



Lesson Title:

V-2 Rocket and After the War

Subjects

U. S. History, World History

Suggested time

One 50-minute class period

Grade Level

7-12

Essential Question

What role did technology developed by the Germans play after the war?

Objectives

To gain a deeper understanding of German technology developed during World War II, and the treatment Jewish prisoners and other prisoners of war received.

Overview

Students will learn about the V-2 Rocket and the role Jewish prisoners in various concentration camps along with POWs played in developing it. The students will also see how the significance of the technology behind it allowed the Nazi scientists a way to not be held accountable for “crimes against humanity” most notably in the Nuremberg Trials. The student assignment will be a “Letter to the Editor” persuasive writing activity.

Materials

- *Chronicles of Courage: Stories of Wartime and Innovation* video
 - [“The V-2 Rocket: Hitler’s Vengeance Weapon”](#)
- Readings
 - [Allies liberating Ohrdruf](#)
 - [The Nuremberg Trials](#)
 - [The U.S. Government German Scientist Immigration Order](#)
 - [Werner von Braun article](#)
- [Lesson](#)
- [Individual Student Activity](#)
- [Rubric](#)
- [Group Extension Activity](#)

- [Individual Extension Activity](#)
- [Standards](#)
- [NCSS C3 Framework](#)

Warm-Up Activity:

As a quick review of the European Theatre, call on multiple students, but one student at a time to answer each of the following questions:

Who is the leader of-

- Italy? (*Benito Mussolini*)
- Germany? (*Adolph Hitler*)
- The Soviet Union? (*Joseph Stalin*)
- France? (*Charles de Gaulle*)
- Great Britain? (*Winston Churchill*)
- The United States (*Franklin D. Roosevelt/Harry S Truman*)

Key Events –

- When did Germany invade Poland? (*September 1, 1931*)
- Which country won the first battle against Nazi Germany? (*Great Britain*)
- Name the turning point battle of the Eastern Front. (*Battle of Stalingrad*)
- Name the turning point battle of the Western Front. (*Normandy Invasion, D-Day*)

Explore the Video:

[“The V-2 Rocket: Hitler’s Vengeance Weapon”](#)

About the Video:

“The V-2 Rocket: Hitler’s Vengeance Weapon” is one of 20 short videos in the series *Chronicles of Courage: Stories of Wartime and Innovation*. It tells the story of the first long-range guided missile in the world. Developed by German scientists and unleashed by order of Adolf Hitler during World War II, the V-2 stood taller than a three-story building and traveled at four times the speed of sound. To save costs on production, the Germans used slave labor, including over 60,000 political prisoners, POWs, and Jews -- victims of Hitler's Holocaust - to work in and build the underground tunnels where the rockets were constructed.

The Eyewitnesses Tell the Story:

By interviewing people who have experienced courageous events, the *Chronicles of Courage: Stories of Wartime and Innovation* series keeps history alive for current generations to explore. Oral history lets the audience hear history directly from those that experienced it and can bring the past to life with powerful information that print resources may miss. The technologies presented are information few have today have and are contextualized by experts that continue to work with and preserve this classic technology.

Video Voices:

Franz Stolle

Stolle was born in 1924 and was a German artillery specialist during World War II. His unit was responsible for launching 3-4 V-2 rockets per day from September 1944 to May 1945.

Cory Graff

Graff is currently the Military Aviation Curator at Flying Heritage Collection – a military aviation and tank museum located near Seattle, Washington.

Language Support

To aid those with limited English proficiency or others who need help focusing on the video, make available the transcript for the video. Click the transcript tab on the side of the video window, then copy and paste into a document for student reference.

Lesson

Show [“The V-2 Rocket: Hitler’s Vengeance Weapon”](#) video

Class Discussion

Teacher to ask –

- What was the “mystery explosion?”
- Why would the Nazis keep this program secret?
- How did the Nazis save costs?
- Who are the political prisoners?*
- Why would “slave laborers” risk their lives to sabotage the rockets?
- How effective were their efforts to sabotage the rockets?
- What are your thoughts on the labor force the Nazis chose to use?
- Watching Franz Stolle’s body language and listening to his words, how do you think he feels about the war?

Teacher to say –

As the Allies marched toward Berlin in the Spring of 1945, they began liberating the concentration camps. General Eisenhower visited Ohrdruf along with Generals Omar Bradley and George Patton. Read the account of the visit including the quotes. [Allies liberating Ohrdruf](#)

- Describe what the generals saw as they entered the camp.
- What had transpired just before the Allies arrived at the camp?
- Why did General Eisenhower want the press to come to the camp?

Teacher to say -

After the war in Europe, remaining high-ranking Nazi Party officials were put on trial for war crimes by the Allied countries.**

- [The Nuremberg Trials](#)

Have students read the article and after about 10 minutes, teacher to ask –

- Was Adolf Hitler put on trial?
- How many Nazis were put on trial in Nuremberg?
- How many Nazis were punished by death?
- Which countries provided judges to preside over the hearings?
- After you finished the article, do you think justice was attained? Why or why not?

