



Personal Choice and Community Dynamics
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Course: US History (high school, but can be adapted for middle school)

Categories: US History, Holocaust Studies, Leadership Studies

Total teaching time: Approximately three 50-minute classes.

Summary

In this lesson, students examine the extent to which individual choices shape community dynamics. By watching *Survival in Sarajevo*, examining images, engaging in group discussions, and creating a final project, students are able to explore how individuals have the capacity to make great changes in the world. This lesson lends itself to themes of community service and action, leadership, and responsibility. This lesson can be taught in the context of American, World or European History courses as well as more specific courses such as Leadership or Holocaust Studies. From the images, film and study guide found at Centropa to the pictures from across America, the content of this lesson is focused on the post-Cold War world. The materials used from Centropa come directly from *Survival in Sarajevo*. A copy of each of the images necessary for this lesson is attached.

Introductory Information

Overview

While students are constantly inundated with images, sound clips, videos, and tidbits of information through the Internet and social media, young people often fail to see the connection between their choices and the impact these choices have on their communities. Arguably, the world has shrunk due to the rapid growth of communication and transmission of information, still we have the false notion that the struggles faced within our own country as well as abroad will 'never happen to us.' We do not recognize that our daily actions could potentially cause unrest to grow and develop. We fail to grasp that simply doing nothing is often the perfect action to allow social tension, physical conflict, war and even genocide to manifest.

This lesson compares the choices the citizens of Sarajevo made to protect their city and the diverse population who called this historic city home to the choices that people make on a daily basis or in a time of crisis to be kind. Students will be challenged to examine the Centropa film *Survival in Sarajevo*, as well as images both from Sarajevo and across America. Each image shows people making a deliberate choice to maintain civil society.

Ms. Emmerth teaches this unit in all of her U.S. History courses, in both inclusion and regular education classes. Because "Personal Choice and Community Dynamics" is multifaceted, it is quite easy to differentiate to meet the needs of all students.

Background Information

Context for Lesson

This lesson fits into the broader theme of U.S. History when examining and understanding to what extent the rise and continuing international influence of the United States, her citizens, and the power of individual choice have shaped the post-Cold War political, economic and social climate of the nation and the world.

Enduring Understanding

Choices made on a daily basis can shape the world.

Goals/Objectives

- Students will evaluate to what extent personal choice shapes the communities in which they live, work, socialize, study, etc.
- Students will believe and understand that they have the power to shape communities where they live and work.
- Students will analyze primary sources to determine the action and consequence of such action.
- Students will design a poster demonstrating the importance of ethical choices. In
- Students will write a one paragraph explanation of their poster.

Materials

- [Survival in Sarajevo](#) film
- [Survival in Sarajevo study guide](#)
- From the lesson "Let All Who are Hungry Come and Eat" this is the [teacher fact sheet](#)
- All images, both from Centropa and independently collected, have been compiled into one document for your convenience
- Google maps to show students where Sarajevo is located
- Computer/Internet/Projector
- Butcher paper (a minimum of 30 feet is suggested)
- Color copies of the images provided
- Poster markers (1 per student)
- Printer paper
- 4x6 index cards
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc.

The Lesson

Preparation

The day before beginning the lesson, assign students to read the information found by clicking on the link to the study guide for "Survival in Sarajevo".

- [Survival in Sarajevo Study Guide Link](#)
- When you click the link above, you will be directed to the "Survival in Sarajevo" film page.
- Scroll down and click the "Study Guide" link in the green box
 - o Now you have the option to choose from a variety of readings (i.e., Yugoslavia, Breakup of Yugoslavia, La Benevolencija, etc.)

- If you click the “Printer-friendly version” link, you will be able to print all of the sections of the study guide in one document.
- For this activity your students should specifically read
 - “Yugoslavia”
 - “Breakup of Yugoslavia”
 - “La Benevolencija”
- Print the document for each student
- Require students to Read – Highlight (or underline) – Annotate
 - This serves as evidence that they have truly read and made connections to the reading
- Students will need this background information for the lesson.

