Big Era Eight
A Half Century of Crisis
1900 – 1950 CE

Panorama Teaching Unit
Turbulent Decades
1900 – 1950

PowerPoint Overview Presentation
A Half Century of Crisis

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World History for Us All
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Why this unit?

The first half of the twentieth century often plays a dual role in a history course. On the one hand, the sheer volume of blood spilled in those fifty years is noteworthy. On the other hand, it was a period when people, it seems, put aside their differences to fight "good wars"—World War I and World War II.

This lens, a bifocal one, so to speak, focuses much attention on the industrialized world, though not without reason. The two world wars are still very much a part of popular culture in Western countries, and students often bring their own knowledge of the subject to bear on an examination of them. Teachers, as a group, also tend to have a larger reserve of factual knowledge about the two wars, and the economic depression that links them, than they do of, say, economic changes in early-twentieth-century Latin America.

The first half of the twentieth century, however, did not just happen in the industrialized world, nor can we understand the period itself, nor the decades that followed, without looking at the globe as a whole. On that scale, the 1900-1950 period was marked by serious and growing economic imbalances, manifested in political and cultural ferment around the world.

What was new in this period, however, was that for the first time in about a century, political and economic domination began to shift away from Western Europe. This was a change that anyone in those years who consciously looked to the future pondered with apprehension, hope, and, quite often, fear.

New as well in the period were the indisputable successes that anti-imperialist, socialist, and anti-capitalist movements gained. While the full collapse of the system created in the nineteenth century era of "New Imperialism" would come in Big Era Nine (1945-present), key developments that led to that collapse happened in Big Era Eight. And whatever flaws one might find in the Soviet communist model, here for the first time was an avowedly socialist **state** existing in a capitalist world-system. By the end of the half-century, that model also spread to China. The period ended, depending on how one frames the debate, in a "bipolar" world of competing capitalist and socialist societies. These two "worlds vied for the political affections of new states and soon-to-be independent colonies.

At the start of the period, the course and ultimate end of the major shifts that took place between 1900 and 1950 were obviously not known. And on a global scale peoples strove to direct, influence, or obstruct the directions human society might take. In this unit, students will examine ways in which groups and individuals tried to control and manage change.

Unit objectives

Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. List major world-historical events in the first half of the twentieth century.
2. Explain global economic, demographic, and geopolitical developments in the first half of the twentieth century.
3. Discuss varying perspectives on historical developments in the first half of the twentieth century.
4. Assess the meaning and significance of historical developments using accepted rules of evidence.

Time and materials

Classes will require three to five 60-minute periods to complete this unit, depending on teacher discretion.

Author

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The historical context

The first half of the twentieth century most famously witnessed more bloodshed than any period in history before or since. At the panoramic level, this is best explained in two ways. On the one hand, the rate of global population growth continued to accelerate faster than in any earlier Big Era. This meant, not insignificantly, that there was literally more blood on the planet to shed. Also, rapid and continuous technological innovation gave humans greater ability to destroy life and property on a much larger scale than at any earlier time.

The period saw not only continued demographic growth but also a drawn-out power shift. This shift involved the waning of the global imperial power of European states, especially Britain and France, to a complex combination of American economic power, bipolar competition between the US and its friends on one side and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other, and the rise of the first of a multitude of new states in Asia and Africa. All these developments emerged from the conditions of two world wars.

This Big Era was also marked by cultural and social quests for certainty and stability in a rapidly changing world, including artistic trends like Cubism and Surrealism and appeals to intense and militaristic forms of nationalism, which had their most extreme expressions in Fascism and Nazism.

This unit sketches the 1900-1950 period in broad strokes, with specific events mentioned only briefly. Between 1900 and 1950, the world's population more than doubled, powerful empires rose and fell, unprecedented millions died in war, the world economy became increasingly-intertwined, and energy consumption increased more than tenfold as people moved out of rural environments into modern cities.

Lesson 1
Four Perspectives

Preparation

Divide students into groups of four, assigning one of the four perspectives to each student so that each group has all four perspectives. If necessary, create groups of five, with two students assigned one perspective.

This lesson presumes students' basic familiarity with the development of capitalism in the nineteenth-century world. Vocabulary may be an issue, so pre-teaching some words, such as "capitalism," "socialism," "nationalism," and "imperialism" may be in order. The readings presume that students have these words in their working vocabulary. If they do not, the readings will be more difficult to understand.

The lesson itself takes the form of a "four-corners" activity. As such, four signs should be placed, one in each corner of the classroom (assuming a traditionally-shaped classroom), labeled as follows:

- Positive
- In-Between
- Negative
- Don't Know

It is critical that the "positive" and "negative" signs be on opposite sides of the room.

The lesson involves one of two procedures: either you will read a series of statements to the class or, if technology is available, project the statements onto a screen (likely in combination with reading them). If you choose to project the statements, you will need to prepare transparencies or presentation software with the statements.

It is probably best to assign students their perspectives before starting the lesson, making sure that there are even numbers of all four perspectives. Note: For Lesson 2 in this unit, students will maintain their perspectives and work in groups of four, each group presenting the four different perspectives.

Introduction

In order to introduce the idea that a historical event or development might be positive or negative depending on one's perspective, present a case, for example, a controversial issue at the school such as dress code, tardy policy, or other, and then ask the class if it is a good or bad thing. If no such issue springs to mind, tax policy is a serviceable issue. For example:

> *Teacher*: I have an idea. Let's raise taxes by 5 percent to pay for health care for everyone. Increase all taxes—sales tax, income tax, capital gains tax. If there's money left over, we can use it to build homeless shelters. What do you think? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Elicit student responses, but quickly guide students to explain *why* they feel how they do. As soon as possible after a response, make a statement that generalizes the students' responses into a broader statement of perspective. For example, "So someone who thinks that the wealthy should have to pay more than the poor wouldn't like this tax proposal, because it raises all taxes by 5 percent, particularly sales tax." As quickly as possible, delineate multiple general perspectives on the issue at hand. Then, explain to students that this same logic—that perspective informs meaning—applies not only to issues today but to issues in the past.

Activities

1. Distribute Student Handouts 1.1-1.4 to student groups of four, one different role per person.

2. Explain the format of the Student Handouts:
   a) Each Student Handout contains a different perspective.
   b) At the top, there is a Fundamental Question. As the students examine different developments in the first half of the twentieth century, they should keep their Fundamental Question in mind. If they examine the development and can answer "yes" to the Fundamental Question, the development is positive. If they answer "no," the development is negative.
   c) Below the Fundamental Question is a brief description of the perspective.
   d) Each description includes at the bottom some representative example of the perspective.

