

# The Remedial Herstory Project

## INQUIRY-BASED LESSON PLAN

### STAGING THE INQUIRY

For this inquiry, teachers should consider opening with an intriguing and open ended question, then provide some background on this topic generally in the form of a video, brief lecture, or presentation. Close the introduction by asking students what questions they have, guide them in discussion to the question for the inquiry, highlighted at the top of the next page.

### ACTIVITY TASKS

- Pose a broad open ended question. Provide background information.
- Students respond to questions in this packet independently or with a partner.
- Consider doing one of the following to extend the exercise:
  - Facilitate student discussion of the compelling question.
  - Facilitate a 4-corner debate.
  - Facilitate a structured academic controversy.
  - Students assume the characters involved and discuss the compelling question in character.
- Students craft an argument.

### C3 FRAMEWORK

D1.1.9-12. Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

D1.2.9-12. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

**D2.His.4.9-12.** Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

**D2.His.5.9-12.** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

D2.His.10.9-12. Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

## What was the human sacrifice on D-Day?

*Before reading, source the following documents. Then, examine and analyze the document by responding to the analysis questions provided.*

### Historical Context:

D-Day was the largest amphibious assault and the largest combined operation in history. Two years in the planning, over the course of one day enough men and materiel were landed on French soil to secure a lodgement area from which the Allies could begin to push back the Germans occupiers. The numbers behind the Normandy Landings are staggering...

We know that around 156,115 men were landed across five invasion beaches and drop zones. The invasion area was 50-miles wide and was split into two zones - the Western Task Force containing the American beaches codenamed UTAH and OMAHA, and the Eastern Task Force with the British and Canadian Beaches codenamed GOLD, JUNO and SWORD. Around 73,000 American soldiers landed on D-Day, and around 83,115 British and Canadian. Facing them were around 50,000 Germans troops. Sailors from 8 different nations, some 195,700 of them, manned the ships of the naval flotilla which carried the bulk of the troops and equipment across the English Channel. Of the 6,939 vessels that took part in the Normandy Landings there were 1,213 naval combat ships, 4,126 landing ships/landing craft, 736 ancillary craft and 864 merchant vessels. Waiting for the Allies on their arrival in Normandy were some 4,000,000 mines placed by the Germans as part of their "Atlantic Wall" defences. Amongst the American forces to land at Utah Beach were 14 Commanche Indian 'code-talkers' who were used to send coded messages in their native tongue.

The airborne troops at the eastern and western flanks of the invasion coast were delivered by a combination of 2,395 aircraft and 867 gliders. However, only around 15% of paratroopers landed in the right place. Other aircraft took part in massive bombing raids designed to destroy beach defences and German positions. They dropped around 3,200 tons of bombs on D-Day. Of the approximate 15,000 sorties of Allied aircraft on D-Day 113 planes were lost. None of these, however, fell victim to Luftwaffe aircraft which only managed to fly 319 sorties during 6th June. The German air force was outnumbered 30:1 on D-Day.

Allied losses on D-Day are estimated to be around 4,413 dead. German numbers are not well recorded, but it is estimated that between 4,000 and 9,000 were killed. Within five days of landing in Normandy, the Allies had landed 326,547 troops, 54,186 vehicles and 104,428 tons of supplies. In the weeks that would follow the two huge pre-fabricated Mulberry Harbours would be constructed. It had taken 55,000 workers more than 6 months to construct the components, using 210,000 tons of steel and 1,000,000 tons of concrete. The harbour in the American sector - "Mulberry A" - was all but destroyed by a huge storm on 19th June, but the surviving "Mulberry B" port at Arromanches would operate for 10 months despite only be envisaged to operate for three. The Mulberries cost £40,000,000 to construct and transport across the Channel, but "Mulberry B" (also known as Port Winston) would see the unloading of approximately 2,500,000 men, 500,000 vehicles and 4,000,000 tons of supplies.

The Battle of Normandy was fierce and bloody and would last until late August when the Allies crossed the Seine River towards Paris. Casualty rates were slightly

higher than they were during a typical day during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Over 425,000 Allied and German troops were wounded, killed or listed as missing during the Battle of Normandy. Of these, around 200,000 were Allied casualties of which almost 53,714 were killed. No reliable figures exist for the German losses, but it is estimated that around 200,000 were killed or wounded with approximately 200,000 more taken prisoner. French civilian casualties during the Battle of Normandy stand at around 19,890 - not including the estimated 15,000 that had been killed during bombardments prior to D-Day. The Battle left 120,000 Norman buildings destroyed and a further 270,000 damaged.

