

Lesson Plan: Peace and Reconciliation after WWII

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will spend time reading and watching a curated list of resources around the topic of reconciliation and peacebuilding in the United States and Japan after World War II. They will then come up with their own questions that will form the basis of a Harkness style class discussion. After the discussion, students will reflect on their contributions and complete a self-assessment.

OBJECTIVES

Students will

- Know the historical situation surrounding U.S.-Japanese relations since WWII.
- Understand the importance of the reconciliation process and the challenges that countries face to rebuild relationships after violent conflict.
- Be able to create questions and clearly communicate their ideas to their peers.

RESOURCES

- Student Playlist Assignment: This document contains links to the “playlist” of resources that students need to read and watch. Additionally there is space for students to create their questions in advance of the class discussion. Teachers can have students submit them for feedback before the discussion or just ask them to bring them to class that day.
- Discussion Self-Assessment Rubric: Students reflect on their performance and complete this after the discussion.
- Discussion Rubric: This teacher version of the rubric allows teachers to provide feedback.

PROCEDURE

1. Assign the “Playlist Assignment” to students, either as classwork or homework. It includes a significant number of resources, so it should likely be a multi-day assignment.
2. Have students submit the assignment (including their questions) before the discussion or bring them to class the day of the discussion.
3. Have students sit in a circle and choose 1 student to serve as the moderator of the discussion. This student is responsible for selecting the students who wish to ask a question and then keeping the conversation moving. When an issue has been fully discussed, the moderator will select another student to ask a question.
4. With 10 minutes remaining in class, have students complete the self-assessment. It includes questions about their own contributions as well as highlights from their classmates.
5. Provide feedback to students using their reflections and the rubric for the assignment.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

If students are interested in peacebuilding and reconciliation, they can take free self-paced [online micro-courses](#) in a variety of related topics through the United States Institute of Peace.