

## Propaganda and Cultural Beliefs about War

### NCSS Thematic Strands: Time, Continuity and Change; Culture

Grade Level: 8-12

Time outline: 2-50 minute periods

### Purpose, Background and Context

World War II was a significant time for people and cultures around the world. The war took place from 1939 to 1945. The U.S. and Nazi Germany were enemies during the war. The U.S.S.R. was neutral in the war until they were betrayed by Germany in 1941 when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. At this point, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. became allies.

Propaganda had long been an important and constant aspect of war. Both the Soviets and the Americans created propaganda posters that portrayed the Nazis as brutal enemies. By looking at propaganda posters from the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and analyzing them, students will be able to see culture differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as well as similarities in their propaganda techniques. Students will learn that although the U.S. and Soviet Union shared an enemy in the Germany, their portrayal of Germans in propaganda posters was different. Students may discuss the differences in the posters and what these differences show us about the U.S. and Soviet Russia in war time.

### Objectives & Student Outcomes

Students will:

- ❖ Use propaganda posters to examine the past.
- ❖ Use techniques of historical examination to understand the past.
- ❖ Understand culture differences between the U.S. and Soviet Union in war time (specifically World War II).
- ❖ Create two propaganda posters of their own based on their understanding of the propaganda techniques of the Soviet Union and the U.S.
- ❖ Write a short reflection about their posters and the lesson.

## Materials:

- ❖ Propaganda posters from the Northwestern digital library and the website [allworldwars.com](http://allworldwars.com). Each group should receive two posters (with enough copies for each person).
- ❖ Markers

## Procedures:

### Day 1:

#### Procedure 1: Getting Started

Pass out a copy of the poster sheet to each student. Prompt students to examine the posters and write down an answer the question: *“What do propaganda posters show about the beliefs about the enemy during World War II?”*

#### Procedure 2: Group Work

In groups of 3 to 4, have the students develop a list of ideas in response to the question: *“What do propaganda posters show about the beliefs about the enemy during World War II?”* One student should compile the group list, but everyone student should take their own notes.

#### Procedure 3: Class Discussion

Direct the students to select a member of their group to share one of the group’s ideas. The teacher will record shared answers on the board. After each group has shared at least two ideas, open up the activity in a class discussion so students can provide additional ideas/thoughts.

#### Procedure 4:

Collect the groups’ notes for the next class meeting.

### DAY 2:

#### Procedure 5:

Split the class back into the groups from the day before and pass back the group notes.

#### Procedure 6:

Review the points from the day before with the class.

#### **Procedure 7:**

Have each group create two propaganda posters of their own. Explain to the students that each group needs to make a poster from the prospective of the Soviets and from the prospective of the U.S. Tell the students that they should consider their answers to the question: “*What do propaganda posters show about the beliefs about the enemy during World War II?*” while making their posters.

#### **Procedure 8:**

Have each student write a reflection about the posters they created. Also have students include in their responses, how their posters related to the question: “*What do propaganda posters show about the beliefs about the enemy during World War II?*”

#### **Procedure 9:**

Collect the group notes, posters and each student’s reflection response.

#### **Assessment of Outcomes:**

Students will:

- ❖ List ideas and compile lists of the ideas based upon the small group discussion and class discussion responses to the question: “*What do propaganda posters show about the beliefs about the enemy during World War II?*”
- ❖ Contribute to the creation of propaganda posters that demonstrate an understanding of the cultural differences of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. during World War II.
- ❖ Write a reflection response about the activity in which they make specific references to the posters that were passed out to them.

#### **Extensions and Adaptations:**

Have students write a research paper using firsthand accounts of U.S. and Soviet soldiers during World War II. The paper should examine different beliefs of the soldiers fighting for each respective nation.

Have students examine German propaganda posters from World War II and discuss differences between these posters and the posters of the U.S and the Soviet Union.

Have students examine U.S. propaganda posters from different wars and write an essay comparing them to the World War II posters.

**Resources:**

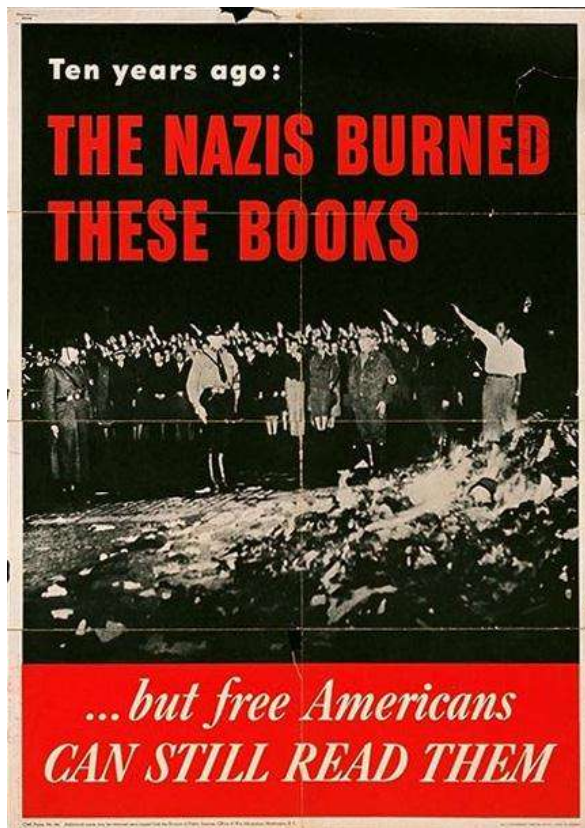
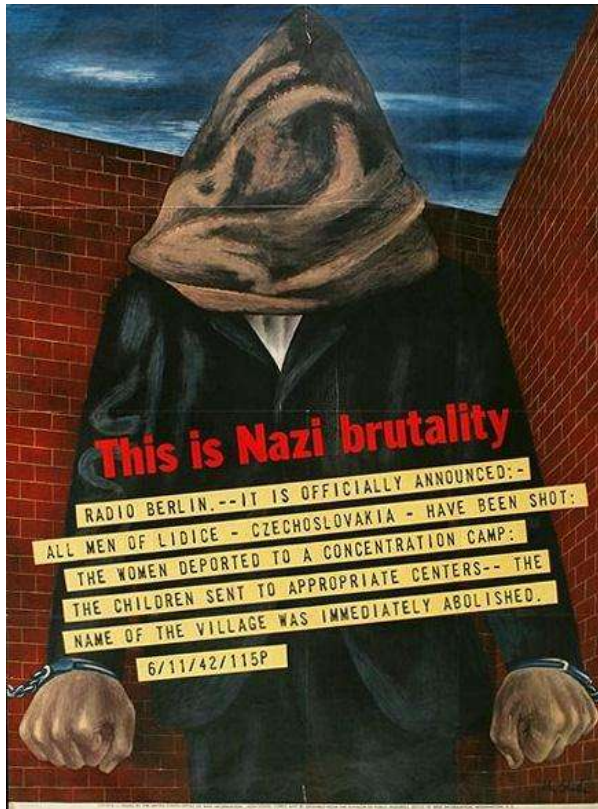
World War II Poster Collection, Northwestern Digital Library

<http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/wwii-posters/>

All World Wars: Russian World War II Propaganda Posters

<http://www.allworldwars.com/Russian%20WWII%20Propaganda%20Posters.html>

## U.S. Propaganda Posters





## U.S.S.R Propaganda



Fight German animals! We can and must destroy Hitler's army.



Let's go forward, destroy German invaders and throw them out from our Motherland!



For blood and tears of our kids German occupiers will die.



Blows from three sides will finish fascist Germany.