Day 1 (50 minutes class period)

Think-Pair-Share (15 minutes)

- 5 minutes: THINK - Pass out “Review Questions for Study Guide” for the study guide articles students read for homework. Students should independently answer each question. These will be used for discussion prompts in the pair and share portions of the introduction
- 5 minutes: PAIR – Arrange students into pairs to discuss their answers to the “Review Questions for Study Guide” and any additional thoughts about the homework reading.
- 5 minutes: SHARE – Ask students to share what they and their partner discussed.

Where in the World?

- 5 minutes - Use Google Maps to show students where Sarajevo is located.

Get Them Thinking

5 minutes – Provide students with these “Guiding Questions” and ask them to think about them as they watch *Survival in Sarajevo*. Encourage students to take notes while watching.

1. What does it mean to be part of a community?
2. To what extent does individual choice shape community dynamics?
3. To what extent did the people in Sarajevo pull together to protect the dignity of the people living in their community?

Watch and Learn

12 minutes - Show [Survival in Sarajevo](#) and remind students to take notes on questions.

Alternative activity: “3-2-1 Flower” is an easy way for teachers to ensure students are actively listening while lessening any struggle that may arise with listening, watching, and writing.

- Directions for 3-2-1 Flower:
 - Pass out 3-2-1 Flower before viewing the film. Instruct students that they are to complete each petal of the flower.
 - Students should complete the flower with the following information
 - 3 Things they learned
 - 2 Things they found interesting
 - 1 Question they still have
 - The “3-2-1 Flower” works well with all ability levels and allows all students to be successful. Some students may complete the flower while watching the film, and others may complete the flower after the film. I usually allow about 5 minutes for students to think after the completion of the film.

- It is important that you either discuss students' questions as a group or answer each student's question when you grade his/her flower.

Since the film is rather short, you might consider showing it TWICE in class. The students can simply watch and experience the film the first time and the second time watch to take notes. Another option might be to assign the film for homework the night before.

Discuss and Learn

- Depending on how much time was used in the initial portions of today's lesson, use the remaining time to answer any questions student may still have.
- Discuss how students responded to the 3 "Guiding Questions"

Wrap up

- Collect completed "Review Questions for Study Guide" and "Guiding Questions"
- Review student comments and answers.
- Students will need this material returned to them in time for the assessment activity of creating a poster.

Day 2 (50 minute class period)

*Today will take additional time for preparation.

20-45 minutes – BEFORE STUDENTS ARRIVE, hang butcher paper around your classroom and then hang the images on the butcher paper. The images are included in this lesson for your convenience, but feel free to find more and/or different images!



This is an example of what it should look like. However, these pictures are very close together. Placing the images at least 3 feet apart will allow students space to think and feel. It is also suggested that you place the images in sheet protectors. This will keep the images from being damaged.

WHEN STUDENTS ARRIVE

(10 minutes) – Quickly review everything covered in the previous lesson. Ask students to think about *Survival in Sarajevo*, the people, and the choices they made

(5 minutes) – Instruct students that they will be walking around the classroom looking at the gallery of images from Sarajevo and America. **They should make at least 3 visits to each image.**

- 1st visit – Simply walk around and look at each image
- 2nd visit – Take time to study each image. Consider who, what, when, where, why, how, and any consequences. Also think about what may have happened in each image that would cause the people to make particular choices. Write your thoughts about the image on the butcher paper.

- 3rd visit – After writing a comment about each image, go back and review what other students have written. Feel free to respond to the comments of others, or write a new thought.

(30 minutes) – Students should circulate the classroom and begin making their visits to each image. Instruct students to silently participate. If possible play music in the classroom.

HOMEWORK – Students should complete the “Gallery Walk Evaluation” worksheet for homework.