3. Ask students to read their handouts.

4. Tell students that in order to make sure the roles are clear, you will read (or project) a series of statements about some of the major events of the years 1900-1950. Depending on the students' individual roles, they will choose one of four corners of the room and go to it on cue. Explain that "Positive" means that from the perspective of a student's role, the development described is a more-or-less good thing. "Negative" means it is a more-or-less bad thing. A clear distinction should be made between "In-Between" and "Don't Know." "In-Between" students find both positive and negative aspects to the development from the perspective of their role and—this is the important thing—*can clearly articulate why they do*. "Don't Know" students are not clear enough in their understanding either of their role or the statement to make an assessment. The "Don't Know" students *will need to articulate how and why they are unclear*. Double-check that students understand the four corners.

5. Explain the process: You will read a statement, and then students will go to the corner which most closely matches how someone in their role (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders,

Colonized Peoples, Socialists) would feel about the statement. Once in their corners, students will discuss why they chose their corner, and spokespeople for each role will share with the class why they chose their corner.

6. Stress to the students that they will need to know how the other roles respond to the statements in order to do a good job on the assessment that closes the activity.

7. Read through one statement to clarify how students connect the ideals in their roles to particular perspectives on the development. Read or project the following:

   In 1914, the First World War began. One side (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman empire) fought the other (Russia, France, Great Britain, and later the United States), in a war that would ultimately lead to the death of roughly 14 million soldiers and the collapse of four empires."

   a) Ask the class: "If you are one of the Imperial Powers, is this positive, negative, or in-between, and why?" Allow students time to think, and then elicit quick responses.
   b) Ask the class: "If you are one of the New Empire Builders, is this positive, negative, or in-between, and why?" Allow students time to think, and then elicit quick responses.
   c) Ask the class: "If you are one of the Colonized Peoples, is this positive, negative, or in-between, and why?" Allow students time to think, and then elicit quick responses.
   d) Ask the class: "If you are one of the Socialists, is this positive, negative, or in-between, and why?" Allow students time to think, and then elicit quick responses.

8. Read through the six statements that follow. It is not necessary to lead the class through all of them, and indeed doing that might well become repetitious and produce fatigue. It depends on the group, the speed of their activity, and the length of time you wish to spend on the activity.
   - Tell students they will need to decide which corner they will go to, based on their role. Ask students to think before they move.
   - Direct students to move to their corners.
   - Direct students to discuss with each other the reasons why they chose their corner. Students should first clarify their roles to each other and then explain why they chose the corner they did. Remind students to choose one spokesperson *from each role* that is present in the corner who will explain to the class why someone with their role chose the corner she or he did.
   - After students discuss and choose spokespeople, ask these spokespeople to explain their perspective succinctly. You should begin with the "In-Between" corner. Ask for a spokesperson from each of the perspectives to present in turn. It is likely that not all of the perspectives will be represented in every corner—this is precisely what students should notice.
   - After the spokespeople present, ask the "Don't Know" students if their ideas became

clearer after what they heard. Then, ask the class if any students want to change their corner based on what they heard. Allow students to move.

- Repeat the process for "Positive" and "Negative." Again, check with the "Don't Knows" for increased clarity after the spokespeople present and give students a chance to change positions.
- If any "Don't Know" students remain in that corner, ask "Don't Know" to present what remains unclear. Ask other students if they can offer clarification and allow them to do so. Give "Don't Know" students a chance to change corners as things become clearer to them.

Read or project the following six statements:

In 1917, the Russian empire collapsed. In its place arose the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a one-party, Communist state. Lenin, the first leader of the Soviet Union, saw the Russian Revolution as the first step toward the destruction of capitalism and imperialism worldwide.

The Versailles Conference of 1919 ended the First World War. As part of the settlement, Britain and France divided up Germany and the Ottoman empire's colonial possessions between themselves in a system of "mandates" set up through the **League of Nations**.

In 1929, the **Great Depression** began. The Depression was the greatest crisis in the history of modern capitalism. However, at the same time, the Soviet Union's socialist economy grew. Some governments in capitalist societies responded by vastly expanding the role of government in the economy to spur economic growth.

In the 1930s, Japan expanded its colonial possessions in Asia, beginning with the conquest of Manchuria, south through coastal China, and ultimately to the Dutch East Indies, now known as Indonesia.

In 1939, the Second World War began in Europe. Over its course, 20 million people died, the majority civilians. At its close, two conferences took place at the urging of the United States to establish the post-war order. The first was the Bretton Woods conference, in New Hampshire, to establish rules for post-war trade and monetary exchange. The second was the 1945 United Nations conference in San Francisco, California, to establish a post- war diplomatic order.

In 1947, after a long but primarily non-violent struggle, India gained its independence from the British empire, adopting its constitution in 1950. Following its independence, India led the 'non-aligned' world, seeking to collaborate with both capitalist and socialist countries.

9. When the series of events—however many the class actually goes through—is complete, ask students to return to their seats.

Assessment

Students produce a quick-write in response to the following:

1. Which of the events we looked at today was the most positive to you from the perspective of your role? Why?

2. Which of the other three roles came closest to yours in deciding what was positive and what was negative? What did you have in common with that other role?

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.1—Perspective: Imperial Powers

Fundamental Question

Does this development help me maintain or expand my empire?

At the start of the twentieth century, you sit, so to speak, on top of the world. Over the course of the last century, you built up your country's industrial power and used the economic and military might it brought you to conquer other countries around the world. More than just national glory is at stake. Your industrial economy takes while it gives. It produces great wealth but requires a steady stream of raw materials with which to produce. The colonies provide them. Your factories can out-produce the manufacturers of any non-industrialized country. But without buyers for your products, your businesses are bound to fail. The millions over whom you rule across your empire are consumers your businesses need.

At some basic level, you sense that you need your colonies more than they need you. You have a sinking feeling that your colonies have come to this realization, too. With apprehension, you look ahead to the future. Growing independence movements of all sorts have increased the cost of colonial occupation. If the strength of these movements grows, they will threaten not only the profitability of your empire but its existence.

Add to this pressure from without a pressure from within. A small but growing segment of your own population, not entirely but largely socialist or communist in their political orientation, echoes the anti-imperialist call of the independence movements and couples it with calls for a more equal distribution of wealth at home. The critique is not just moral, but economic. This part of the population would prefer to see government spending on social services rather than on exploiting and keeping order in overseas colonies.

You are not the only empire in the world, either. You have not only the old rivals from the past but new industrial powers. They have rapidly-growing economies and the newest technologies. All your rivals would like to expand their economic reach in the world at the expense of your own.

Looking ahead fifty years to 1950, your main goal is the same as it was in the nineteenth century: expand your empire. If you cannot do that, then, at the very least, do not let it shrink.

Main examples: Great Britain, France, Russia.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.2—Perspective: New Empire-Builders

Fundamental Question

Does this development grow my empire while older imperial powers decline?

One hundred years ago, you looked on as other powers, like Britain and France, held dominion over the world. Britain built its industrial base and used that economic might to drive competitors around the world out of business while building an empire on which the sun, famously, never set. So, too, with the French, who built an empire only slightly less titanic than that of the British.

