Showing Evidence Plan

Title: Turning Points in History

Description: Students research important turning points in European history and choose the three they believe are most important. They use the *Showing Evidence Tool* to provide strong evidence to support their claims. Finally, students narrow down the list of turning points to the top two claims and participate in a mock trial.

At a Glance

Grade Level: 9–12
Subject sort (for Web site index): Social Studies
Subject: Social Studies
Topics: European History
Higher-Order Thinking Skills: Argumentation, Investigation, Evaluation
Key Learnings: Turning Points, Argumentation Skills, Persuasive Speaking, Historical Research
Time Needed: 8–10 hours
Background: Texas, United States

Unit Summary

World War II, the fall of the Soviet Union, and 9/11 are all important turning points in the development of the world in which we live. What led to these pivotal moments in history? In this unit, students evaluate what they believe are the three most important turning points in European history from 1500–1939. Support for students' judgments come from their research. Students use the *Showing Evidence Tool* to organize three claims and the evidence to support them, and participate in a mock trial to determine the most important turning point in European history.

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
  How did we get here from there?
- **Unit Questions**
  How can we determine the most important turning points in the history of modern Europe?
  What do you think are the three most important turning points in European history?
- **Content Questions**
  What types of events can be turning points?
  What are some of the important time periods in European history?

Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in the Turning Points in History Unit Plan. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

Instructional Procedures

Introduce the Unit
NOTE: *This unit can be implemented as a culminating activity after studying key periods in European history.*

Before the unit begins, provide each student with a journal to use throughout the learning cycle to record thoughts and responses to questions.

Write on the board the Essential Question, *How did we get here from there?* To help students make a personal connection, first ask them to reflect on the question and how it relates to their lives. Ask students, *What events have led them to where they are today?* Allow students time to respond in their journals and then ask volunteers to share and discuss their responses. Next, pose the question again and ask students to now answer the question in relation to the study of history. Guide students to think about the cause-and-effect nature of historical events, and give examples of how the outcomes of some events can dramatically change the course of history (for example, Pearl Harbor, Hitler attacking Russia in violation of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, and so forth). Use a graphic organizer, such as a flowchart, to offer a visual representation of these examples.

Describe or review (depending on when in the unit is implemented) some of the key periods in European history from 1500–1939, such as the Reformation, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution periods. Make sure to distinguish the differences between a specific event (Waterloo) and the more general concept of a period (Renaissance). Lead a discussion about some of the important time periods in European history. Begin to define the idea of turning points in history, and ask students to brainstorm the types of events they think can be turning points. The National History Day Web site* states that a turning point can be:

- A personal decision in the life of one person

- A political choice affecting millions

- An event or idea with global or local consequences

- The life of a single person who inspires or affects other people

Pose the Unit Question, *How can we determine the most important turning points in the history of modern Europe?* Have students propose some pivotal events in European history using the planning guide. Encourage students to share their thoughts as you record their responses on the board. Make sure students think critically about the impact of the events they choose and what factors contributed to the development of the events. Students should present a description of the events, but also draw conclusions about how the events affected individuals, communities, nations, or the world. Point out that each event listed is a starting point in answering the Essential Question, and often the paths "from there to here" include many complex events and issues. Allow time for students to record their thoughts in their journals.

Practice Using the Tool
Introduce students to the *Showing Evidence Tool* by exploring the Try the Tool [link to demonstration space] demonstration space together. Discuss the sample case together or create a sample project and show students how to add, describe, and rate evidence and claims. Model how student teams will peer review each other's work. Also, show the Comments feature, and agree on how it will be used. This feature can provide valuable insight into students' thinking.

Hold a discussion around the idea of reliable evidence. Have students ask themselves the following questions when rating the reliability of an evidence source:

- *Is the source biased?*

- *Is the information current?*

- *Is the author an authority on the subject?*

- *Is the author expressing fact or opinion?*

Use the Tool

Before proceeding with the next activity, click here to set up the Turning Points in History project in your workspace. Have students log into their *Showing Evidence* team spaces. Assign students to work with a partner. Instruct students to choose three separate events that they think are the most important turning points in European history. Each event becomes a claim in the *Showing Evidence* workspace. Outline parameters for the amount of evidence needed for each claim. For example, students must find at least five pieces of evidence that support the claim and three pieces of evidence that weaken the claim. Remind students that evidence must be researched from reliable sources and must not be based on the students' opinions. Distribute the argumentation rubric and explain to students that they should use the rubric as a guide while they work with *Showing Evidence*. As teams work, use the evaluative checklist to observe and assess the evaluative thinking of students.

