

The World War II Foundation Multidisciplinary Integrated Curriculum

"Valor & Virtue: A World War II Journey"

Part III: Project-Based Learning

Encourage students to engage in projects that require them to apply knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines, culminating in a tangible product or presentation.

"Valor & Virtue: A Journey Through World War II History" – Project-Based Learning Expansion

Unit on Survival and Resilience (Pages 2-3) [*Promise to My Father*](#)

- **History:** Students will research the historical context surrounding the personal stories featured in the documentary, including the events that individuals experienced during the war.
- **Language Arts:** Learners will engage in creative writing projects, such as diary entries or letters from the perspective of someone during WWII, drawing inspiration from the documentary's narratives.
- **Ethics:** Classes will hold discussions and debates on the moral choices and ethical dilemmas faced by individuals during the war, encouraging critical thinking and empathy.
- **Final Project:** A documentary film where students compile interviews, personal stories, and archival research to create a narrative piece echoing the themes of the documentary.

Unit on Engineering and Problem-Solving (Pages 4-5) [*Seabees on Iwo Jima*](#)

- **Mathematics:** Pupils will tackle mathematical problems similar to those solved by the Seabees, such as calculating material needs or troop movements.
- **Science:** The unit will explore the science behind the construction projects on Iwo Jima, including the materials and engineering principles used under combat conditions.
- **Technology:** Students will learn about the tools and machines used during WWII and may even create scale models or simulations of construction projects.
- **Final Project:** A comprehensive planning and construction project where students must design and propose a logistical solution for a hypothetical scenario inspired by the Seabees' missions.

Relevant "Front to the Films" Podcast Episodes:

1. Strategic Military Planning:

- [*"Don McCarthy and the 29th Infantry Division on Omaha Beach on D-Day"*](#)

2. Ethical and Tactical Challenges:

- [*Survivors of Malmedy: December 1944*](#) Narrated by Jason Beghe" (Ethical dilemmas and war crimes)

By integrating these documentaries into the PBL curriculum, educators can provide students with a holistic and immersive learning experience that not only teaches them about WWII but also equips them with valuable skills for their future academic and personal endeavors. Each unit will culminate in a tangible outcome that students can share with their community, showcasing their understanding and appreciation of the multifaceted history of WWII.

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Edited from original format by Cindy Tatum, Curriculum Developer, Wreaths Across America.



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Lesson Plan

Part III

Unit 1: Survival and Resilience (History, Language Arts & Ethics)

Objectives:

- **Understand Personal Histories:** Students will research the events and personal stories in [*Promise to My Father*](#) to appreciate the human aspect of historical events.
- **Creative Writing and Empathy:** Engage students in creating diaries or letters from WWII perspectives to develop empathy and understand the impact of the war on individuals.
- **Ethical Reasoning:** Encourage critical discussions on the moral choices and dilemmas faced during the war, reflecting on contemporary parallels.

Classroom Activities:

- **Documentary Deep Dive:** Students watch [*Promise to My Father*](#) and discuss the experiences of Holocaust survivor Israel Arbeiter.
- **Historical Context Research:** Assign students to research the events leading to and during the Holocaust, the roles of different countries, and the long-term impacts.
- **Creative Writing Project:** Students write diary entries or letters from the perspective of historical figures or fictional characters based on true events.
- **Ethics Debate:** Organize debates on the moral decisions of the era, comparing them to ethical dilemmas today.
- **Essay:** Explain the journey Israel Arbeiter endured from the time he left Poland until the end of the war. What horrors stood out for you? Be detailed.

Resources:

- a. Access to [*Promise to My Father*](#) documentary.
- b. Historical databases and libraries for archival research.
- c. Creative writing tools and platforms for students to draft and revise their work.
- d. Ethical frameworks and contemporary case studies for analysis.

Final Project:

Narrative Documentary: Students use their research and creative writing to produce a mini-documentary or digital story echoing the themes of [*Promise to My Father*](#), integrating interviews, personal stories, and historical insights.

Assessment:

- Evaluate research depth and historical accuracy.
- Assess creative writing for empathy, perspective-taking, and narrative skills.
- Critique participation in ethical debates for reasoning and engagement.
- Review the mini documentary for storytelling, technical quality, and factual reliability.