Day 3 (50 minute class period)

(2 minutes) – Collect “Gallery Walk Evaluation” worksheet which was assigned as homework

(10-15 minutes) – Debrief: Allow time for free discussion about the film and images. This should be treated as time to discuss any outstanding questions or concerns. Refer back to the “Guiding Questions”:

1. What does it mean to be part of a community?
2. To what extent does individual choice shape community dynamics?
3. To what extent did the people in Sarajevo pull together to protect the dignity of the people living in their community?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

(10 minutes) – Pass out and discuss “Create a Poster” directions

- Allow students to ask any questions
- Provide students with a piece of paper and an index card
- Students should fill the entire paper creating their poster
- The index card is where students will write their 1 paragraph explanation of their poster and how it demonstrates how the choices of individuals can shape the dynamics of a community.
- The purpose of the poster is to serve as a visual public announcement to indicate the importance of choosing to work for good. The students should think about the title of the lesson “Personal Choice and Community Dynamics” when they design their poster.
- The poster should have a strong visual message. Typically these posters are few in words or have no words at all.
- As a brainstorming activity, ask students what choices they make to positively impact their community. Also ask them if they make any choice that negatively impact their community. If they make choices that harm their community, then challenge them to think of a positive way to change this behavior.
- The poster should illustrate how each student chooses to make his/her community a better place.

(20 minutes) – Allow students to begin to design their poster. Allow at least 3 days for students to work on their poster at home as homework.

- The poster serves as the assessment and evidence of learning
- As an extension, you may want to have students present their posters.
- There is a rubric included in this lesson.

Teacher Reflection

This is one of my favorite lessons to teach. The story of *Survival in Sarajevo* resonates with the students. I have had several students tell me that after watching this film they now feel as if they understand why we study history. Being that my students were born in the 1990s, I think they can see themselves in the images. There is a personal connection. Furthermore, the students enjoy walking around the classrooms and interacting with the images. I had previously conducted a lesson similar to this where I flashed images on the projector screen and students were to write a response on their own paper. I noticed that students were sleeping, drawing on their papers, or simply tuned out. By placing the images on the wall with butcher paper and a marker, the students become so much more involved. They study the images and really think about what they are examining.

In this lesson I have made many corrections to my original lesson. If I could provide any suggestion it would be to be prepared for great discussion. Allow for extra time. This lesson is designed to take three days, but do not let a teachable moment pass by. Allow plenty of time for the student to look at the pictures. If possible play some soothing music in the background. The music keeps kids thinking and not talking.

If you have the time/space to do more than 10 pictures, I think you will see even better results. It can be challenging to have 30 kids moving around the classroom looking at 10 pictures. Additionally, if you teach more than one section of the same course, finding time to hang the pictures could be difficult. One suggestion to work around this would be to print multiple copies of the pictures and hang layers of the butcher paper. When one class is finished, simply take down their paper and the paper for the next class will already be ready.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Review Questions for Study Guide

Yugoslavia

1. During WWII, Yugoslavia experienced a civil war, which groups of people were involved

2. What was the name of Yugoslavia after the civil war was

3. The delicate peace dissolved in what decade? _____

Breakup of Yugoslavia

1. Name 3 of the problems facing Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

2. How much of the population of Bosnia was comprised of Serbs and Croats? _____

La Benevolencija

1. When was La Benevolencija established? _____

2. What does La Benevolencija mean in Ladino? “ _____ ”

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Guiding Questions

1. What does it mean to be part of a community?

2. To what extent does individual choice shape community dynamics?

3. To what extent did the people in Sarajevo pull together to protect the dignity of the people living in their community?