After students complete the initial research stage, use the teacher workspace in *Showing Evidence* to assign each pair of students a peer team to review. Have student pairs use the peer review checklist to read and evaluate the claims of the team assigned to them and make constructive comments and corrections where needed to the claims and evidence. Students can comment on the work by requesting clarification of evidence, pointing out where claims are unclear, indicating where facts or assumptions are questionable, and correcting distortions of opposing points of view again using the argumentation rubric as a guide.

Use the Comments feature to give feedback, redirect effort, suggest new avenues of study, or ask for clarification about a team's thinking. When the review process is complete, give the students time to make adjustments and corrections based on the comments of their peer review team.

Examine the Showing Evidence Activity

The *Showing Evidence Tool* space below represents one team's investigation in this project. You can double-click the evidence to read the team's descriptions.

Project Name: Turning Points in History (Click here to set up this project in your workspace)

Prompt: What are the three most important turning points in European history?

[insert live tool view here—see file management spreadsheet]

Revisit Student Claims

Bring the class back together and make a list on the board of all of the claims made by the student teams. Have each team give a short multimedia presentation detailing their claims. After the presentations, guide students through the process of determining which of the claims are the most important. Have the class reach

consensus before a claim's position on the list can be finalized. (Alternately, this activity could be conducted using the *Visual Ranking Tool*.)

Announce that a mock trial will be conducted between the two claims that the class consensus judged to be the most important. Assign students to courtroom roles, such as lawyers on the legal team representing each claim, expert witnesses, and jury members. Use the Mock Trial Guide* (PDF; 52 pages) to support the implementation of the trial. Share the mock trial rubric with students, so they are aware of the expectations for this performance assessment. Act as judge and manage the trial, ruling on objections raised by the legal teams and deciding if evidence is of high enough quality to be submitted to the "court."

After the conclusion of the mock trial, ask each student to fill out a self reflection. The reflections give students an opportunity to reflect on their individual performances as well as the performance of their team as they prepared for and participated in the mock trial.

Reflect on the Unit
Revisit the Essential Question, *How did we get here from there?* Allow students time to reflect individually in their journals. Then, in small groups, have students discuss the question in relation to what they have learned with their research and mock trial. Bring the discussion back to the whole class and give students an opportunity to share what they talked about in their small groups.

Prerequisite Skills

- Basic knowledge of the sequence of important events in European history
- Good research skills (library and Internet)

Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student
- Provide the student with extra study time, reduced number of required claims, reduced amount of required evidence, preselected research materials, adaptive technologies, and support from resource specialists
- Modify the student's learning objectives to dictate the level of depth and complexity required in final products
- Assign the student to a modified role during the mock trial

Gifted Student
- During the mock trial, assign the student the role of "expert witness," in which the student assumes the persona of a participant in the key turning point
- Give the student opportunities to explore key events that are of interest to the student and to craft evidence in new and original ways
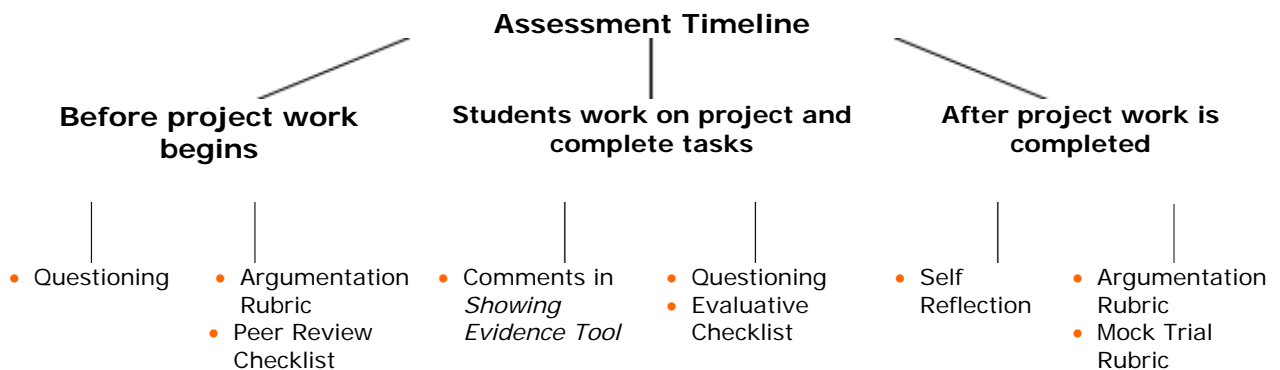
English Language Learner
- Group the student with other bilingual students and allow them to work with English language instruction specialists
- Have research conducted on the Web translated by a variety of Web sites
- During the mock trial, allow the student to provide research support to a legal team if the student is uncomfortable with a speaking role