*"D-Day the Numbers."* D Day Center. 2020. <http://www.dday.center/d-day-facts-and-figures.html>.

### Source A: Martha Gelhorn

*Martha Gelhorn was on the beach the morning of D-Day as a journalist. She was the only woman on the beach and was one of the first journalists to witness the event. The morning of D-Day, she had hoped to join the many male journalists covering the story, but was not permitted to be there by the military. She wrote letters to the military leaders demanding that she be permitted to witness the invasion on behalf of her magazine. She said, "It is necessary that I report on this war. I do not feel there is any need to beg as a favour for the right to serve as the eyes for millions of people in America who are desperately in need of seeing, but cannot see for themselves." She was denied. Her estranged husband, Hemingway, applied for her spot and got it, he didn't even work for a magazine, but he was famous.*

*The morning of the invasion, she got onto a ship on the pretense of interviewing nurses and stowed away in a bathroom on board so that she, like the male journalists, could write a first hand account of the day. After the initial assault on the beach she emerged with some doctors and helped them tend the wounded. At this point 9,000 allied soldiers were dead. She got there before Hemingway. Her account was later published in Colliers Magazine and many people found it a better read than the more widely published work of her ex because it was more human. She said, "all of us knew that our own wounded were good men and that with their amazing help, their selflessness and self-control, we would get through all right." Gelhorn was stripped of her accreditation and sent to a nurses camp simply for wanting to do her job like other journalists, her only offense was that she was a woman. She subsequently escaped and flew to Italy to continue covering the war. The next Allied women to land on the beach would come a month later.*

*A Little Herstory Editors. "Committed to Reporting the Truth." A Little Herstory. Last modified September 1, 2019, <https://www.herstory-online.com/single-post/2019/09/01/Committed-to-Reporting-the-Truth>.*

Then we saw the coast of France and suddenly we were in the midst of the Armada of the invasion. People will be writing about this site for one hundred years and whoever saw it will never forget it. First it seemed incredible; then there could not be so many ships in the world. Then it seemed incredible as a feat of planning; if there were so many ships, what genius is required to get them there, what amazing and unimaginable genius. After the first shock of wonder and admiration, one began to look around and

see separate details. They were destroyers and battleships and transports, a floating city of huge vessels anchored before the green cliffs of Normandy. Occasionally you could see a gun flash or perhaps only hear a distant roar, as a naval guns fired far over those hills. Small craft Beatles around in a curiously jolly way. It looks like a lot of fun to race from shore to ship in snubnose boats beating up the spray. It was no fun at all, considering the mines and obstacles that remained in the water, the sunken tanks with only the radio antenna showing above the water, the drowned bodies that still floated past. On an LCT near us washing was hung up on a line, in between the loud explosions of mines being that needed on the beach dance music could be hard coming from it's radio. Barrage balloons, always looking like comic toy elephants bounced in the Highwind above the mast ships, and invisible planes drone behind the gray ceiling of cloud. Troops were unloading from big ships too heavy cement barges or to light craft, and on the shore moving up for brown roads that scarred the hillside, our tanks clanked slowly and steadily forward.

Then we stopped noticing the invasion, the ships, the ominous beach, because the first wounded had arrived. And LCT Drew alongside our ship, pitching in the waves; a soldier in a steel helmet shouted up to the crew at the aft rail, and a wooden box looking like a lidless coffin was lowered on a pulley, and with the greatest difficulty, bracing themselves against the movement of their boats, the men on the LCT latest structure inside the box. The box was raised to our deck and out of it was lifted a man who is closer to being a boy than a man, dead white and seemingly dying. The first spoon did Mandy brought to that ship for safety and care was a German prisoner. Everything happened at once. We had six water ambulances, light motor launches, which swung down from the Shipp side and could be raised the same way when full of wounded. They carried six litter cases apiece or as many walking wounded as could be crowded into them...

The captain came down from the Bridge to watch this. He was feeling cheerful and he now remarked, "I got us in all right but God knows how we will ever get out." He gestured toward the ship that were stick around us as cars in a parking lot. "Worry about that some other time."

