lot of the information that is linked through the site could be found in history books and encyclopedias. A teacher could accomplish a somewhat similar task without the webquest, but the technology aspect does provide ease of use and convenience. Using the webquest versus the traditional research strategy also speaks to this younger generation's love and frequent use of technology.

I think overall this webquest works. I did notice, however, that some of the links are out of date. The information that should be found there is either not there, or only partially there. Links do not seem to be broken, and credit is given where credit is due to the best of my knowledge.

To improve this webquest, I would add an interactive element to it; perhaps an online quiz or survey or a place to enter answers online and later print them out. This would be opposed to the method of writing down their answers in traditional pencil and paper format.

Webquest link: http://web-and-flow.com/members/shursey/separatepeace/webquest.htm

http://www.web-and-flow.com/members/shursey/separatepeace/webquest.htm

Web-and-Flow WebQuest: A Separate Peace

A Separate Peace: A Teenager Experiences World War II

by Sally Hursey

Introduction · Question · Background Info · Individual Roles · Group Process
Rubric · Conclusion · Teacher's Guide

Introduction

You are a teenager living in the United States during World War II. You read the newspapers and hear the radio broadcasts, but it is hard to make sense of this war that involves so many countries and people. This webquest will take you back to the Home Front of the 1940's to learn what it was like to grow up during this turbulent time.

As a group you're going to explore the topic of A Separate Peace. Each member of your team will become an expert on one part of the topic. Then you'll have to come back together to answer a question that gets to the heart of 'what's the truth and who says so?' We want you to do a good job, so why not read the evaluation rubric for this WebQuest?

The Question

The main question you will be asked to find an answer for is:

What would it have been like to have been a teenager during World War II? How would teenagers of today deal

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http://americanhistory.si.edu/victory/victory1.htm

Every Citizen a Soldier

★ Every Citizen a Soldier

Addressing every citizen as a combatant in the war of production, wartime posters united the power of art with the power of advertising to sell the idea that the factory and the home were also arenas of war. Poster campaigns aimed not only to increase productivity in factories, but also to enlarge people's views of their responsibilities in a time of total war.

Wartime posters were conceived as a visual call to arms. According to poster designers, posters should be to the eye what a shouted command is to the ear.

"Come on, Gang! We're Building Arms for Victory!"
(Pontiac Motor Division, General Motors Corporation, 1942.
Gift of S.D. Warren Company,
Poster, cat. 163991.11, 30"w x 40"h, cs91-14109)

Some poster designs aimed at making the war personal by raising the grim possibility of war extending to one's own backyard.