Lesson Plan

Battle Dispatch

Series: War Histories
Level: Voyager

Objective

To help students summarize an important moment or battle in a major war by researching and writing a short newspaper-style article about it.

Supplies

- One book in the War Histories series
- Whiteboard and markers
- Computer and internet access for students
- Paper and pencils for students

Before the Activity

Have students read a book in the War Histories series. Students can read independently, or they can take turns reading aloud as a class. But all students should read the same book.

Activity

After students have read the book, invite volunteers to raise a hand and list an important attack or battle from the war it describes. Write each answer as a list on the whiteboard. Have each student choose one of these events to research in more detail. Students should use three online sources to learn more about their event. These sources should be from reliable organizations, such as encyclopedias, museums, and well-known newspapers. Students should take notes while reading each source, making sure to include both the facts they learned and the source those facts came from.

Next, ask each student to pretend they are a war correspondent. This is a journalist who travels to where fighting is happening and writes about it. Students should use what they learned to type a short newspaper article (400–500 words). In it, they should summarize the main details that people should know about their event. But they should choose only the information that a journalist could have known shortly afterward. For example, an article about a World War I battle shouldn't mention World War II, as that second war took place many years later. Students should give their article a clear, attention-getting headline. They should also include a list of the sources they used.

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Evaluation

Collect each student's article and give them up to 10 points, using the following system:

- 1 point for meeting the word count requirement
- 5 points for summarizing the event clearly and accurately
- 1 point for sticking with information a journalist could have known at the time
- 1 point for including a clear, compelling headline
- 2 points for using good spelling and grammar

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational text, grade 7 (RI 7.2), writing standards, grade 7 (W 7.4, 7.6), and the National Council for the Social Studies standard 2.

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