Wounded were pouring in now, hauled up in the lidless coffin or swung aboard in the motor ambulances... An American soldier on that same deck had a head wound so horrible that he was not moved. Nothing could be done for him and anything, any touch, would have made him worse. The next morning he was drinking coffee. His eyes looked very dark and strange, as if he had been a long way away, so far away that he almost could not get back. His face was set in lines of weariness and pain, but when asked how he felt, he said he was okay. He was never known to say anything more...



Figure 1: Cover of *The Face of War*, by Martha Gelhorn



We waded ashore in water to our waists... It was almost dark by now and there was a terrible feeling of working against time.

Everyone was violently busy on that crowded and dangerous shore. The pebbles were the size of melons and we stumbled up a road that a huge road shovel was scooping out... The dust that rose in the gray night light seemed like the fog of war itself... all of us knew that our own wounded were good men and that with their amazing help, their selflessness and self-control, we would get through it all right.

*Gelhorn, Martha. The Face of War. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959.*

*Sourcing*

1. Is this a primary or secondary source?

*Document*

2. Describe the scene in your own words.
3. Describe the human sacrifices witnessed by Gelhorn.

*Analysis*

4. How might this description be helpful to families of soldiers back home?

**Source B: Marie Louise Osmot**

*Americans often forget that wars happen in people's backyards. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans prevent Americans from facing the full realities of war that other nations feel so deeply. So of course many perhaps forget to consider the French women who witnessed the invasion first hand. One of the best eyewitnesses to D-Day was Marie Louise Osmont, She kept a diary throughout the war and the morning of the invasion. Her gorgeous home sat moments from the beaches. It had been occupied by the Nazi's since the fall of France. In the diary, she refers to the "Tommies," a nickname for the English.*

June 4, 1944

Quiet, warm day; Night, by contrast, filled with the noise of six drunks staggering and bawling. The three NCOs in the "mean Speiss" we're dead drunk! They click heels nevertheless. [REDACTED]

June 6, 1944

Landing!! During the night of the 5th to 6th, I am awakened by a considerable rumbling of airplanes and buy cannon fire, prolong but fairly far away. Then noises in the garden and in the house: talking, loading ammunition boxes, nailing. I get up, go to the window. I see the big 15 Dash ton truck arriving, coming from the drive and pulling up in front of the stoop, and another truck backing up to the dining room window. I gather that a departure has begun, and I

envisioned the unit moving to a new camp, and in the middle of the night as always. I am annoyed at the idea of changing troops. I stay up wondering. I watch through the keyhole of my door, which faces that of the [REDACTED] Kommandantur. In the lake, I catch sight of shadows moving in the office. They're dragging socks, boxes; they come up and go down. I recognized Mr. George, the bookkeeper, the Spiess. They don't look happy. I stay by the window. The airplanes fly over in tight formations, round and round continuously. I envision German airplanes over flying the departure. I'm surprised. But the campfire gets closer, intensifies, pounds methodology; what's going on? Great turmoil in the garden. The men have shouted, "Alarm", from man to man with a siren hasn't sounded. [REDACTED] The Spiess fidgets, plays with the dog, with his unusual error of a man playing at being important... nothing more.

Little by little the grey dawn comes up, but by this time around, from the intensity of the aircraft in the canon an idea springs to mind: landing! I get dressed her early. I cross the garden, the men recognition as me. In one of the foxholes in front of the house, a wrecking nice one of the young man from the office; he has had phones on his ear the telephone having been move there. Airplanes, [REDACTED] Canon right on the coast almost on us. I cross the road, run to the farm, come across Mel temps. "Well!" I say, "is