You were behind in the imperial game, even fifty years ago. But now, the future looks bright as you look forward to the twentieth century. It is not that your empire is as big as that of the British Crown—not yet. You know, though, that what goes up must come down. The French are big, and the British bigger. To you, however, this only means that they have more to lose.

How can you beat the powers that rigged the rules of the game in their own favor? Not just by copying them, but by bettering them. Your factories need to be more productive and your businesses more efficient. Your armies must be better trained and better armed. Whatever the means, you need to make sure that your empire grows, either economically or geographically, ideally both. Other empires may need to shrink for this to happen.

This is a tall order and at no point can you afford to rest. This is a national project: the particular desires of elites and, more pressing, working classes must be subordinated to the larger, more important goal of national greatness. You want your rich to enrich themselves further but not on behalf of foreign capital. You want your workers to be able to afford the products they make in the factories, but you want them to love and serve the nation, not a particular social class. Socialists and communists would divide the nation into competing or even warring classes, and they oppose the achievement of national glory through imperial expansion.

You learned the rules of the game in the past century. To be a Great Power, you build an industrial, capitalist economy at home and secure access to materials and markets with a colonial empire. The bigger the empire, the greater the Great Power. As the twentieth century begins, you are playing the game to win.

Main examples: United States, Germany, Japan.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.3—Perspective: Colonized Peoples

Fundamental Question

Does this development help colonies become free of imperial domination?

By no measure can you argue that the nineteenth century was good for your country. It is not that all was well one hundred years ago. Even then, European countries like the Netherlands, France, and Britain ruled over much of the globe through their colonial empires, leeching raw materials from conquered lands to feed their growing industrial economies. Even in the regions which remained politically independent, the industrial centers exerted a sort of economic centrifugal force, sucking wealth from the peripheries, from countries like your own.

You face the twentieth century from this disadvantaged position. You know where you need to go, but not quite how to get there. You could push for independence, but the odds seem to be against you. Your elites might come to terms with the imperialists but probably never as equals. Asking for independence is like asking the winning side to forfeit the game. Demanding it, however, could become ugly, if, say, your demands are put forward by intellectuals without connection to the masses. In that case you have too little popular support to back up your demands. Ugly, too, if your demands take the form of a mass movement. A mass movement creates real pressure, but the imperialists' reprisals would surely fall hard on your people.

Of course, the country that colonized you is not the only industrial power in the world. At times you wonder if it would be best to seek help from one of the rival industrial powers. Perhaps the enemy of your enemy is your friend. But perhaps not. Your goal is independence, not to exchange one colonial master for another. You know that at root all industrial powers have the same needs: raw materials and markets. You could change the colonizer, but you would remain a colony economically, if in no other way,

Many of your people, both intellectuals and laborers, see in the international socialist movement an answer to your problems. The industrialized world's strongest critiques of imperialism are voiced by socialists and communists. You are intrigued but concerned. The socialists and communists want your independence too, but they see it as a part of class struggle. Do they really understand the racism you face in the colonies? And after independence, socialists and communists might ask your workers and peasants to rise against your own upper classes.

You have a sure sense that despite all the disadvantages the next fifty years will bring you, at least, close to independence. You know that a small minority of the world's people cannot dominate the majority forever. It only remains to be seen precisely when the colonizers will lose control of their dependencies.

Primary examples: India, Vietnam, Nigeria.

Lesson 1

Student Handout 1.4—Perspective: Socialists

Fundamental Question
Does this development diminish the power of capitalism in the world and increase the power of workers?

The Industrial Revolution of the last century gave humanity more power over the world than any other single development in history. At the same time, it produced widespread misery. Never before had laboring people produced, you argue, so much wealth for so relatively few, while gaining so little for themselves. And yet you are hopeful. The simple fact that human beings can produce so much in the age of industry lets you know that the means exist to solve age-old human problems. We can now produce enough for everyone. All that remains is to get unrestrained capitalism, based as it is on the private ownership of productive wealth, out of the way.

Therein lies the problem. On the surface, the capitalists of the world hold all the advantages. Though labor drives modern world production, capital organizes it, not only through corporations and banks but also through states and militaries. Capital pits worker against worker through the competition among industries, **nations**, and empires. At the start of the twentieth century, the international working class—factory workers in industrialized countries, newly-emancipated slaves in the Western Hemisphere, peasants in the colonies—seems woefully disunited in the face of capitalist oppressors.

You are certain, however, that the situation is not as it appears. Capitalism as a system is dynamic, but unstable. How could a system which takes competition as its cardinal virtue be anything but unstable? In the last century, empires gobbled up lands across the globe, particularly in Africa. Now, the imperial appetite for resources and markets remains, but unclaimed lands are few. Empires, you are sure, will soon go to war to take what belongs to the others. Then, with their attention on each other, they will lose their grip not only on their colonies but also on their own workers.

Your goal in the new century is to restrain capitalism, replacing the excesses of that system with a new world economy dedicated to social justice. Your communist friends, who are more radical socialists, want to terminate capitalism altogether. It is true that what motivates an urban factory worker is different from what motivates a peasant, but both groups share the same capitalist enemy. Perhaps their interests will conflict in the future, but for now they must ally. The nationalist independence movements, so often led by elites who do not have their workers' best interests at heart, nonetheless share with you the common imperialist enemy. The time will come to settle those differences. Until then, you see the cracks in the capitalist system that many others miss. In the next half-century, you know you will see that system crumble.

Primary examples: Russia/USSR, China.

Lesson 2
Seven Developments

Preparation

This lesson presumes that students have completed Lesson 1 of the unit because it requires them to examine various data using the four perspectives from Lesson 1. Without this background, the lesson will be difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish successfully. The goal is not simply to have students know, in broad strokes, some of the basic worldwide developments of the first half of the twentieth century but also to help them understand that the meaning of those developments may shift with perspective.

The lesson is a "gallery walk," in which students walk around the gallery room, examining a series of documents in their groups. Prepare Class Resources 2.1-2.7 to hang up around the classroom. Print them and, if possible, blow them up to a larger size. Arrange the documents around the room, spaced so that a group of students can gather around one without crowding another group. Students should be able to see both the documents and the discussion questions clearly. Copy a class set of Student Handout 2.1 so that all students have their own copy.

Timing may be something of an issue. There are seven documents, and if you allow ten minutes to read, comprehend, discuss, and record the discussion, the lesson will take 80 to 90 minutes, depending on how briskly you introduce and close it. Feel free to leave some documents out if you want the lesson to be shorter. What is most important is that students get a panoramic view of developments from differing perspectives.

It would be simplest to form the students' heterogeneous groups prior to starting the lesson, using the perspective roles they took in Lesson 1. It would also be best to number the groups according to the number of documents. If you have an odd number of students, it is better to have groups with one extra member than one fewer. Double up on one perspective.

