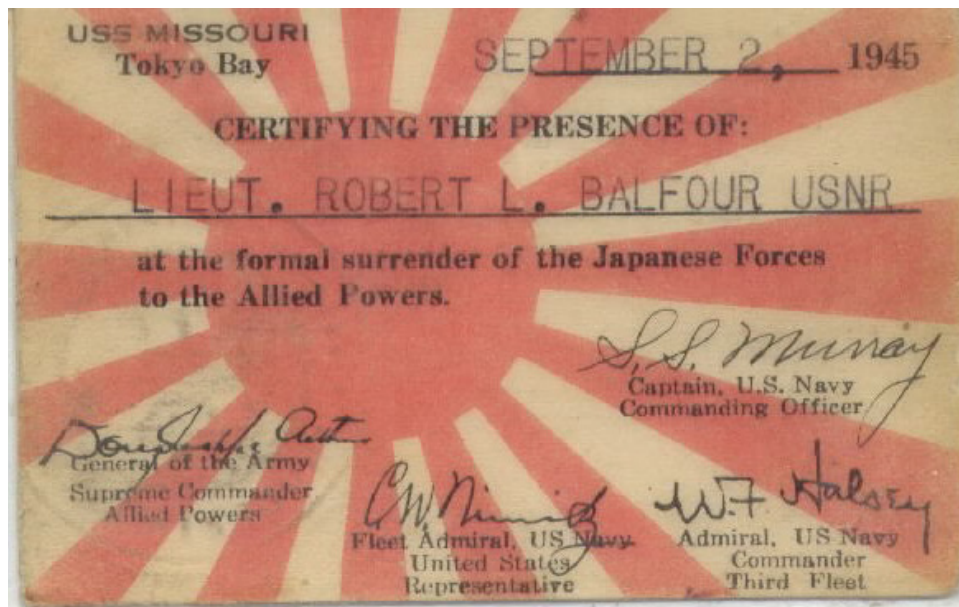




## NAVAL HISTORY *and* HERITAGE COMMAND

# The German and Japanese Surrender Ceremonies, 1945: Instructor's Guide



Wallet card souvenir of the occasion, issued to Lieutenant Robert L. Balfour, USNR, for the September 2, 1945, surrender ceremony aboard USS *Missouri*. These cards were designed by Chief Shipfitter Donald G. Drodgy and produced by *Missouri's* printshop. The cards show the facsimile signatures of Captain Stuart S. Murray, the ship's commanding officer; General of the Army Douglas MacArthur; Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz; and Admiral William F. Halsey (NH 100856-KN).

## Essential Question

- ✿ Why were the German and Japanese surrender ceremonies at the end of World War II different?

## Instructor's Guide:

# *The German and Japanese Surrender Ceremonies, 1945*

### Duration

80 minutes (double period or two single periods)

### Grades

9–12

### Subjects

- ✿ Social Studies
- ✿ U.S. History and Government

### Materials Needed

Student Packet (one per student)

### Field-Specific Vocabulary

- ✿ Allies
- ✿ atomic bomb
- ✿ instrument of surrender
- ✿ multifront war
- ✿ occupation
- ✿ Pacific Fleet
- ✿ Potsdam Declaration
- ✿ Soviet Union
- ✿ surrender ceremony
- ✿ unconditional surrender

### Planning and Preparation

Classroom arrangement: pairs or individual desks, instructor's discretion.  
Prior Knowledge for the instructor to have:

- Causes and course of World War II
- Origins of the Cold War
- International relations, 1914–89

### Skills and Competencies Objectives

- Conduct a close reading of first-hand accounts.
- Build an argument by setting two or more sources in conversation.
- Establish context by combining and evaluating information in sources.
- Use evidence to demonstrate the validity of an argument.
- Identify bias.

### Content Objectives

- Assess the impact of cultural prejudice on events in the mid-20th century.
- Evaluate and explain the Allied war aims and U.S. foreign policy in the mid-20th century.
- Understand the process whereby World War II ended.

### Essential Question

- ✿ Why were the Japanese and German surrender ceremonies at the end of World War II different?

### Sequence of Activities

The lesson (and formative assessment) is designed for a double block (1 hour, 20 minutes) or two class periods (40 minutes each). The homework (summative assessment) is designed to take 30 to 45 minutes.

