

World History Activators

Brief, Engaging Historical Experiences





About the author

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Welcome to World History Activators: Renaissance through Enlightenment!

Students simulate the siege of Constantinople, circumnavigate the globe in a Magellan Reader's Theater, arrange themselves into living tableaux re-creating art masterpieces of the Renaissance, participate in a Scientific Revolution science fair, and play the roles of Hobbes, Locke, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Kant, Mary Wollstonecraft, Ben Franklin, and others in an Enlightenment salon. Teaching aids include procedures, character assignments, short and long debriefings, student handouts (including background essays), and lists of works for students to consult. Activities can be accomplished in one or two class periods.

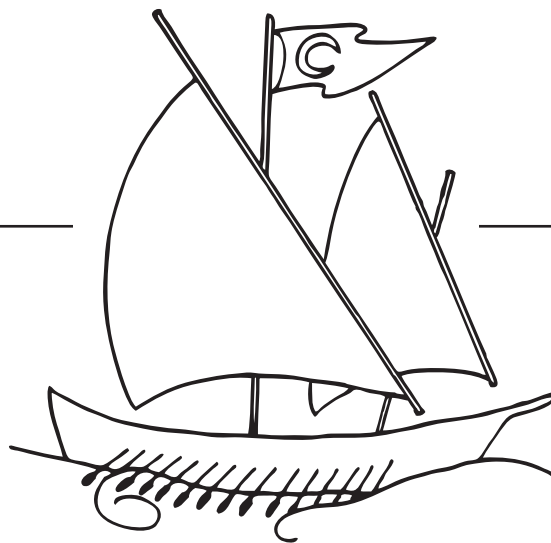


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General Teacher's Guide

Purpose

These simple-to-use activators supplement your World History classes and immerse your students in “living history” situations. Students get up from their desks, move around in different classroom configurations and find themselves drawn into history that becomes compellingly real. For a variety of reasons, students function better and learn more when actively engaged. *World History Activators* provide brief, clever and exciting experiences for your students.

What are Activators?

Activators possess three common elements, which embody a philosophical foundation.

1. Activators are simple, brief and require little background reading or preparation. Most activators take one to two class periods.
2. Some duplication is required but can be minimized by projecting background essays and other information on a whiteboard or screen. You may also choose to use a computer with a projector.
3. Activators involve most, if not all, of your students, be they advanced, average, low ability or of limited English fluency.

Special Lessons

World History Activators provide experiences that shape students’ historical perceptions and positively enhance their understanding of past, current and future events. As you introduce the units to your students, help them to understand that we re-create history because doing so has an inherent value.

Be Prepared

Be sure to read the Procedure options thoroughly before introducing the Activator to your students. Enlist students’ help in setting the scene within the classroom.

Reinforce Student Response

During the action of an Activator, your students are involved in issues and events. When students make personal comments, either in class or during the Debriefing, praise them for their astute remarks. Your reinforcement of their experiences emphasizes for all students that history is real because it touches them. Above all, express your pleasure that students are so involved.



Teaching tip

Every student in your class will be standing, walking, marching, crawling, lying down, negotiating, plotting, perhaps even “painting” as participants at crucial turning points in the development of our modern world.



Teaching tip

An Activator provides memorable experiences that your students will retain long after other school events fade.

Procedure

Setup

1. Use the **Character Assignment Chart** to assign roles to your students. The chart indicates how many students may be assigned to each role. Students may play more than one role. The props needed for each character are indicated on the list. Write the names of the students assigned to the different roles on the list, to be posted for the students' reference.
2. Photocopying
 - For **Option 2** below, photocopy a class set of the **Re-enactment**. [For **Option 1**, you will not give each student a copy of the **Re-enactment**. Instead, they will follow the action as described in the narration and as instructed by the DIRECTOR. (For this simulation, it is the teacher who adopts the role of the NARRATOR and also acts as DIRECTOR.) This option significantly reduces the amount of photocopying required.
 - For Option 1 below, prepare to project the **Background Essay** onto a screen or whiteboard via computer or overhead projector.
 - For Option 2 below, photocopy a class set of the **Background Essay** for students to read for homework the day before the activity.
 - Photocopy enough pictures of **Ottoman Ships** and **Christian Ships** to provide one for each of the Ottoman and Christian sailors to hold up.
3. Props
 - Assign students to make their own props, using the **Character Assignment Chart** as a reference, or acquire the needed props and provide them for the students.
 - Weapons should be made of materials that cannot cause injury or harm. Students can make sturdy and safe swords, muskets, shovels and picks by layering foam board and wrapping it in packing tape or duct tape. Styrofoam pool noodles, cut down to the proper length, may also work well as weapons and tools.
 - Acquire or make the props listed under "Other props" on the **Character Assignment Chart**.

