

“Beyond Boundaries”
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Overview Information

- School: U.S. public middle school (*can be adapted for high school*)
- Course: United States History
- Lesson Category: U.S. History, English/Language Arts, Holocaust, Civics, Character Education
- Grade Level Presented To: 8
- Total Teaching Time: Two, 45 minute lessons; One gallery walk presentation on the third day

Introductory Information

Overview

Jerome A. Price teaches eighth grade United States History at a culturally diverse suburban middle school in Rockville, Maryland. He discovered Centropa during a collaborative planning meeting with his team of social studies teachers and Middle Years Programme (MYP) coordinator. Price was inspired to create an innovative lesson plan series after studying the impact of three groups of people who made the decision to unite in the face of religious difference. The humanity of La Benevolencija in the face of war was striking for Price to study in depth. Price’s middle school spent some time this school year engaging students about combating hate speech after a recent incident at the school community. Price believes this lesson connects and builds on the discussion by providing students with opportunities to increase civil discourse. Price believes the story of La Benevolencija exemplifies such dialogue and provides students with noteworthy global context in a creative way.

Background Information

Context for Lesson

The fourth and final unit I teach each year is entitled “A Nation Divided and Rebuilt.” The content begins with the events leading up to the American Civil War, moves to the actual fighting of the war, and ends with the period of Reconstruction. Specifically, this unit highlights the economic, political and social tension that ensued between the North and South throughout the mid to late 1800s. Though the harsh realities endured during the Bosnian War occurred over one hundred years later, I push my historians to draw connections to the concepts of change and unity beyond difference. In our current unit, the essential question my students wrestle with is “At what point should people fight to defend deeply held beliefs?” This question directly addresses the humanity and conviction of La Benevolencija.

Enduring Understanding

- Unity beyond religious, social, political, and economic bounds can affect positive change.

Goals/Objectives: By the end of the lesson, historians will be able to:

- Identify commonalities in the face of difference between peers
- Analyze a quote and images highlighting the Jewish community in Sarajevo
- Construct a visual representation highlighting the impact of the people of La Benevolencija

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Materials

- Survival in Sarajevo documentary
- Book, *Survival in Sarajevo: How a Jewish Community Came to the Aid of its City* (Edward Serotta)-**Optional**
- Chairs
- 4x6 index cards
- 8 ½ x 11 white paper for each student
- Pens and/or pencils
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Video Questions Graphic Organizer (*Attached*)
- Image Analysis Graphic Organizer (*Attached*)
- Quotation Analysis Worksheet (*Attached*)
- Instagram Project Rubric (*Attached*)

The Lesson

Preparation

Day 1 (45 minute class period)

I. Opening Group Activity: Where the Wind Blows (15 minutes)

- **Background Context:** This introductory activity is designed to engage student participants while allowing them to draw connections to hope, safety, commitment, and friendship. Students will eventually come to find out that those connections are directly linked to the experiences of Muslims, Croats, and Serbians with the support of the Jewish community of Sarajevo.

Directions:

- **Step One:** Arrange your classroom chairs to form a circle. All chairs should face inward toward the middle. One student volunteer or teacher will stand in the middle to begin the round holding a set of numbered index cards (*with the descriptions labeled on the opposite side*). There should be enough chairs for every student, with exception of the person standing in the middle of the circle.
- **Step Two:** The person in the middle will say “The wind blows in the direction of anyone who...” and complete the statement with the information on the back of the card. (Ex: “The wind blows in the direction of anyone who likes to eat Chipotle!”)
- **Step Three:** All students who like Chipotle must stand and quickly find a new seat that is more than two chairs away from them. The last student standing, unable to find a seat, will be the new person in the middle and read the next card. Continue the activity until you reach your last card.
- **Step Four:** Allow students to Turn & Talk to a partner and share their responses on a few select statements. Have students share out to the entire class will help build understanding and community.

The list of statements below is the one I used. Feel free to adjust to fit your individual classroom community:

*Begin with... “The wind blows in the direction of anyone who...”