Introduction

Students tend to think of history as a series of events. Even if you have made it all the way to the twentieth century in your course, many of your students will need fairly constant reminders of history's different scales, labeled Panorama, Landscape, and Closeup in World History for Us All.

None of the documents in this lesson describes or explains events, with the exception of Class Resource 2.3 which, in showing worldwide war deaths, notes some specific wars and military conflicts. All show world-wide processes, though most disaggregate data regionally in some way. Before the students begin to examine the documents, remind them of how we can see things from the panoramic perspective. For example, the teacher says, "So, I was thinking, … if I have a student in my class who is doing poorly and does not understand what we are learning, does that mean the class is not working?"

Elicit student responses. Students will fall on either side of the question. Some will say that if one student does not understand, then something is wrong with the class. Others will say something along the lines of "if one student does not get it but most of the class does, then the class is working." Guide the discussion so that students understand the difference between the aggregate performance of the class, and that of an individual student. Emphasize that the perspective of the whole class and that of the individual student are both valid perspectives, but that they are distinct.

Once students understand the difference between the perspective of the whole class rather than that of an individual student, tell the students that the same principles apply in history. Remind them of the three WHFUA perspectives. What happens in a class for one student is not the same as what happens for the whole class. So, too, what happens at one point of time in the world is not the same as *what happens in the world as a whole*. Stress to students that they will next look at a series of developments in the world as a whole.

Activities

1. Distribute Student Handout 2 (Discussion Record).

2. Explain to students that they will examine a series of developments in the first half of the twentieth century, from the same perspective they had in Lesson 1.
   a) Place students in numbered groups, heterogeneously, containing all four perspectives, that is, Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists.
   b) There are seven different developments students will examine so, depending on class size, groups may have five, rather than four people.
      - If necessary, break up one or two groups.
      - First, fill gaps in any groups owing to absences.
      - Once gaps are filled, double up in groups in particular roles. A group might have two Socialists, for example.
      - Do not put more than five students into a group.

3. Point out the different documents hanging around the room and explain to students that the groups will examine each document in turn for ten minutes (or however many minutes you feel is appropriate), discuss the questions, and record the conversation on Student Handout 2.1.
   a) Tell students that after ten minutes they will move to the next document in a clockwise direction around the room.
   b) Go over each column in Student Handout 2.1 with the class, checking for understanding.
   c) Remind students of their Fundamental Questions from Student Handouts 1.1-1.4. Stress that they will use these questions as they examine the developments around the room. Remind the students that a "no" answer to their Fundamental Question would mean a negative development, a "yes," a positive one.

d) Pay particular attention to the right-hand column, in which students are to indicate how negative or positive they feel the development in question is, from their perspective. They are to give the development a rating, from 1 (for most negative) to 5 (for most positive), and offer a brief rationale.

e) Depending on your students, it might be very helpful to give them language which correlates to each of the numbers. A "1" would be "very negative, a "2" "slightly negative," etc.

4. Direct students to go to the same number document as their group. If they are in group 1, they go to the document labeled "Class Resource 2.1," etc.

5. Once students are at the documents, remind them of their task: Examine the document, discuss the questions, record the discussion, and move clockwise to the next document when time is up.

6. Tell students to begin, and start time. Circulate through the room, checking in with each group for understanding of the process. In terms of helping students understand the content, limit your input as much as possible for the moment. Students should discuss *with each other*.

7. When one minute remains, say, "One minute left!"

8. When time is up, call "Time! Move clockwise in your group to the next document!"

9. The process repeats until students have read and discussed all documents, at which time you instruct students to return to their seats.

Assessment

Ask students to write a paragraph in which they:

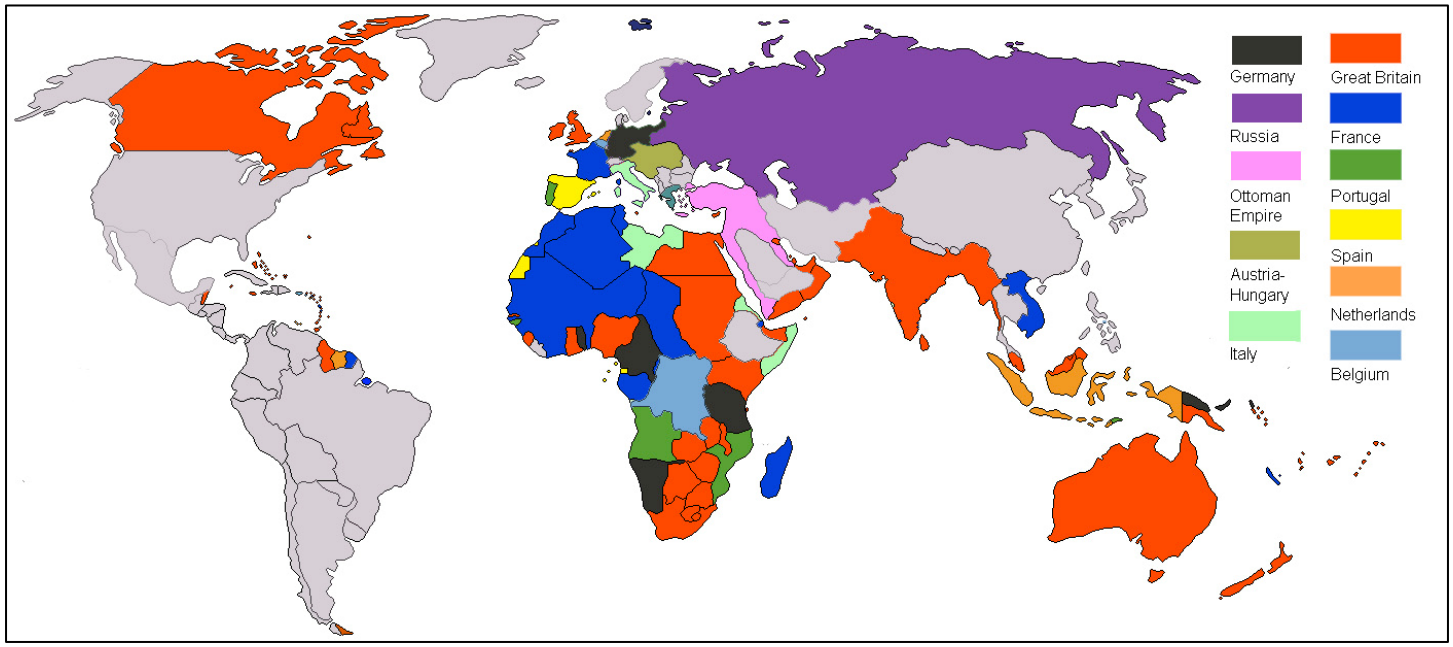
1. Explain what they felt, from their perspective, was the most important development they read about in the documents, and why.

