

COLD WAR I

Yalta: Peace, Power and Betrayal

Lesson 2: Perception of the Viewer

Vision is the art
of seeing what is invisible to others.

Jonathan Swift

Perception may appear to be a subtle, abstract quality, but the change that it can have on a person's actions are vast. Perception of an event, an action, or a person has often had a major impact upon world events. Thus, it is vastly important to understand the perceptions of yourself and equally important to comprehend the perceptions of others.

What influences perception? What can change a person's unique perspective? How does that person's perspective affect their actions and attitudes? Discovering the answers to these questions will allow you to more effectively interact with others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand that perception often plays a role in world events.
- Students will be able to explain that any event can be seen from a number of perspectives and that a person's actions are influenced by those perceptions.
- Students will discuss how understanding other's perspectives will allow them to interact more effectively in school and society.

CIVICS STANDARDS

from MCREL standards at <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Standard.asp?SubjectID=14>

- Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations

LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

from MCREL standards at <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Standard.asp?SubjectID=7>

- Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes
- Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

HISTORY STANDARDS

from MCREL standards at

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=3&StandardID=2>

- Analyzes the effects specific decisions had on history and studies how things might have been different in the absence of those decisions
- Understands how the past affects our lives and society in general
- Evaluates the validity and credibility of different historical interpretations

WORKING WITH OTHERS STANDARDS

from MCREL standards at <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Standard.asp?SubjectID=22>

- Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situations
- Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- A copy of the PBS documentary, *Yalta Conference*, a television, and a VCR
- Computers with Internet access

TIME NEEDED

- Time will vary based upon students' and teacher's comfort level with Internet research.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. View in class with your students the educational version of the *Yalta Conference*. Segment 1
2. Allow time for discussion and reflection upon specific, key parts of the Yalta Conference video such as the segments on
 - a. Churchill's dislike of the Russians at the onset of World War II
 - b. Stalin's belief that England and the U.S. were withholding supplies from the Russian army
 - c. The effect that the successes of the Russian armies had upon Roosevelt and Churchill
 - d. The hospitality of the Russians, particularly the planting of lemon trees after an offhand remark by a British diplomat
3. Accompany a viewing of Segment 1 of the educational version of the *Yalta Conference*, with exploration of the Winston Churchill website, going into Churchill and War, and selecting the reflections under "Allies at War: Bitter Rivalry" for a perspective on the influences that occur due to the "duality of the principal actors." The website is at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/>

Examine, too, on the Internet the historical perspectives on the Cold War accompanied by historical images at

<http://history.acusd.edu/gen/20th/coldwar1.html>

Examine, too, the Internet Modern History Sourcebook. Go to Stalin's Reply to Churchill offered on March 14, 1946 in a Pravda interview that was published in the New York Times and read the text of Stalin's words to gain further perspective at

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1946stalin.html>

4. Have the class discuss the concept of perception. Can the way that one person views events differ from the way another person does? What causes differences in perception? Do any two people see events in the same way?
5. Tell students that they will be creating a tableau, a still scene, of a school cafeteria, or some other common school locale.
Students can view the definition of tableau as a living picture at <http://www.wordreference.com/English/definition.asp?en=tableau>
6. Have groups of about eight students go up to the front of the class and pose as part of the tableau.
7. Take a moment to preserve the tableau as a digital "frozen moment" by taking several digital camera pictures of the tableau.
8. While student groups are posing, tell other students to pick out what they feel is the most important detail of each tableau. Continue until the entire class has had an opportunity to be part of a tableau.
9. Have students compare their lists with other students to see if their perceptions of the tableaux were different. Even if students focused on the same individual or aspect of the tableau, have them compare in more depth to see if their perception was identical or if it had other differences.
10. Tell students that history has many perspectives. Ask if they can list any differences in perspective that appear in the Yalta Conference video. One particularly strong instance is where it is pointed out that Stalin feels the other Allies are withholding supplies.
11. Continue the conversation by asking if there were any points in the video where people tried to influence the perspective of others. If students have trouble coming up with events, ask how the Russian hosts planting lemon trees may have influenced perspective.
12. Have students get into groups and list at least five other historical events where they can identify at least two unique perspectives. Have them reflect back on previous lessons in order to complete this. If students need to, allow them to use resource material or the Internet in order to complete their lists.
13. Have students choose two of the events they have listed as those where perspective played the most important role.
14. Have students report back to the class about the two events which were most affected by perspective.
15. As a class, discuss what local and world events are currently being affected by perspective. Discuss how it is useful to understand the numerous perspectives surrounding an event.

16. Conclude by returning to the Yalta Conference video and view Segment 2 of Lesson 2 Perception of the Viewer. Ask students how Roosevelt was aided by understanding others' perspectives and how he was hindered when he was unable to see the perspectives of the other leaders.

EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

1. Students might wish to preserve their living history tableau activity as a CD-ROM collection.
2. Download all the pictures. Have each student group make the necessary selection of desired "group tableau" pictures.
3. Ask each student group to prepare a Word document that lists the names of all students involved in the particular tableau as well as a description of what the student group was attempting to depict and how they thought their poses would affect the perceptions of the audience.
4. Organize the materials in group folders and burn onto CD-ROM.
5. Have students create CD-ROM covers. Copy a CD-ROM for each student, and they will have a group perspective in imagery and words of how the class handled learning about the powerful effects of perception.

**The range of what we think and do
is limited by what we fail to notice.**

R.D. Laing