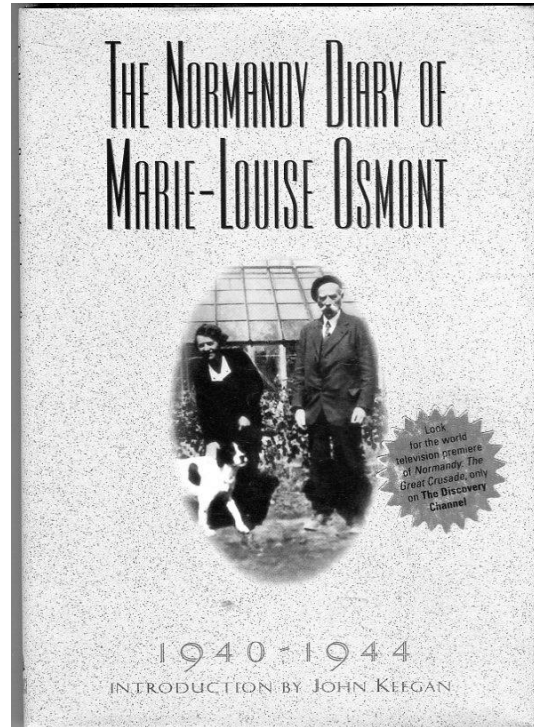


Figure 2: Diary of Marie Louise Osmont

this it, this time?" "Yes," he says, "I think so, and I'm really afraid we're in a sector that's being attacked; that's going to be something!" Were definite by the airplanes which make a never ending round, very low; obviously what I thought were German airplanes were quite simply English ones, protecting the landing. Coming from the sea, a dense artificial cloud; it's ominous and begins to be alarming; the first shells his overheads. I feel cold; I'm agitated. I go back home, dress more warmly, close the door; I go to get Bernice to get into the trench, a quick bowl of milk and we run - just in time! The shells his explode continually in the trench in the farmyard parentheses the one that was dug in 1940 parentheses we find three or four Germans: Leo the cook, his helper, and to others crouching, not proud parentheses except for Leo, who stays outside to watch parentheses. We ask them, "Tommy come?" They say yes, with conviction. Morning in the trench, with overhead the hisses and winds that make you bend even lower. For fun Leo fires a rifle shot at a low flying airplane, but the Spiess ~~OBJ OBJ OBJ OBJ~~ appears and choose him out horribly; this is not the time to attract attention. Shelves are exploding everywhere, and not far away with short moments of calm; we take advantage of these to run and deal with the animals, and we return with hearts pounding to borrow into the trench. Each time a shell hisses by too low, I cling to the back of the cooks helper; it makes me feel a little more secure, and he turns around with a big smile. The fact is that we're all afraid...

The afternoon is endless. At one point the sound of footsteps makes us jump up and look toward the opening, expecting anything. Consternation: it's the replacement Spiess parentheses the nice dark- haired one parentheses, who, with a revolver in his hand, his submachine gun under his other ~~OBJ OBJ OBJ~~ Arm, and followed by a soldier carrying two boxes of ammunition on his shoulder, has come to see whether there are any stragglers still in the holes. He seems exhausted. He's wounded near the year and there's a trickle of blood; he sick down for a few moments on the edge of the trench, looking at us with sympathy and as it feeling sorry for us. A few words about his wound, a few words about "the Tommy's here," and he leaves. We continue to wait. The first English soldiers appear in the pasture by behind the farm at 2 o'clock. They come down, submachine guns and machine guns under their arms walking steadily, not trying to hide at all. Around 6 o'clock a lull. We get out and go to the house to care for the animals and get things to spend the night underground. And then we see the first damage. Branches of the big walnut broken roof on the outbuildings heavily damaged, a big hole all the way up, I keep a broken roof tiles on the ground, a few window panes at My Pl., Dash hundreds of slight blown off the Château, walls cracked first floor shutters won't close - but at Bernice's it's worse an airplane or tank shell has exploded in the paving of her kitchen at the corner of the stairs, in the whole interior of the room is devastated: the big clock, dishes, cooking equipment, walls, everything is riddled with holes, the dishes in broken pieces as are almost all the window panes...

The English tanks are silhouetted from time to time on the road above Periers. Grand impassioned exchanges on the road with people from the farm; we are all stupefied by the sudden this summer events....

June 7, 1944

Above our heads, sudden and horrifying, and airplane battle. I hung the walls of the outbuildings; I'm terrified. I want to get to the trench, to escape the machine gun

bullets that smack everywhere. I run when I get to the turn that leads to the farmyard a throw myself flat on the ground, bewildered, glued to the slope. Suddenly everything's erupting, everything falling around me. I feel a painful blow to the small of my back. I see balls of fire a few meters in front of me. I raise my head instinctively and catch sight of an airplane falling in flames. All in that few seconds I'm mad with terror and distress. I'm talking to myself, I say to myself, "I'm hit," and my first thought is to wonder whether I'll be able to walk. Yes, I can get up, so I walk or run parentheses I don't remember now parentheses, and I take refuge grasping for breath in the kitchen; I stay on my feet, glued to the wall between the two doors. I lean my head against the wall; I tried to call myself. Blood is running down my face my left arm hurts, but the right side of my back hurts so much more so I try to see whether my back is bleeding a lot. I take off my leather belt, and I see that it probably save me from death, the scout belt brought for the Red Cross and on which I hung a medallion of Saint George. ...

