

Lesson Plan 1

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Who Were the 'Comfort Women' and Why Is It So Important to Know about Their Struggle for Justice?

Supporting Questions

[Session 1]

1. Who were the 'Comfort Women' and how was the 'Comfort Women' system established? What did the Comfort Women go through?

[Session 2]

2. How are the crimes against the Comfort Women an ongoing issue? How have they struggled to be heard?

3. Why is this history relevant to us today? What can we do to stop ongoing institutionalized sexual violence against women?

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™	
Compelling Question	Who were the 'Comfort Women' and why is it so important to know about their struggle for justice?
Staging the Question	<p>Discuss the meaning of "comfort" and its application to sexual exploitation during wartime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Section I. Definition," from UN rapporteur's special report on Comfort Women, 1996 (paragraphs 6-10) <p>Using two maps of the Japanese Empire during World War II, ask students to assess geographic and economic differences in the various locations and how these factors might affect conditions for Comfort Women and the exploitation of local populations to provide Comfort Women for the Japanese military.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map of Comfort Station locations (Source: WAM) - Map of the Japanese Empire: 1942

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
<p>Who were the Comfort Women and how was the Comfort Women system established? What did the victims go through?</p>	<p>How are the crimes against the Comfort Women an ongoing issue? How have the survivors struggled to be heard?</p>	<p>Why is this history relevant to us today? What can we do to stop ongoing institutionalized sexual violence against women?</p>
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch a video and in small groups, discuss about what you thought and what you would like to learn about this issue. - During the Powerpoint lecture, take notes and list five important things that you have learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read the <i>New York Times</i> article. Highlight five sentences that jump at you and write down why. List three things that you would like to understand better. - Read the House of Representatives Resolution 121 and testimonies of former Comfort Women. In groups, role-play the congressional hearing into the effects of sexual slavery on the women who testified. 	<p>In groups, conduct a project to actively remember and support the Comfort Women survivors and today's human trafficking victims.</p> <p>Possible projects include, but are not limited to, 1) creating a story book or a flowchart of a comfort woman's life from WWII to today, 2) creating a brochure, flyer, or poster that reports about the history of sex slavery, and 3) writing a letter to the survivors or to the organizations</p>

		advocating justice for the Comfort Women.
Featured Sources		Featured Sources
<p>Video: <i>Her Story</i></p> <p>Video: <i>In the Name of the Emperor</i> (Comfort Women segment)</p> <p>Video: <i>Comfort Women Wanted</i></p>		<p>US House of Representatives Resolution 121</p> <p>Article on the current issues regarding the Comfort Women: "The Comfort Women and Japan's War on Truth" (<i>New York Times</i>)</p> <p>Video: <i>Asian American Life</i></p> <p>Testimony of Ms. Yong Soo Lee, from U.S. House of Representatives Hearing on February 15, 2007 (pages 17-23)</p> <p>Testimony of Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne, from U.S. House of Representatives Hearing on February 15, 2007 (pages 23-28)</p> <p>Testimony of Ms. Zhou Fenying, from <i>Chinese Comfort Women</i> (2013) (pages 89-93)</p>
Summative Performance Task	Argument	<p>Who were the 'Comfort Women' and why is it so important to know about their struggle for justice?</p> <p>Construct an argument (e.g. detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses a compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.</p>
	Extension	<p>Work collaboratively to write an argument outlining why it is important to know about Comfort Women and their struggle for justice.</p>

Taking Informed Action	<p>Understand: Research an incident of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking today.</p> <p>Assess: Determine different groups' and individuals' responsibility for exploitation and how they might be held accountable for their actions.</p> <p>Act: Contact NGOs, such as Crisis Aid, that help victims of sex trafficking, in order to conduct a discussion in your class of ways in which communities and individuals can combat this problem either globally or locally.</p>
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Overview

During this inquiry students will investigate the "Comfort Women" system of human trafficking and sexual slavery organized by the Japanese military during WWII. Students will come to understand the importance of remembering these atrocities and how they connect to similar incidents of sexual exploitation today. The crimes inflicted on the "Comfort Women," including human trafficking and sexual slavery, constitute one of the most serious human rights violations in world history. Estimates vary as to how many women were involved, but most agree that hundreds of thousands of women were victimized. A majority of the women were from Korea (80%) and China, although many women from Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, East Timor, and the Dutch East Indies, as well as European women in Japanese-occupied territories, were forced into sexual slavery. "Comfort Stations" were located in Japan, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macau, and what were then Malaya, Burma, New Guinea, and French Indochina. It is the responsibility of our global civil society to recognize and give voice to those who have suffered from inhumane crimes, to defend their human rights, and to restore their dignity. By remembering the victims we can help to stop the occurrence of another Holocaust or system of sexual slavery.