2. Explain what they felt, from their perspective, was the least important development they read about in the documents and why.

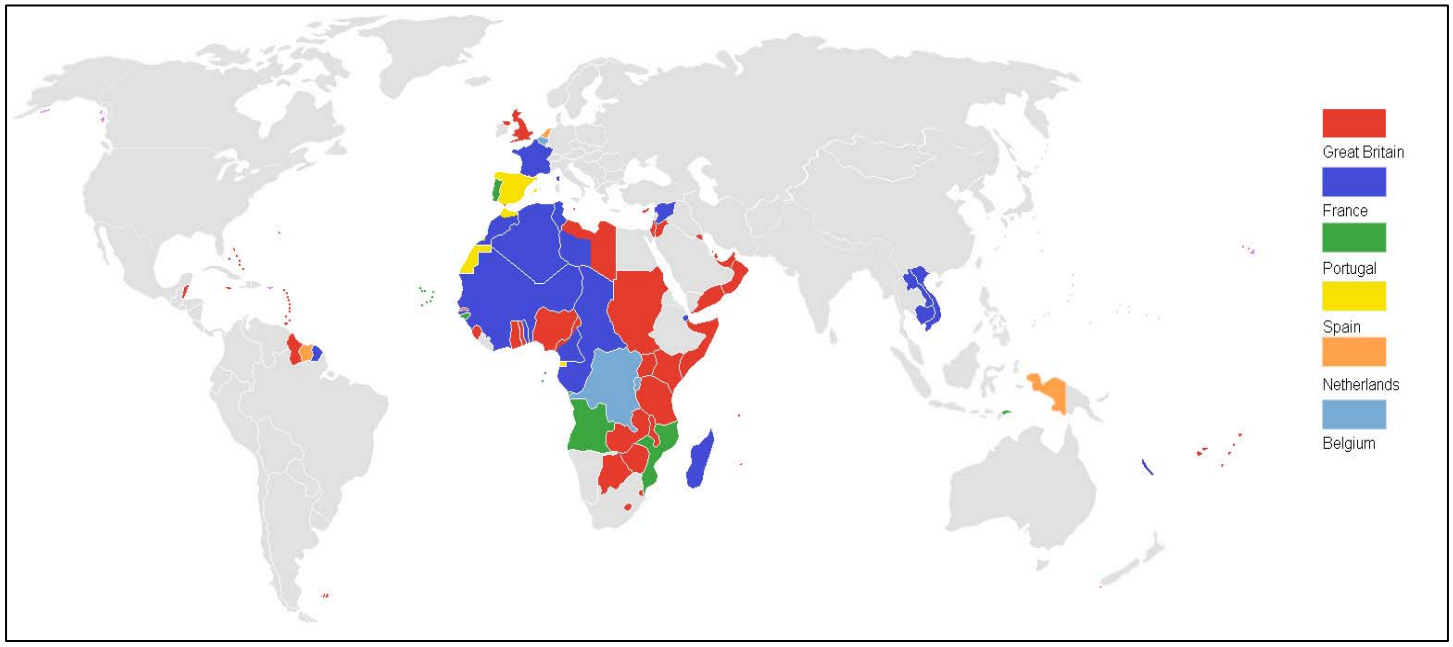
Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.1—Data: Maps

World Map with European Colonial Empires in 1900



World Map with European Colonial Empires in 1950



Maps Discussion Questions:

1. How much of the world, based on the first map, is dominated by Europe in 1900? Based on what you know about the nineteenth century and on your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), why would this be the case?

2. In 1900, which continents are the least independent? Which are the most independent? From your perspective, is this a good or bad way to organize the world? Why?

3. Look at the second map. By 1950, how has the world changed? Which areas have become more or less independent? Which countries have gained and lost power in the world? From your perspective, are these changes positive or negative? Why?

Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.2—Data: World Population

(in millions)

	1850	1900	1950
Africa	**111**	**133**	**224**
Asia	**809**	**947**	**1,402**
Europe	**276**	**408**	**547**
Latin America and Caribbean	**38**	**74**	**166**
North America	**26**	**82**	**172**
Oceania	**2**	**6**	**13**
World	**1,262**	**1,650**	**2,524**

Source: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/xsdataset.asp?vlnk=1359&More=Y

World Population Discussion Questions:

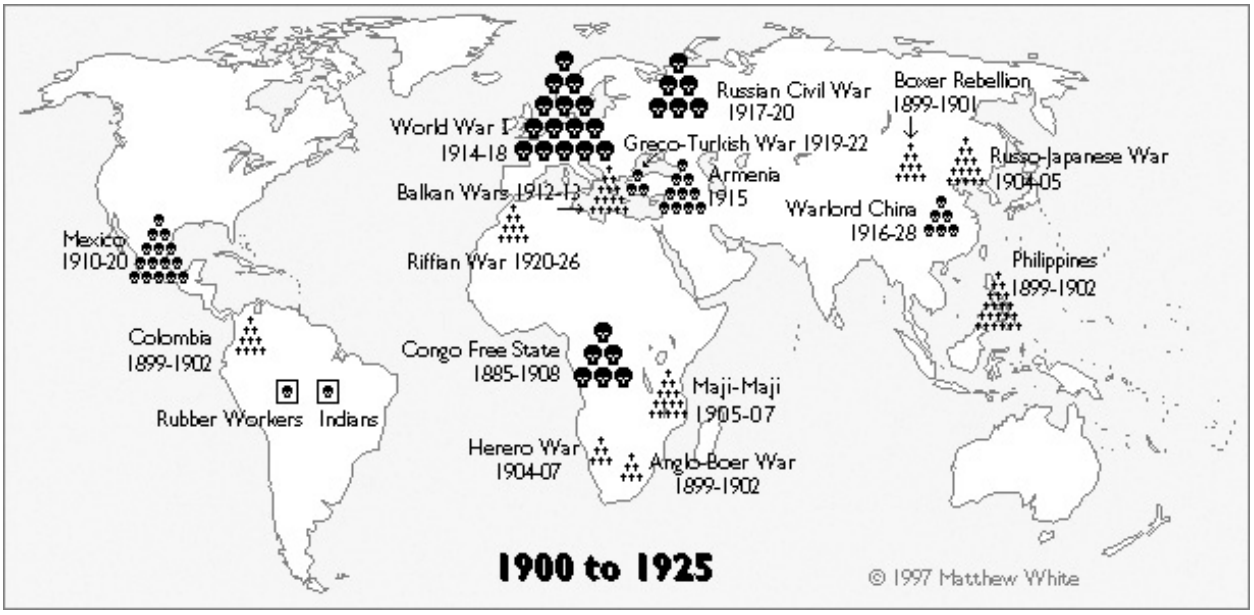
1. Which parts of the world had the largest population in 1850? Which in 1950? Did one of these regions grow more quickly than the other? Why do you think this might have happened?

