

Difficult History - teachers

Step 1:

Introduction (50 mins)

Part 2: Introducing the topic: starter clips that end with a research question

Students will watch the starter clip based on the Bosnia-Herzegovina war, and reflect on the research question putting them in the shoes of the protagonists of the clip. This will create their interest in the topic and identify the different options to deal with difficult history.

Difficult History: Step 1 Part 2: Introducing the Topic

Introduction

This part has the objective of introducing the topic and motivating students.

Objectives

- Students will start reflecting on the topic “difficult history”, watching a prepared video based on the Bosnia-Herzegovina War
- Students will start thinking about the research question: *how should we deal with a difficult past?*

Preparation and materials

- Difficult History starter clip.

It is crucial that students understand the concept of difficult history as they will research and create a documentary based on it. In this lesson, they will start

this process of “comprehension” that will continue in step 2.

Difficult histories are events that:

- 1) are central to a nation's history
- 2) contradict accepted histories or values
- 3) connect with present problems
- 4) involve violence enacted by the state or large groups of citizens
- 5) create disequilibria that require changes to historical understandings that may carry a personal or social cost.

Source: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1179506>

Planning Grid

- 1) Introduction of the topic:
 - a) On the blackboard, write: difficult past - silenced history
 - b) Ask students what they understand by these terms and how they think these terms could be related.
 - c) Students should reflect on the following:
 - i) Is this topic important?
 - ii) what might be the perspective(s) of the different people involved?
 - d) You can help students understand “difficult past” by providing them with some examples of difficult history (dictatorships, slavery, wars...)
 - e) Once students have understood these two terms, introduce the enquiry question.
- 2) Introduction of the enquiry question: **how do you think we should deal with a difficult past?**
 - a) Ask students to individually write down their reflections on the enquiry question.

Motivational activity

- b) Watch the starter clip and comment on it as a whole class. If necessary, briefly explain the historical background of the clip (Balkan wars) and focus on the topic of the question.

c) Some possible questions you could ask your students:

i) **Comprehension**

- (1) What is shown in the clip?
- (2) Who are the people in the clip?
- (3) What are the protagonists' opinions on dealing with the past?

ii) **Discussion**

- (1) Why do some people try to silence history? Why do others want to investigate it?
- (2) What is your own perspective on this theme? How do think we should deal with the difficult past?
- (3) Are there some historical episodes/events in your country that are not easy to talk about? What are they?

*At the end of the project students will come back to the enquiry question and write down reflections on it for the second time, comparing their responses to see if they have modified/developed ideas on the topic. It would be a good idea to take a picture of the ideas written on the blackboard.