Credits

Robert McCraw teaches European History and World History in McKinney, Texas. He participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for a classroom project. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

THINGS YOU NEED (highlight box)

Assessment Plan

Assessment Timeline

Before project work begins	Students work on project and complete tasks	After project work is completed
• Questioning	• Comments in *Showing Evidence Tool*	• Self Reflection
• Argumentation Rubric • Peer Review Checklist	• Questioning • Evaluative Checklist	• Argumentation Rubric • Mock Trial Rubric

Questioning is used throughout the unit to assess prior knowledge as well as prompt student thinking. Student thinking is also assessed through the quality and complexity of claims, evidence, ratings, and peer-to-peer comments within *Showing Evidence.* Use the [argumentation rubric](#) to assess student performance. This assessment can be completed at the end of the *Showing Evidence Tool* phase and at the end of the multimedia presentation. The [peer review checklist](#) offers students an opportunity to provide feedback on one another's work as well as self-assess their own understanding. Assess student collaboration, research, and higher-order thinking with the [evaluative checklist](#). The checklist can be used during or after all collaborative work sessions.

During the mock trial phase of the unit, assess students as they prepare evidence, construct characters to use as primary source "expert witnesses," deliver arguments, deliver rebuttals, and conduct cross-examinations. Offer objections as well as make evaluative judgments to decide the final outcome of the trial. The students conduct [self reflections](#) and critiques of their performances during the trial.

Use a [mock trial rubric](#) to assess the quality of the learning outcomes of the mock trial. This is the summative assessment to be completed at the end of the unit.

Students keep reflections on their experiences and critiques of their performance in a journal. Student journals can be an ongoing assignment for the length of the unit or can be implemented only during the mock trial.

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

10th Grade Social Studies

1A: The student understands traditional historical points of reference in world history. The student is expected to identify the major eras in world history and describe their defining characteristics.

2A: The student understands how the present relates to the past. The student is expected to identify elements in a contemporary situation that parallel a historical situation.

2B: The student describes variables in a contemporary situation that could result in different outcomes.

5A: The student understands causes and effects of European expansion beginning in the 16th century. The student is expected to identify causes of European expansion beginning in the 16th century.

15A: The student understands the historical antecedents of contemporary political systems. The student is expected to explain the impact of parliamentary and constitutional systems of government on significant world political developments.

Student Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Evaluate trends in European history from 1500–1939 and identify key turning points
- Evaluate evidence to support claims that one turning point is more important than any other
- Conduct research using library reference resources and the Internet
- Assume various courtroom roles and conduct a mock trial using argumentation and logic skills to debate the merits of two different claims
- Collaborate with classmates to rank the importance of various European history turning points
- Review the work of their peers for the purposes of editing and constructive criticism

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Materials and Resources

Printed Materials

- History textbooks
- Variety of library research materials, including books, periodicals, and reference materials

Internet Resources

- Best of History Web Sites
  www.besthistorysites.net*
  A gateway to hundreds of high-quality, star-rated history Web sites
- National History Day
  www.nationalhistoryday.org*
  Collection of resources focused on the theme of "Turning Points in History"

Technology—Hardware

- Computer with Internet to access the *Showing Evidence Tool*
- Projection system to show students how to use the *Showing Evidence Tool*

Technology—Software
- Multimedia software to create presentation of claims