At the instructor's discretion, this lesson could be expanded to include more time for discussion and/or direct instruction. The lesson also contains an optional extension exercise for deeper engagement with the topic and themes.

## Sequence of Activities (continued)

1. Distribute the Student Packets.
2. Read the context section aloud with the students and answer any questions about World War II.
3. Open a discussion about the sources. Possible opening question: What are the limitations of primary sources produced so long after the fact? What kinds of things do photographs leave out?
4. Put the students in groups of two or three and have them read and discuss each source selection. Working together, they should complete the worksheet (formative assessment).
5. Collect the worksheets and redistribute them in random order around the classroom. For questions 1–8, ask the students to share answers from the worksheets in hand. For question 9, initiate small-group discussions or discuss as a class.
6. Return the worksheets to their respective authors. Allow students to make any corrections or additions to their worksheets from what they learned during the activity (and/or discussion).
7. Explain the homework assignment (summative assessment).
8. At the next class, collect the formative (worksheet) and summative (homework) assessments.

\* *Please note: This lesson plan does not contain rubrics. The intent is for the plan to be malleable enough for integration into an existing skills-based curriculum. It is therefore recommended that the instructor use those rubrics with which the students are already familiar.*

## Assessments

Formative: Student worksheet (self- or peer-assessed)

Summative: Homework assignment (instructor-assessed)

Optional Summative for Extension Exercise: Essay (instructor-assessed)

## Further Reading

Richard Bessel, *Germany, 1945: From War to Peace* (London: Pocket, 2009).

John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999).

Carsten Fries, “Victory in the Pacific: Japan’s Surrender and Aftermath, August–October 1945,” Naval History and Heritage Command, March 3, 2020, <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/world-war-ii/1945/victory-in-pacific.html>.

——— “Victory in Europe: Germany’s Surrender and Aftermath, April–July 1945,” Naval History and Heritage Command (March 31, 2020), <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/world-war-ii/1945/ve-day.html>.

Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler’s Germany, 1944–1945* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

“Report of Surrender and Occupation of Japan,” U.S. Pacific Fleet and Ocean Areas, transcribed by Naval History and Heritage Command, first circulated in February 1946, <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/t/ships-present-in-tokyo-bay.html>.

## Learning Standards Sources

“Common Core: State Sponsored Initiative—Preparing America’s Students for College and Career,” accessed April 15, 2020, <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

National Council for the Social Studies, “National Curriculum for Social Studies: Executive Summary,” accessed April 15, 2020, <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/execsummary>.

## Adjustments in Relation to Common Core Standards

This lesson adheres to the pedagogical adjustments required by the Common Core standards as implemented by the states. This lesson is a series of skills-based activities designed to develop students’ competencies with respect to the Common Core.

## Learning Standards

### Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies

#### For Grades 9 and 10

RH.9–10.1; RH.9–10.2; RH.9–10.3; RH.9–10.4

#### For Grades 11 and 12

RH.11–12.1; RH.11–12.2; RH.11–12.3; RH.11–12.4; RH.11–12.5; RH.11–12.7; RH.11–12.8

### Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Literacy in Reading Informational Texts

#### For Grades 9 and 10

CR.9–10.1; CR.9–10.3; CR.9–10.4; CR.9–10.5; CR.9–10.6; CR.9–10.8

#### For Grades 11 and 12

RI.11–12.1; RI.11–12.4; RI.11–12.6

### Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Literacy in Writing

#### For Grades 9 and 10

WHST.9–10.1; WHST.9–10.1A; WHST.9–10.1B; WHST.9–10.1C; WHST.9–10.2; WHST.9–10.2C; WHST.9–10.4; WHST.9–10.5; WHST.9–10.9

#### For Grades 11 and 12

WHST.11–12.1; WHST.11–12.1A; WHST.11–12.1B; WHST.11–12.2B; WHST.11–12.2C; WHST.11–12.4; WHST.11–12.5; WHST.11–12.9

### National Council for the Social Studies Themes

- ✿ Culture
- ✿ Time, Continuity, and Change
- ✿ People, Places, and Environments
- ✿ Power, Authority, and Governance
- ✿ Global Connections