2. Which parts of the world grew most quickly between 1850 and 1950? Based on what you know in history, why might this region have grown the most?

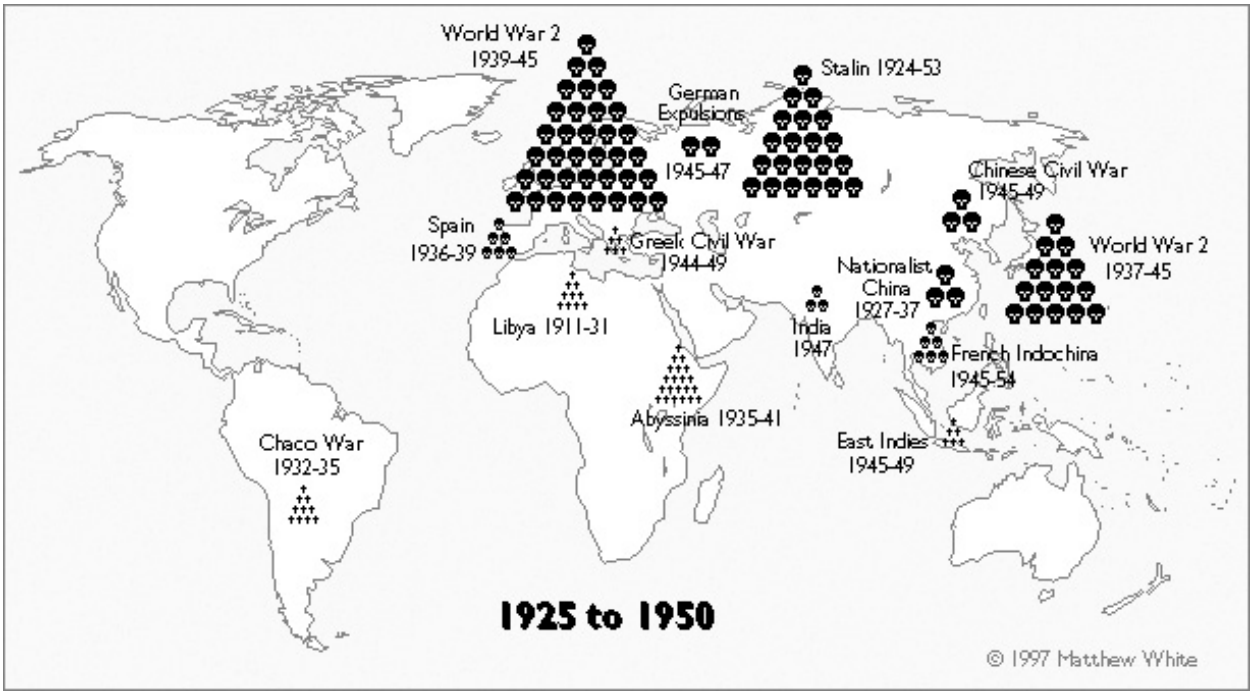
3. Based on your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), were the changes in the world's population by 1950 good for you or not? Why do you say so?

Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.3—War Deaths



Source: Matthew White's Homepage, http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/war-1925.htm



Source: Matthew White's Homepage, http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/war-1950.htm

Key:

Small skull:	10,000 dead	Large skull:	1,000,000 dead
Medium skull:	100,000 dead	Boxed skull:	unknown death toll, assumed high

War Deaths Discussion Questions:

1. In what parts of the world did most of the killing in war take place between 1900 and 1925? Between 1925 and 1950? What changed between the two periods and what stayed the same?

2. From your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), how would you explain why the war deaths happened where they did, based on what you know? Why do you think so many people were killed?

3. Would the wars of 1900-1950 make it easier or more difficult for you to attain the goals of your perspective? Why do you think so? Which perspectives are helped most by these wars? Which are hurt most?

Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.4—Data: World Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

(in billions, 1990 dollars)

	1870	1913	1950
Europe and Western Offshoots (United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	**611.5**	**1845.9**	**3732.3**
Latin America	**27.9**	**121.7**	**423.6**
Asia	**422.2**	**664.2**	**985.7**
Africa	**40.2**	**72.9**	**194.6**
World	**1101.7**	**2704.8**	**5336.1**

Source: Angus Maddison,. *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001), 173.

World GDP Discussion Questions:

1. In 1870, which regional group had the largest share of world GDP? How much greater was its share than that of other regions? How did the distribution of GDP change by 1913? Did the basic distribution change or did the trends from 1870 continue? How did the distribution change by 1950? Do you think it was fundamentally different than that in 1870, basically similar, or somewhere in between? Why?

2. Why do you think some regions in those years had so much greater a share of GDP than others? What do you know in history that might make the wealthier regions wealthy and the poorer poor?

3. From your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), is the distribution of GDP in this period a helpful development or a harmful one? Did the changes over the period help or harm your interests? Why?

Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.5—Data: Regional Share of Exports

(percentage)

	1870	1913	1950
Western Europe	**64.4**	**60.2**	**41.1**
Western Offshoots (United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand)	**7.5**	**12.9**	**21.3**
Eastern Europe and Russia/USSR	**4.2**	**4.1**	**5.0**
Latin America	**5.4**	**5.1**	**8.5**
Asia	**13.9**	**10.8**	**14.1**
Africa	**4.6**	**6.9**	**10.0**
World	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Angus Maddison,. *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001), 127.