- Like Chipotle
- Was born in the state of Maryland (*Person in the middle asks students who moved seats to share the city they were born in to the group*)
- Attended Beall Elementary School
- Plays an instrument (*Person in the middle asks students who moved seats to share what instrument they play for the group*)
- Has at least one person they can call: friend
- Has ever been responsible for someone or something else
- Has ever felt unsafe (*Person in the middle asks students who moved seats to share the time they felt unsafe*)
- Has ever been bullied
- Has a hero or admires someone (*Person in the middle asks students who moved seats to share the name of their hero or admirer*)
- Has ever stood up for someone who could not on their own
- Is hopeful for the future (*Person in the middle asks students who moved seats to share what she or he is hopeful for*)

Debrief Questions: Next, generate student discussion by asking the following two questions to the class.

1. What do you think was the purpose of this activity?
2. Did you learn anything you did not already know about your peers? If so, what was it?

II. Show Video, Survival in Sarajevo (17 minutes)

- *Directions:* To build student knowledge on this historical content, have students view the 12 minute film “Survival in Sarajevo”. During the film, have students fill in the graphic organizer (below) by responding to the following four questions.

Video Questions:

<i>Questions:</i>	<i>Student Responses:</i>
1. Describe the living conditions of Sarajevo between 1992 and 1995.	
2. How did the United States and Europe respond to Sarajevo after it was bombed? Do you believe these actions were justified?	
3. “People were losing hope, holding on. Even though most Serbs and Croats had left Sarajevo, some chose not to listen to their political leaders	

and felt that different people could live together.” Do you agree or disagree with the actions of Serbs and Croats who resisted the ideas of their political leaders? Explain why or why not.	
4. What impact did the people of La Benevolencija have on Sarajevo? Provide one example.	

After Video Question Completion: After the video, provide students with the opportunity to Turn and Talk and share their responses with their neighbor. After 3 minutes, ask for a student (1 per question) to share their response or a comment their partner made to the entire class.

III. Photograph Analysis (13 mins)

Directions: After completing the video questions, students will work in pairs to analyze any two of the three photographs (*below and attached*) highlighting the struggles of the people of Sarajevo and impact of the support of La Benevolencija. Students should follow the steps outlined below to analyze the photographs taken.

1. Study the photograph for 1 minute to form a complete impression of what makes up the image.
2. Then, divide the photograph into quadrants and study each quadrant to see what new details become visible.
3. Fill in your chart by recording the details you observe from each photograph.

Photograph One Comments:

People	Objects	Activities

Photograph Two Comments:

People	Objects	Activities

Photograph One:



Photograph Two:



Photograph Three:



Tonight's Homework: What questions do you have about the people of Sarajevo or La Benevolencija? Come up with two good questions to ask a neighbor tomorrow.

Day 2 (45 minute class period)

*Begin class by asking a student volunteer to read the objective for the day: “By the end of class, historians will be able to analyze a quote and images highlighting the Jewish community in Sarajevo.” Afterwards, provide students with 2 minutes to share their questions (homework from last night) with a partner. Ask 2-3 volunteers to share one question (each) to the class and discuss as a group. (5 minutes)

I. Quote Analysis (10 minutes)

“Don’t. Don’t. Don’t live under this dream that the West is going to come in and sort this problem out. Don’t dream dreams.”—*David Owen, European Community’s Chief Negotiator, to residents of Sarajevo, December 1992.*