Through this inquiry, students will investigate the nature of the "Comfort Women" system established by the Japanese Imperial Military during WWII and how the

survivors have become activists while struggling to restore their human rights and dignity. During their investigation students will learn both the history and the ongoing debate around the "Comfort Women" in order to grasp the importance of this issue. As an extension, students will research human trafficking today and relate it to the "Comfort Women." They will consider how these ongoing human rights violations can be opposed in today's world.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question "**Who were the 'Comfort Women' and why is it so important to know about them and their struggle for justice?**" students will work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence while acknowledging competing perspectives.

Staging the Compelling Question

As a full class students will consider the meaning of the word comfort and how it is used in the euphemism "comfort women." For reference, they can read the "Definition" section from the UN Rapporteur's report on comfort women in 1996. To judge the extent of the system they will view two maps: one showing Japanese expansion by 1942 and the other showing comfort station locations throughout the Japanese Empire.

Supporting Questions and Formative Performance Tasks

[Session 1]

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question – **Who were the 'Comfort Women' and how was the 'Comfort Women' system established? What did the Comfort Women go through?** – introduces students to the background history and the nature of the Comfort Women system. Students will learn what Comfort Women victims went through, not only during the war, but also long after the war ended.

Teachers begin by giving a lecture using the Powerpoint file. The lecture should help students understand the Comfort Women system within the context of WWII – how the Japanese empire expanded beginning in the 1930s and how the Japanese military established and managed the Comfort Women system during the war. Students will take notes during the lecture and list five important things that they have learned or would like to learn about the issue.

Then students will watch one of the featured videos (choose from A, B, or C) regarding Comfort Women. The videos will help students to understand how these women were forced or tricked into sexual slavery, what their experiences were, and how much shame and degradation they felt – so much that they did not come forward for decades. Testimonies in the videos are graphic, but necessary to fully understand the human rights violations that the women endured. Students will work in pairs and discuss what they thought or felt about the video.

Featured Powerpoint for background history

Featured Video A: [*Her Story – Animated video of testimony of Seo-Woon Chung*](#)

Featured Video B: [*In the Name of the Emperor \(part on Comfort Women\)*](#)

Featured Video C: [*Comfort Women Wanted \(by Chang-jin Lee\)*](#)

[Session 2]

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question- **How are the crimes against the Comfort Women an ongoing issue? How have the survivors struggled to be heard?** – allows students to further understand the effects of forced sexual exploitation on Comfort Women after their liberation, as well as denials of what happened and other issues today. Students will learn how former Comfort Women transformed themselves from victims to activists – how they remained in silence for decades, came forward to tell their stories, and struggled to make their voices heard. They have become activists advocating women's human rights. Teachers can use the Powerpoint's section V, "Ongoing Issues," to introduce current issues regarding Comfort Women.

Performance Task Option (1)

Students will read Mindy Kotler's article from the *New York Times* (Featured Source A), highlight five sentences that jump out to them, and explain why. They may also compose three questions about issues that they would like to understand better. In small groups, students will share their lists and discuss them. If time permits, they can read other articles or watch a video (Featured Sources B to H) for reference. Their questions and discussion will be a useful source in creating a project in the third Performance Task and writing an essay in the Summative Performance Task.

Featured Source A: [*The Comfort Women and Japan's War on Truth*](#) – article on the position of Japan under Prime Minister Abe (by Mindy Kotler, *The New York Times*. November 14, 2014)

Featured Source B: [*An Uncomfortable Legacy*](#) – article on the 2015 agreement and its aftermath (by Alexis Dudden, *The Indian Express*. January 14, 2016)

Featured Source C: [*Why This Statue of a Young Girl Caused a Diplomatic Incident*](#) – article on the attitude of activists (from CNN: February 10, 2017)

Featured Source D: [*Official Statement of WCCW, Inc.*](#) (Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues) - Position of a non-profit US activist group

Featured Source E: [*Japan's Stance on 'Comfort Women' Issue Violates Victims' Rights – UN official Statement of the United Nations*](#) (from UN website)