Regional Share of Exports Discussion Questions

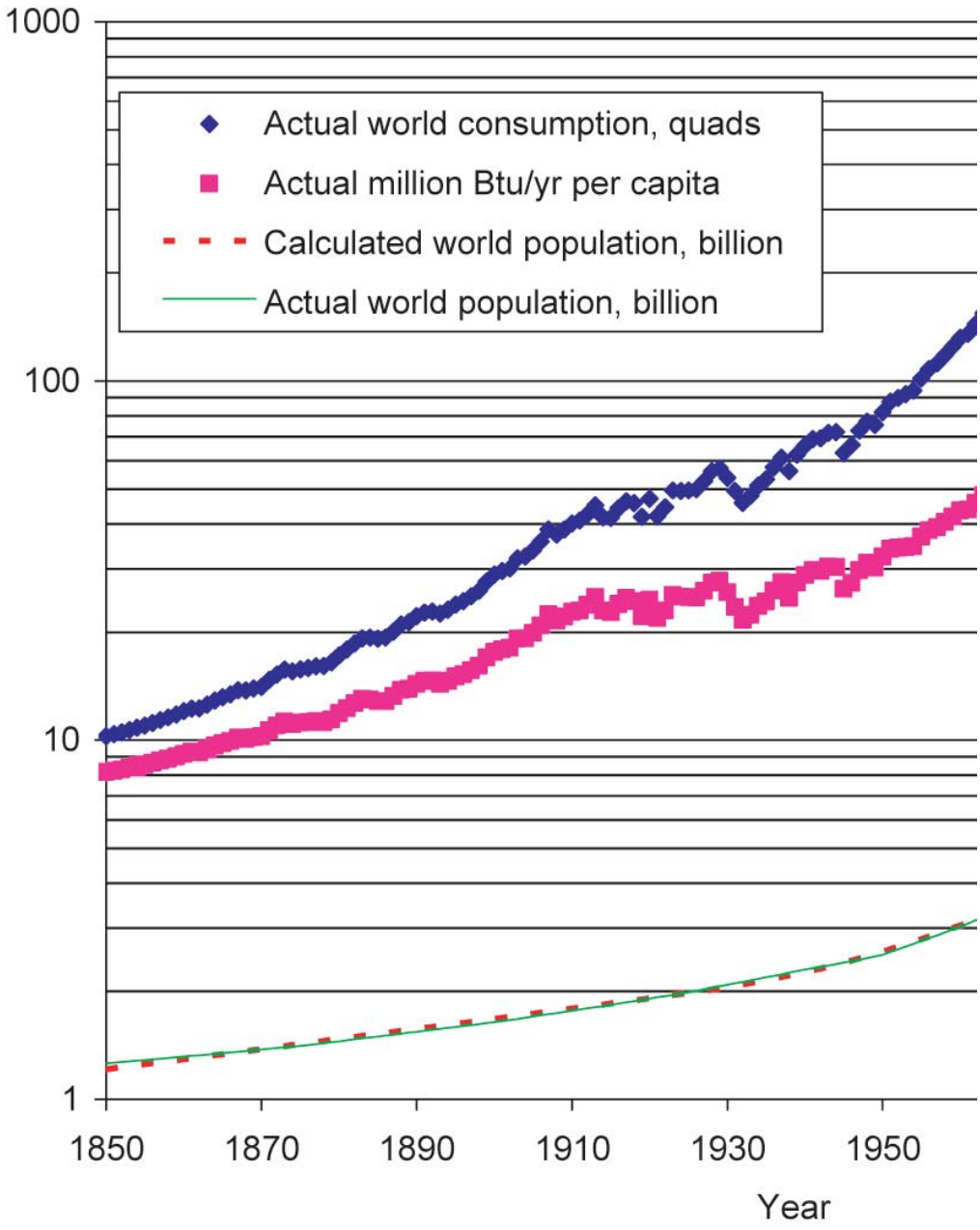
1. Which region or regions played the most dominant role(s) in international trade in 1870? Which played lesser roles? From your understanding of history, what would have led to this balance? How had those roles changed by 1913? By 1950? Why do you think this might have happened?

2. Which regions of the world found their share of participation changing the most over the course of this period? Which changed the least? From what you know, what do you think might have changed certain regions' roles more, or less, and in a positive or negative direction?

3. From your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), was the distribution of regional share of exports a basically positive or negative thing in this period? Why? Did it change for the better or worse over the course of the period? Why?

Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.6—Data: World Energy Consumption



Source: Roberto F. Aguilera and Roberto Aguilera, "Assessing the Past, Present, and Near Future of the Global Energy Market," *Journal of Petroleum Technology*, May 2008, 37, http://www.spe.org/spe-site/spe/spe/jpt/2008/05/10Management.pdf .

World Energy Consumption Discussion Questions

1. How much did actual world energy consumption grow between 1900 and 1950? What percentage increase was that growth? How much did per capita growth increase? What percentage increase was that growth?

2. Based on your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), what share of this energy consumption do you think you would likely have, a large one or a small one? Given your perspective, why do you think this would be the case?

3. From your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists) is this growth in energy consumption a positive or a negative development in human history? If you think it is positive, why do you think so? If you think it is negative, is there any change you could make that would turn it into more positive? What?

Lesson 2

Class Resource 2.7—Data: Percent of Population Living in Cities as Percentage of Total Population

(percentage)

Region	1890	1950
United States	35	64
Japan	30	56
China	5	11
Western Europe	35	63
Latin America	5	41
Africa	5	15
World	14	29

Adapted from J. R. McNeill, *Something New under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Norton, 2000), 283.

Data: Percent of Population Living in Cities as Percentage of Total Population Discussion Questions

1. Which regions were the most urban in 1890? Which were the least urban? Based on your knowledge of the nineteenth century, why do you think this would be so?

2. Which regions were the most urban in 1950? Which were the least? Were the more urban regions the same as in 1890 or had they changed? Based on what you know, why do you think the situation changed or stayed the same?

3. From your perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists), is this regional distribution of urban population a basically positive or negative thing? Did it become more or less positive as time passed? Why do you think so?

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2—Discussion Record

From your perspective, how negative or positive was this development? Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?
What did your group discuss?				

Document				
From your perspective, how negative or positive was this development? Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?	1 2 3 4 5 Negative Positive Why?
What did your group discuss?				

Lesson 3
Numbers

Preparation

This lesson presumes that students have completed the first two lessons. It should take one to two class periods. In this third lesson, students retain their perspectives and use the series of ratings they gave to the various developments in Lesson 2.

Lesson 3 requires the use of math. Specifically, students will find averages for a series of numbers, so teachers should be aware of the students' level of math ability.

Photocopy Student Handouts 3.1 and 3.2 for distribution to students. If desired, prepare an overhead of Student Handout 3.2.

Introduction

In this lesson students will come up, collectively, with average ratings for the different developments of the first half of the twentieth century, as seen in Lesson 2, and for the period as a whole. Then they will determine individually if they agree or disagree with those collective assessments. The first task is fairly simple, as the students simply average the class' ratings. What is more difficult is the idea that the truth may not be, so to speak, the middle point between two extremes.

Choose in advance some topic—a recent movie, popular song, etc.—about which students in the room are likely to have varying opinions regarding its quality. Solicit students' opinions about the topic. For each student response, ask them to rate the topic for quality on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the worst and 5 the best. Write a few of these topics on the board, making sure that there is a good spread of responses, hopefully one or two at the extremes.

Ask students to find the average—the arithmetic mean—of the set of numbers. This average will clearly fall somewhere between the extremes. Then ask the class, "So can we say that it is a fact that [state the topic] gets a [state the average rating], meaning it is [articulate the rating verbally—"very bad," "pretty bad," "pretty good," "very good"]?

Elicit student responses. If the students who had initially offered a rating at one of the extremes do not respond, ask if they will admit to the class that they were wrong now that the class has given the topic in question a different rating. Students may stick to their original opinion, and if they do not, then probe the reasons why they were so quick to change. In the process, guide the discussion so that students understand the difference between the type of assessment arrived at in the group and the assessment arrived at individually. Stress that the widest held opinion is not necessarily the most true, but neither is it necessarily false. We simply need to be aware of the difference.