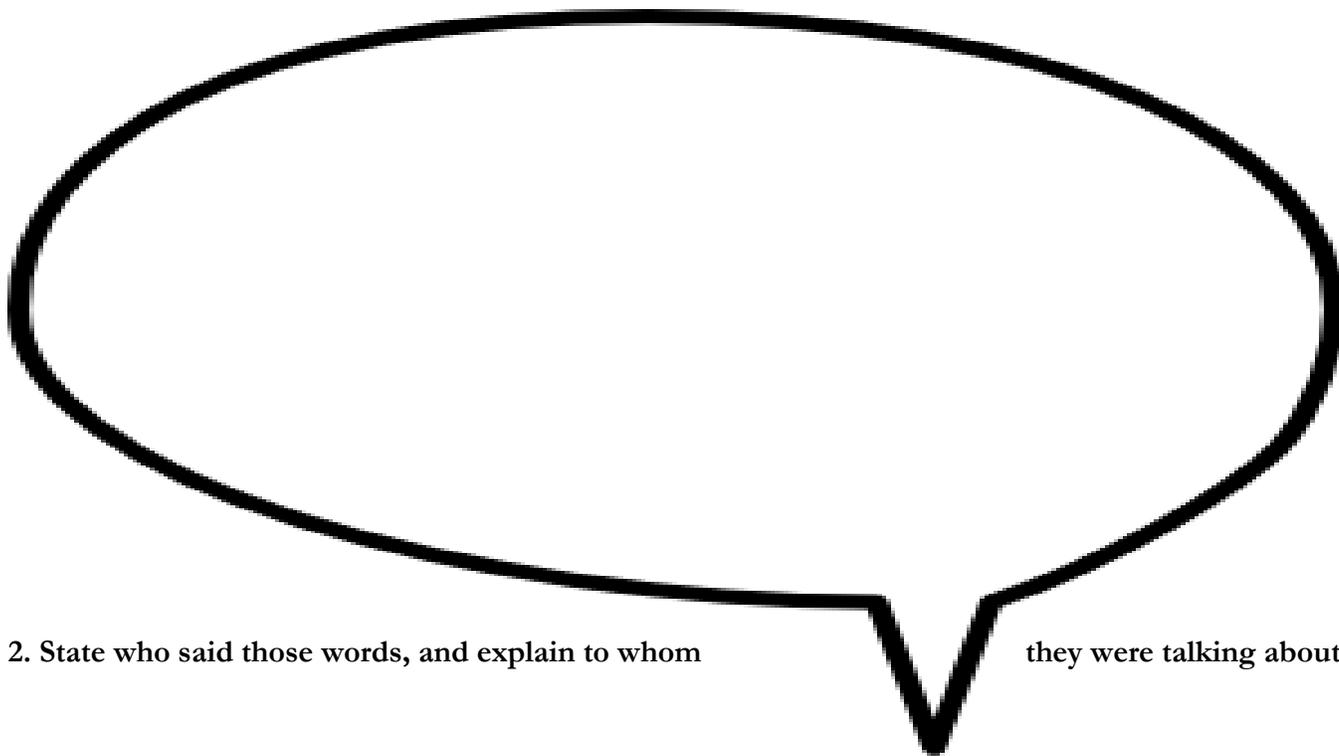
Quotation Analysis Directions—

1. Write or post the quote (above) on your board.
2. Ask a student volunteer to read the quote aloud to the entire class.
3. Then, allow students time to complete the Quote Analysis worksheet (see attached).
4. After 5 minutes, have students Turn & Talk to share their responses with a neighbor.
5. Afterwards, allow students to share their thoughts and ideas to the questions posed in front of the entire class.

Quote Analysis Worksheet

Name/Period _____ Date _____

1. Write the quote below. Remember to put it in quotation marks.



2. State who said those words, and explain to whom they were talking about.

3. Paraphrase key details/information: Which words or phrases best paraphrases the information in this quote?

A. _____ B. _____ C. _____

- Now, put the quote in your own words. Don't use quotation marks here because you are no longer using the words from the quote.

4. Explain analyses/ inferences/ conclusions/ predictions/ generalizations by citing appropriate textual evidence.

- Select one character trait to describe this character: _____
- Which specific details in the text led you to this conclusion about this character?

***Congratulations, you have officially
analyzed another writer's work!***

Take a bow. 😊

II. Concluding Activity (Remaining 25 minutes—students should begin this assignment in class and complete for homework)

Prompt: The Jewish community of Sarajevo looked beyond religious and cultural differences to unite at the time of the Bosnian War. Create an original Instagram post (*following the expectations of the attached rubric*) that highlights the role of the people of La Benevolecija but also draws on the importance of the two quotes below.

“When the Jews are leaving, it is a bad sign for the city,”—*Bosnian proverb*

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends,”—*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Tonight's Homework: Complete your Instagram Project. Be prepared to present tomorrow for our Gallery Walk!