Teacher to provide information on the United States Government’s decision to allow German scientists to immigrate to the United States.

- [The U.S. Government German Scientist Immigration Order](#)

Individual Student Activity

Teacher to say -

Read about Werner von Braun in this [article](#).

Using the information from the War Department memo and von Braun’s biographical article, compose a “Letter to the Editor” as if you are a young adult in 1945, offering your reasoned opinion on whether the United States should allow von Braun to continue to conduct scientific experiments with rockets after the war.

This should be a well-developed argument providing reasons to justify the position you chose.

Rubric

	Proficient (25 points)	Developing (20 points)	Not Proficient (15 points)
Introduction	Student presents a clear reason for writing to the editor.	Student presents a reason for writing, but doesn’t make it perfectly clear.	Student does not present a reason for writing the letter.
Arguments/Opinion	Student writes and develops ideas of some complexity and includes a counter-argument. Student supports facts and is very persuasive.	Student shows some understanding of the issues, but does not develop the argument. Student attempts to persuade.	Student does not clearly develop ideas, provides very few facts supporting POV.
Ending/Call to Action	Student summarizes	Student summarizes	Student leaves reader

	the issue, provides clear and compelling call to action.	the issue, but does not provide a clear call to action.	confused. There is no clear recommendation or call to action.
Format	Student addresses all aspects of the proper letter format.	Student uses some aspects of the proper letter format.	Student does not follow proper letter format.

Extension Activities

*POW Activity

Group Extension Activity

Divide the class into five groups of 4 – 6 students. Each group will conduct research for 15 – 20 minutes on their assigned topic.

Topic 1 - American POW Camps – Japan – specifically, Palawan and Changi camps

- [Interview with Rufus W. Smith, World War II POW](#)
- [Veteran won't let massacre be forgotten](#)
- ['Unbroken' also describes local POW](#)
- [Truth is more horrific than fiction](#)

Topic 2 - Bataan Death March

- [The Bataan Death March, 1942](#)
- [Back to Bataan, A Survivor's Story](#)
- [Accounts of those on Death March](#)

Topic 3 - German POW camps - United States

- [German POWs on the American Homefront](#)

Topic 4 - Japanese POW camps – United States

- [Japanese Prisoners of War in America](#)

Topic 5 - American POW camps - Germany

- [Guests of the Third Reich](#)

POW Activity Chart

	American POW Camps - Japan	Bataan Death March	German POW camps - US	Japanese POW camps - US	American POW camps - Germany
How many prisoners?					
Daily conditions?					
Forms of punishment?					
How long detained?					
Lasting effects on POWs?					

Each group will create an audio “breaking news report” about POW camp conditions of their assigned topic.

Rubric

POW Breaking News Report				
Category	4	3	2	1
Creativity	Was extremely clever and presented with originality; a unique approach that truly enhanced the project	Was clever at times; thoughtfully and uniquely presented	Was somewhat clever, but did not keep the audience engaged.	Was not clever and seemed disorganized.
Content Accuracy	All information was accurate.	Most of the information was accurate.	Some of the information was accurate.	Had inaccurate information throughout the report.

On a whiteboard in the classroom or through a web tool such as <https://awwapp.com/> have students write down their reaction to the various POW camps (much like the comment section in today’s social media).

Individual Student Activity

Read about the Prosecutor who presided over the Nuremberg Trials – click [here](#).

Using the information from the article, create a magazine cover that highlights all of the key information you discovered about Ben Ferencz using this [link](#).

Rubric

Nuremberg Trial Prosecutor Magazine Cover				
Category	4	3	2	1
Creativity	Was extremely creative and presented the facts well	Was creative, but not fully developed	Was somewhat clever, but did change color and font	Was very plainly organized, no color or font change
Content Accuracy	All information was accurate	Most of the information was accurate	Some of the information was accurate	Had inaccurate information throughout the cover

** for additional background information on the other trials

- [The Nuremberg Trial and the Tokyo War Crimes Trials \(1945 -1948\)](#)
- [FALQs: Soviet Investigation of Nazi War Crimes](#)
- [World War II: After the War](#)
- [Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust](#)
- [Nuremberg Trials and Other Trials Against Germany](#)

Standards

11.8. WORLD WAR II (1935 – 1945): The participation of the United States in World War II was a transformative event for the nation and its role in the world. (Standards: 1, 2; Themes: TCC, GOV, CIV, TECH)

Students will examine how technological advancements altered the nature of war and the extent of its devastation, including the use of air power over civilian targets and President Truman’s decision to use the atomic bomb against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Build Social Studies Literacy through Reading and Writing Common Core State Standard for ELA & Literacy in Social Studies Grades 9-10

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7

Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8

Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Build Social Studies Literacy through Reading and Writing Common Core State Standard for ELA & Literacy in Social Studies Grades 11-12

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/>

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

NCSS C3 Framework

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

Dimension 3: Argument Writing

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action