Featured Source F: Recommendations on the "Comfort Women" issue (pages 7-8) from [*UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\) Report, 2016*](#)

Featured Source G: [*Asian American Life*](#) – video showing Comfort Women survivors speaking out against the 2015 agreement

Performance Task Option (2)

This option allows students to examine the role of the United States House of Representatives in investigating the suffering of the Comfort Women. Students will read the U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 121 (Featured Source B) on Comfort Women and testimonies of former Comfort Women at the congressional hearing. In groups, the students will reenact the House of Representatives hearings by taking on the roles of Comfort Women survivors testifying and members of the

House, who have different attitudes on the US role, questioning the witnesses. Articles and videos from Performance Task Option (1) may be used to support their opinions in the role-play.

Featured Source A: [US House of Representatives Resolution 121](#)

Featured Source B: [Testimony of Ms. Yong Soo Lee, from U.S. House of Representatives Hearing on February 15, 2007](#) (pages 17-23)

Featured Source C: [Testimony of Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne, from U.S. House of Representatives Hearing on February 15, 2007](#) (pages 23-28)

Featured Source D: Testimony of Ms. Zhou Fenying, from *Chinese Comfort Women* (2013) (pages 89-93)

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question - **Why is this history relevant to us today? What can we do to stop ongoing institutionalized sexual violence against women?** – asks students to consider the reasons that we have to learn this history, leading them to see connections between history and current issues. In groups, students engage in projects to support the Comfort Women victims in their quest to restore their human rights and dignity and to stop today's human trafficking crimes. Comfort Women survivors' testimonies [Featured Sources B to E from Supporting Question 2, Task Option (2)] can be referred to and quoted. Students may select one of the following options, but are also free to create their own projects.

Example 1)

Create a story book or a flowchart of a Comfort Woman survivor's life from her perspective. Please include her experiences during the war as well as her activities today in raising her voice to gain the world's attention.

Featured Website A: www.storybird.com - Free online storybook tool

Featured Website B: www.popplet.com - Free graphic organizer

Example 2)

Create a brochure, flyer, or poster about the history of sex slavery to make the issue known to a public audience. Students can include other examples of human trafficking and war crimes against women, both historical and contemporary.

Featured Website C: www.canva.com - Free online brochure program

Example 3)

Write a supportive letter to Comfort Women survivors or to organizations advocating justice for Comfort Women. There are many such non-profit organizations in the U.S., Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, and other countries.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have explored the impact on individual lives of the Japanese Comfort Women System during World War II, the Japanese government's involvement in its establishment and maintenance, and the position of different governments and international groups towards the issue of recognition and reparations. This exploration has introduced students to the complexity and differing attitudes involved in an international debate over war atrocities. In this task, students should construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question, "**Why is it so important to know about Comfort Women and their struggle for justice?**" Students should be able to demonstrate the extent of their understanding of the issue as well as an ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. The arguments can take different forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Although students' opinions will vary, they could include any of the following arguments:

- Although these atrocities occurred seventy years ago and most of the victims are deceased, the incidents should be given recognition.

- Learning about Comfort Women is important to prevent such crimes in the future. It is vital to educate the young generation about crimes against human rights.
- A sincere apology and appropriate compensation should be awarded to victims for their suffering, both during and after World War II, from those involved in the comfort system. This action will help lessen the shame of the victims and their families and partly make up for the difficulty they experienced integrating back into their home societies after the war. By learning about this history, we will be able to support Comfort Women survivors as they restore their dignity.
- It is an important history to remember, not only because of the atrocities involved in the Comfort Women system, but also due to the survivors' struggles, which have changed our view of war and crimes against women.
- Civilized society has a moral obligation to remember, to give voice to those victims of human rights violation, and to defend their human rights. Like the Holocaust, the crimes against the Comfort Women are a powerful illustration of why we need to defend human rights.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by investigating an incident of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking in today's world, either internationally or domestically. They should show that they *understand* the issue by researching how sexual exploitation affects the lives of the victims both during their exploitation and afterwards, when they attempt to reintegrate into society. They may extend their argument by contrasting victims' silence vs. speaking out and by discussing how to resolve the issue. They exhibit their ability to *assess* by examining the relationship between war and sexual violence in both the Comfort Women system and today's atrocities against women. They *act* by contacting an NGO, such as Crisis Aid, that helps victims of sex trafficking, in order to conduct a discussion in class of the ways

in which communities and individuals can combat the problem of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking, either globally or locally.

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