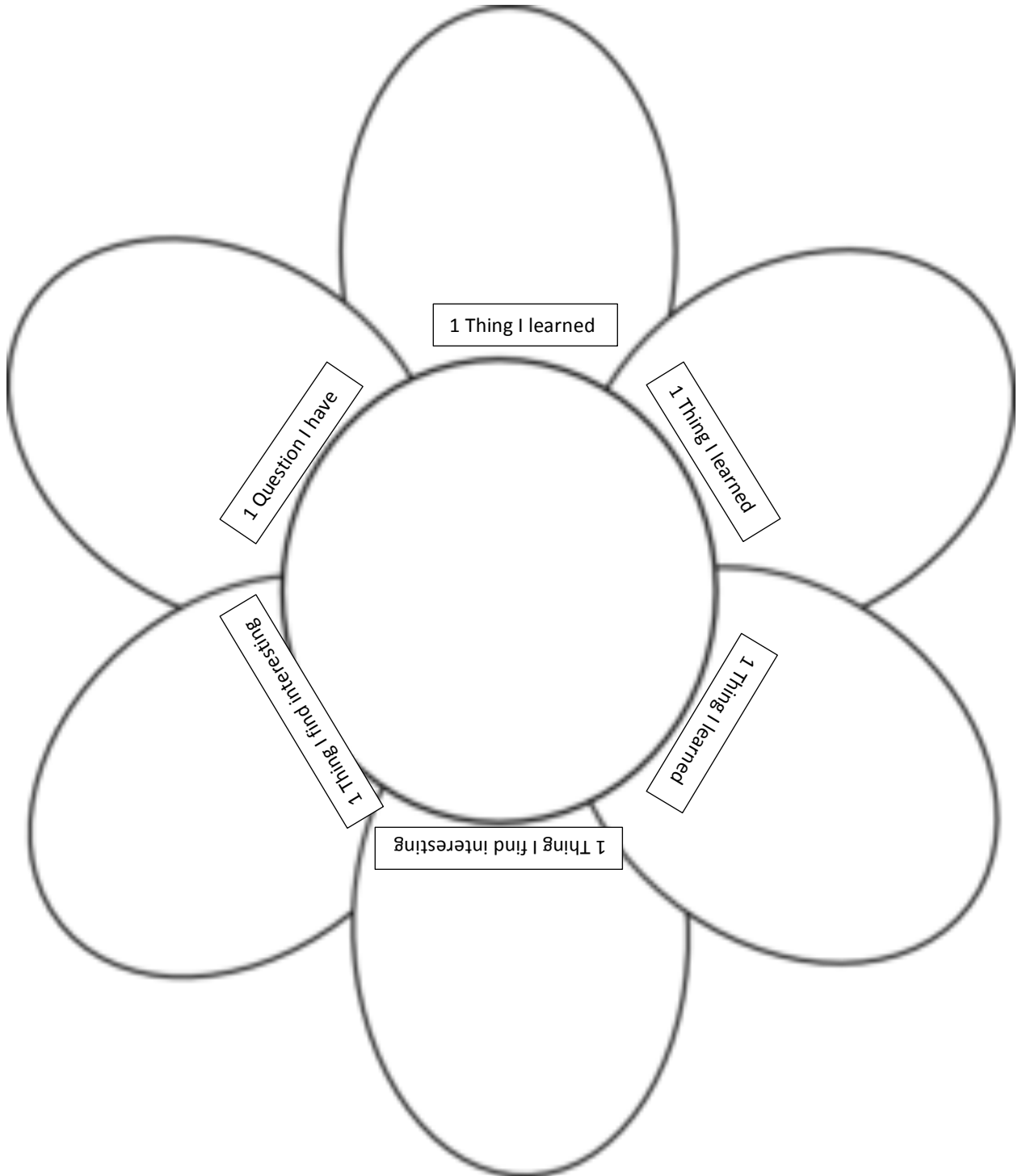
Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

3-2-1 Flower

Directions: In each of the petals of the flower write a statement that best matches the prompt



Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Gallery Walk Evaluation

1. What were your initial thoughts as you passed by each of the images?

2. How did you feel about expressing your thoughts next to each picture?

3. How did you respond to the comments left by your classmates?

4. In your opinion, which was the most powerful image and why?

5. Do you have any additional thoughts or questions? If so please express them here.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Personal Choice and Community Dynamics Poster

Create a poster that meets the following requirements:

- Use an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper
- The design must cover the entire page
- The poster must be original
- The poster must be based on the material covered in the previous classes
- ON THE BACK write your name in pencil

Index card component requirements:

- The title of your poster
- 1 paragraph description of the poster and how it demonstrates the theme of how personal choice can and does impact community dynamics.
- Your name

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Personal Choice and Community Dynamic Poster Rubric

_____ Student uses 8 ½ x 11 paper and the poster covers the entire page (5 pts)

_____ Student creates an original poster (The student does not trace or copy a poster, picture or other media) (5pts)

_____ Student creates a poster that demonstrates how the choices of an individual can have large and positive impacts on the community (15 pts)

_____ Student name is written in pencil on the back of the poster (2pts)

_____ Student completes an index card that includes the following

Title of the poster (1pt)

Student name (1 pt)

Paragraph explaining the poster and how personal choice can impact community dynamics (11 pts)

Total Score:

/40