Extension:

- Host a film screening for the school or community to showcase student documentaries.
- Connect with Holocaust remembrance organizations to share student projects and possibly engage in a community dialogue.

Teacher's Execution Plan:

- **Preparation:** Teachers will review the documentary and prepare guiding questions and research topics.



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- **Introduction:** Introduce the unit with an overview of WWII's impact on civilian populations, particularly focusing on personal narratives like Israel Arbeiter's.
- **Research Phase:** Guide students through historical research, ensuring access to various sources and perspectives.
- **Writing Workshops:** Conduct workshops on effective diary and letter writing, providing examples from the era.
- **Ethics in History Discussions:** Facilitate discussions on historical ethics, possibly inviting guest speakers like historians or ethicists.
- **Project Development:** Support students in their documentary projects, providing feedback and technical assistance.
- **Review and Reflect:** Assess and reflect on completed projects, encouraging students to share their experiences and learning outcomes.
- **Community Engagement:** Coordinate with local organizations for a public showcase of the documentaries, promoting broader engagement with history.

Implementation Timeline:

- **Weeks 1-2:** Introduction, documentary viewing, and initial research.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Creative writing development and ethics discussions.
- **Weeks 5-6:** Mini-documentary production and editing.
- **Week 7:** Final review, assessment, and preparations for the community showcase.
- **Week 8:** Public screening and reflection.

This comprehensive approach ensures that students gain not only an understanding of the historical context but also develop skills in research, ethical reasoning, and narrative storytelling. By integrating personal stories with the broader narrative of WWII, students will gain a more nuanced appreciation for the complexity of historical events and their enduring impact.



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Unit 2: Engineering and Problem-Solving (Mathematics, Science, Technology)

Objectives:

- **Practical Application of Mathematics:** Students will engage in solving real-world mathematical problems similar to those tackled by the Seabees.
- **Understanding Engineering in War:** Explore the engineering challenges faced during WWII and the principles used in construction projects under combat conditions.
- **Technology and History:** Learn about the historical tools and machines of war, and the role of the Seabees in infrastructure development.
- **Project Management:** Apply learned concepts to plan and design a solution for a hypothetical military engineering challenge.

Classroom Activities:

Mathematics

- **Material and Troop Movement Calculations:** Assign problems for calculating material needs, manpower, and logistics, mirroring the types of calculations the Seabees would have performed.

Science

- **Engineering Under Duress:** Study the materials and engineering principles utilized by the Seabees, focusing on the innovations and adaptations required by the war environment.

Technology

- **Tools of the Trade:** Research the machinery and equipment used during WWII, understanding how technology has evolved since then.
- **Model Construction:** Create scale models or computer simulations of the Seabees' construction projects, applying principles of engineering and problem-solving.

Final Project:

Logistical Solution Design: In teams, students will be tasked with designing a comprehensive plan for a construction project based on a given scenario that reflects the challenges faced by the Seabees on Iwo Jima.

Resources:

- Documentary [*Seabees on Iwo Jima*](#) narrated by Jim Nantz.
- Engineering and construction simulation software for educational purposes.
- Access to military engineering historical data and veteran interviews or memoirs.
- [Resource material and suggested classroom activities for use with the WWII Foundation documentary D-Day: The Price of Freedom](#)

Assessment:

- Evaluate mathematical calculations for accuracy and applicability to real-world scenarios.
- Assess understanding of engineering principles and their applications under wartime constraints.
- Critique the use of technology in project design and the historical accuracy of tool and machinery usage.
- Review final projects for their innovation, feasibility, and reflection of the Seabees' legacy.



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Extension Activities:

- **Expert Guest Lectures:** Invite engineers or military historians to discuss the role of engineering in modern military applications.
- **Community Showcase:** Display student models and project plans at a school event or in a digital format for the community.

Implementation Timeline:

- **Weeks 1-2:** Introduce the Seabees, watch the documentary, and begin mathematical problems.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Dive into engineering principles and begin model construction.
- **Weeks 5-6:** Technology research and simulation model building.
- **Weeks 7-8:** Final project planning and execution.

By engaging with the history and challenges of the Seabees, students will gain a robust understanding of the vital role of engineering and problem-solving in warfare, as well as an appreciation for the ingenuity and resourcefulness required in such high-stakes environments. The final project will demonstrate students' ability to integrate these historical lessons with modern technology and engineering knowledge.