Background Essay

Place: Constantinople (capital of the Byzantine Empire)

Year: 1453

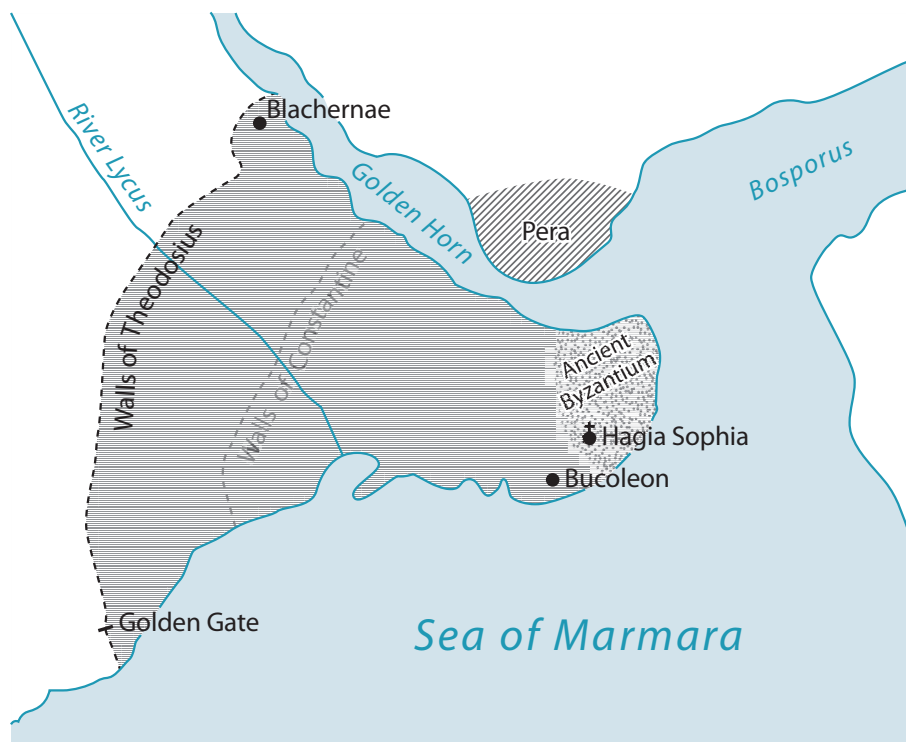
The City of Constantinople

In 330 CE, the Roman Emperor Constantine I established a new city on the site of the ancient Greek colony of Byzantium, replacing Rome as the imperial capital; it came to be known as Constantinople. He chose a superbly strategic location, in terms of both trade and defense. The city was located both on the land route between Europe and Asia and on the Bosphorus, a strait connecting the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea, flanked by an excellent natural harbor, known as the "Golden Horn." In terms of protection, Constantinople stood on a triangular peninsula, and was thus protected on two sides by water. Befitting the new capital of the Roman Empire, Constantine I built a palace, a hippodrome (chariot racing stadium) that seated 80,000, a

bath complex, and a great boulevard that ran down the center of the city, called the Mese, or Middle Street. He also built defensive walls around the city protecting it from attack by land or sea. In the 5th century, Emperor Theodosius II enhanced the city's defenses by constructing a triple wall, which served as a formidable barrier against attack. Over time, the city became more Greek than Roman, and with the construction of the beautiful domed cathedral, the Hagia Sophia, or Church of the Holy Wisdom, the city became the center of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

For over 1000 years, the city of Constantinople withstood numerous sieges, protected by its natural geography, its triple walls, its Greek fire, and its heroic defenders. During that time, only the Christians of the Fourth Crusade managed

to capture the city in 1204, and they were assisted by treachery within the walls. The Crusaders established Constantinople as a short-lived Latin state, but the Greeks retook the city in 1261. However, the city suffered thereafter from nearly continuous attacks from various invaders, and to make matters worse, between 1346 and 1349, the Black Death killed nearly half of its population. By the mid-15th century, the Byzantine Empire had diminished to just the area around Constantinople, a few islands in the Sea of Marmara, and the



Map of Constantinople and Pera