Activities

1. Distribute Student Handouts 3.1 and 3.2.

2. Explain that the class will use the information and assessments from Lesson 2. They will determine how each perspective as a whole rated the developments of the first half of the twentieth century and then how all the perspectives did so as a group.

3. Ask students to look at Student Handout 3.1 (Perspective Synthesis Worksheet). Explain the different parts:
   a) Student name and perspective (Imperial Powers, New Empire Builders, Colonized Peoples, or Socialists) in the top row.
   b) Along the second row are the names of each document examined in Lesson 2. Each student would have given each document a numeric rating, from 1 to 5, on Student Handout 2.
   c) Along the first column are ten boxes with "name" in them. Explain that when students group in perspectives, they will share how they rated each development from Lesson 2. Each individual student's name goes in one of those boxes. Along the row go that same student's ratings for each development, in the appropriate column. There are ten "Name" boxes, which should be sufficient for an average size classroom.
   d) The row following the "Total" box in the first column will be where students determine the sum of each column's ratings.
   e) The row following the "Average" box in the first column will be where students determine the average rating for each document, most easily the arithmetic mean. By teacher discretion, however, the median or mode could reveal interesting results.
   f) At the far right, the column labeled "Aggregate" will contain the group rating for the period as a whole.
      - Students write the sum of all the averages in the box directly beneath "Aggregate."
      - Students write the average of the sum beneath that, in the box to the left of "Average." Again, the arithmetic mean would be the likely choice, though other averages could be interesting.
   g) Tell the students that they will gather in groups with others of their perspectives to:
      - Share their 1-5 ratings for the different developments in Lesson 2, including their own, copying down student names, plus ratings in the appropriate boxes.
      - Calculate the average for each different development, by column.
      - Calculate the aggregate average—the average of the sum of the averages.
      - Last, choose a spokesperson to share the information with the class.
   h) Instruct the students to gather in perspective groups, most likely each perspective in a small circle in each of the four corners of the room.

i) When in perspectives, students:
   - Share their 1-5 ratings for the different developments in Lesson 2, including their own, copying down student names, plus ratings in the appropriate boxes.
   - Calculate the average for each different development, by column.
   - Calculate the aggregate average—the average of the sum of the averages.
   - Last, choose a spokesperson to share their information with the class.

j) Instruct the students to return to their seats.

k) Explain Student Handout 3.2.
   - Stress its similarity to Student Handout 3.1. The difference is that 3.2 aggregates all four perspectives, rather than just one.
   - Spokespeople for each perspective will share each of the groups' average ratings—for each different development—in turn.
   - Students write the numbers as read on their own worksheets.
   - Call on the spokesperson for each perspective to report to the class. In turn, each spokesperson:
   - Reads each of her or his group's averages for the different developments.
   - If an overhead of the table on Student Handout 3.2 has been prepared, someone—the spokesperson, the teacher, or another student—can record the spokesperson's numbers as he or she reads them, in the appropriate box.

l) Once all the spokespeople have presented, instruct the students to total the numbers and calculate each average.
   - First, students add and average by column—by each individual development.
   - Last, students add the individual developments' averages under "Aggregate," and then calculate the final average, for the entire class and the entire period (of history), below.

m) Go over the numbers with the class, checking to see that the students have the correct calculations.

Assessment

Students write an essay in which they assess how well their class understood the first half of the twentieth century. Essays should include the following:

1. A discussion of how they rated the developments of the twentieth century from their perspective, individually and in their group.
   a) Students should not simply list numbers in their discussion, but should use qualitative language, e.g., "very positive," "fairly negative."
   b) Students should explain why they arrived at their assessments of the developments, taking into account their perspective.

2. A discussion of how both their perspective group and the class as a whole rated the

developments of the first half of the twentieth century.

Students should explain any discrepancy between their individual assessments and those of their perspective group and the class as a whole.

- If students feel that their group or the class misunderstood the developments, they should discuss why.
- If students feel that their own understanding was corrected by their group or the class, they should discuss that.

3. Students should offer their own assessment of the developments of the first half of the twentieth century as individuals, not from the perspective they took in the lessons.
   a) Students should discuss how taking their perspective helped clarify their own thoughts on the subject, in either disagreement or agreement, offering examples.
   b) Students should discuss how hearing from the other perspectives helped clarify their own thoughts on the subject, in either disagreement or agreement, offering examples.

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.1—Perspective Synthesis Worksheet

Name	**Perspective**							
	Maps	*World Pop.*	*War Deaths*	*World GDP*	*Regional Share of Exports*	*World Energy Cons.*	*Pop. in Cities*	
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Name:								
Total								***Aggregate***
Average								
							Average	

Scale
1 2 3 4 5
Negative Positive

Lesson 3

Student Handout 3.2—World Synthesis Worksheet

Name								
	Maps	*World Pop.*	*War Deaths*	*World GDP*	*Regional Share of Exports*	*World Energy Cons.*	*Pop. in Cities*	
Imperial Powers								
New Empire-Builders								
Colonized Peoples								
Socialists								
Total								***Aggregate***
Average								
							Average	

Scale
1 2 3 4 5
Negative Positive

This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking

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Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (F) reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.

Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (H) utilize visual, mathematical, and quantitative data presented in charts, tables, pie and bar graphs, flow charts, Venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to (C) analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental, and the irrational.

Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

The student is able to (C) interrogate historical data by uncovering the social, political, and economic context in which it was created; testing the data source for its credibility, authority, authenticity, internal consistency and completeness; and detecting and evaluating bias, distortion, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts.

Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (E) formulate a position or course of action on an issue by identifying the nature of the problem, analyzing the underlying factors contributing to the problem, and choosing a plausible solution from a choice of carefully evaluated options.

Resources

Resources for teachers

Christian, David. *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Excellent big-picture look at Big Era Eight, among other periods.

Eckhardt, William. “War Related Deaths Since 3000 B.C.” *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 22.4 (1991): 437-43. Data not disaggregated by half-century but very thought-provoking nonetheless.

Maddison, Angus. *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective*. Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001. Overview of world economic development with ample statistics.

McNeill, J. R. *Something New under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World.* New York: Norton, 2000.

Ponting, Clive. *A New Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations*. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 2007. Particularly good at highlighting environmental questions that pertain to societal longevity.

Smil, Vaclav. *Energy in World History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994. Looks particularly at energy use, which casts historical development in a different light than, for example, a history of technological innovations themselves.

Correlations to National and State Standards

National Standards for World History

Era 8: A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945. 3B: The student understands economic, social, and political transformations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s. 5A: The student understands major global trends from 1900 to the end of World War II.

Michigan High School Content Expectations: Social Studies

WHG Era 7: Global Crisis and Achievement, 1900 – 1945. 7.1. Global or Cross-temporal Expectations. Analyze changes in global balances of military, political, economic, and technological power and influence in the first half of the 20th century.

Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning

WHII.11. The student will demonstrate knowledge of political, economic, social, and cultural developments during the Interwar Period.