Day spent hiding, hitting the ground, running. Always the rotten fear, and still at times you get used to it...

The firing of the Naval shells empties you absolutely; you have the feeling that a runaway train is passing over your body. The straw stacks at the farm catch fire, probably hit by a shell. The English tanks Stream by continually in front of the house; the men salute with two fingers in the shape of a V parentheses victory! Parentheses. French flag hung on the school by the soldiers. In the evening some excitement: we learned that there are still Germans hidden in the woods. With a boy from the farm leading them, who do we see arriving, drawn, pale, hands dangling, guarded by Tommy's with machine guns? The tailor who slept on the third floor in the tall redhead who constantly worked on his vehicle in the garden. What a sight: these men surrounded, taken prisoner, sitting on the ground distraught, the little Taylor near tears. I am overwhelmed by this human English. I'd like to comfort them, encourage them. I try to get across to them that it's better this way, that for them the war is over, that they won't be killed. The Taylor talks to me about his wife, about his child. He sensed that he's gripped by anguish, and his eyes constantly seek mine because he feels I understand him. We bring them eggs and milk, and we talk with them for a long time; the tummies are truly accommodating they both asked to get their overcoats from the car, and someone escorts them. They come back having found chocolate, and these poor devils who haven't eaten since yesterday want to offer us some. We stay around them until late in the evening. The tailor is very much afraid of sinking on his way to England; he still believes in his countries victory, but not his comrade, who says they will never have enough equipment to fight. A little later they leave in a truck, waving goodbye to us and somewhat cheered...

I am horribly sad...

The Tommies distribute cigarettes, chocolate, candy...

Noisy night, cannon fire, airplanes, machine guns, but we are so worn out with fatigue that we sleep a little wet anyway. Ribs hurt pretty badly in the morning!

*Osmont, Marie-Louise. "The Normandy Diary of Marie-Louise Osmont." New York: Random House, 1994.*

Sourcing



1. Who is the source? What bias do they likely have?

*Document*

2. Describe the scene in your own words.
  
3. Describe the human sacrifices witnessed by Osmont.

*Analysis*

4. Why do you think Osmont is “horribly sad”?

**Source C: Eleanor Roosevelt**

*During the war, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a column for My Day to comfort the American people. Six days a week she wrote to uplift and inspire the women of America. On June 7th, she wrote the following passage.*

So at last we have come to D-Day, or rather, the news of it reached us over the radio in the early hours of the morning on June the 6th... I have no sense of excitement whatsoever. It seems as though we have been waiting for this day for weeks, and dreading it, and now all emotion is drained away...

The time is here, and in this country, we live in safety and comfort and wait for victory. It is difficult to make life seem real. It is hard to believe that the beaches of France, which we once knew, are now places from which, in days to come, boys in hospitals over here will tell us that they have returned. They may never go beyond the water or the beach, but all their lives, perhaps, they will bear the marks of this day. At that, they will be fortunate, for many others won't return....

This is the beginning of a long, hard fight, a fight for ports where heavy materials of war must be landed, a fight for airfields in the countries in which we must operate. Day by day, miles of country may be taken, lost and retaken. That is what we have to face, what the boys who are over there have been preparing for and what must be done before the day of victory. That day is coming surely. It will be a happy and glorious day. How can we hasten it?

The best way in which we can help is by doing our jobs here better than ever before, no matter what these jobs may be.

E. R.

*Roosevelt, Eleanor. "Eleanor Roosevelt's 'My Day,' 6/7/1944: sacrifice on d-day." White House Historical Association. Electronically Published 2020, <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/eleanor-roosevelts-my-day-6-7-1944>.*



**Figure 3: Eleanor Roosevelt, -1962., 1924. May 3. Photograph.**  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002714436/>.

*Sourcing*

1. Who is the source? What bias do they likely have?

*Document*

2. Does Roosevelt seem optimistic?
  
3. Describe the human sacrifices mentioned by Roosevelt.

*Analysis*

4. Why is this source important to understanding the impact of D-Day on American and world families?

**What were the human sacrifices on D-Day?**