Mr. Price

8th Grade United States History

Name/Period _____ Date _____

La Benevolencija Instagram Project

Prompt: The Jewish community of Sarajevo looked beyond religious and cultural differences to unite at the time of the Bosnian War. Create an original Instagram post (*following the expectations of the rubric below*) that highlights the role of the people of La Benevolencija but also draws on the importance of the two quotes below.

“When the Jews are leaving, it is a bad sign for the city,”—*Bosnian proverb*

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends,”—
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

	Points Earned	Possible Points
one or both of the quotes (Bosnian proverb and Dr. King quote)	/ 5	5
detailed visual highlighting the work of the people of La Benevolencija	/ 5	5
images should be in color	/ 2.5	2.5
Instagram logo	/ 2.5	2.5
at least 3 hashtags	/5	5
at least 3 comments	/ 5	5

Total Points Earned = _____

NOTE: Julius West Middle School is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school offering the Middle Years Programme (MYP). The rubric format below mirrors what our teachers use to assess student work. For the La Benevolecija Instagram Project, I wanted to connect the work of this two-day lesson to our IB/MYP Programme.

Criterion C: Communicating

At the end of year 3, students should be able to:

- i. communicate information and ideas in a way that is appropriate for the audience and purpose
- ii. structure information and ideas according to the task instructions

ASSIGNMENT: Performance-Based Assessment (*La Benevolecija Instagram Project Rubric*)

MCPS Grade	MYP Achievement Level	Achievement level descriptor
Below 59.5% 18 and under	0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
60-65% 19 20 21	1-2	The student: i. communicates information and ideas in a style that is not always clear ii. organizes information and ideas in a limited way
70-75% 22 23 24	3-4	The student: i. communicates information and ideas in a way that is somewhat clear ii. somewhat organizes information and ideas
80-85% 25 26 27	5-6	The student: i. communicates information and ideas in a style that is mostly appropriate to the audience and purpose ii. mostly structures information and ideas according to the task instructions
90-100% 28 29 30	7-8	The student: i. communicates information and ideas in a style that is completely appropriate to the audience and purpose ii. structures information and ideas completely according to the task instructions

Teacher Reflection

Teaching this lesson to my eighth grade U.S. History students was a very powerful experience. Even though the content of the Bosnian War and work of La Benevolencija in Sarajevo occurred over a century following the unit my students have been studying, the connections were striking. Before crafting this two-day lesson, I was adamant in the belief that my student historians must be provided with some sense of personal connection to this period in history. From our very first opening activity “Where the Wind Blows,” to the culminating activity of student created Instagram projects, my student historians gained multiple opportunities to connect to the time period, key players, and realities of the Bosnian War and circumstances surrounding Sarajevo. I was keen on my students beginning with an experience that allowed them to see that people can work together in the face of difference. “Where the Wind Blows” breaks this down for kids well before moving into the content found in the work of the video questions, photo, and quotation analysis.

The work of history educators, in my opinion, should always involve connecting the student to the material being studied in class each and every day. I did not take for granted that my students would know or easily connect to the material because it occurred in the 1990s, a period not extremely distant from 2017. Social media has proven to be a powerful force in the lives of students. My student historians really enjoyed pulling together their knowledge from the Student Learning Packet as well as the class discussions to create a unique Instagram visual. This was my first time presenting this lesson and I had no idea how my students would creatively approach this project beyond the prompt and rubric. Dr. King’s words were added because I knew my student historians could relate to him while making strong connections to Sarajevo. I was very pleased with their takeaways and ideas. One student asked: Why do we still judge others by their religious beliefs?

Throughout this three-day lesson, I made edits and changes as I moved along. Be open to change. I made the decision to have class in our school’s staff lounge for the first day. Your students will need room to move around from chair to chair for the opening activity. Our normal classroom space would not provide for that movement with the desks we use. I was purposeful with providing my student historians with some choice. Students had the opportunity to choose which two of the three photographs they wanted to analyze. On the last day, final project work and the gallery walk took place in our normal classroom space. As you move through this lesson, students will become more and more curious and ask questions. This is good. Allow for the conversation but always come back to the enduring understanding: **Unity beyond religious, social, political, and economic bounds can affect positive change.**

