



“ON FREEDOM’S WINGS: BOUND FOR GLORY”

The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II

Tuskegee Airmen Lesson Plans

Recommended Level: **High School**

Time Required: **5 Days**

Introduction:

This unit addresses major areas of study in American History: racism in the 1930’s and 1940’s and the Allied campaign on the Western Front. Knowledge of the role of Booker T. Washington through *Plessy vs. Ferguson* has usually been covered in most curriculum guides before World War II. The lesson may best be used in the context of World War II and the European theater of action. However, lessons may also be used during Black History Month. These lesson plans and viewing of the film are prepared to take five class periods. However, lessons can be separated into individual activities to fit the needs of your class.

Materials:

- Video: *On Freedom’s Wings – Bound for Glory*
- Internet resources
- Textbook

Unit Goals:

After completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Have an understanding of Allied strategy to defeat Hitler on the Western Front
2. Identify Allied and German leaders on the Western Front
3. Describe the racism prior and during WWII as seen in the stories of the Tuskegee Airmen.
4. Describe the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen in WWII.
5. Take the role of war correspondents in reporting on the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen either using Power Point or Publisher.

Day 1:

Aim:

The student will:

1. Examine Allied strategies to defeat Hitler in 1942
2. Identify roles of Churchill, Roosevelt and Allied generals in setting goals
3. Describe Operation Torch and significant battles in North Africa
4. Identify the roles of Eisenhower, Montgomery and Rommel

Procedure:

1. In paired partners, have student examine the map of Europe and Africa to figure out the easiest and best way to beat Hitler
2. Identify controversy among allied leaders over the invasion of France versus the invasion of Africa
3. Examine Operation Torch and its goals
4. Identify Eisenhower, Montgomery and Rommel and their role in North Africa
5. Describe significance of the battle of El Alamein

Assessment:

3-2-1 – The students will list and identify 3 Allied generals, 2 Allied generals, and 1 important battle from the lesson.

Day 2:

The student will:

Aim:

1. Identify role of Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute
2. Review Washington's theory of gradualism and the effects of segregation
3. Identify DuBois and review his theories on Black rights
4. Assess the significance of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*
5. Use primary sources to examine the results – segregation in the 1930's

Procedure:

1. Divide students into groups to research in their texts the significance of:
 - a. Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute
 - b. Gradualism
 - c. W.E.B. DuBois
 - d. NAACP
 - e. *Plessy Vs. Ferguson*

2. Using Venn diagram, compare and contrast DuBois and Washington's views
3. Evaluate their effects on the lives of African Americans
4. Examine pictures from the 1930's and 1940's:
Google: Photographs of Racial Segregation
<http://africanamericanhistory.about.com>

Assessment:

Research and summarize the dissent of Justice John Marshall Harlan to Plessy vs. Ferguson.

www.louisville.edu/library/law/Harlan/harlthom.html or Google: Harlan's Great Dissent by Charles Thompson which gives background and facts of the case and Harlan's dissent.

Focus question: What good advice does Harlan give regarding American's equality under the law?

Day 3:

Aim:

The student will:

1. Identify Tuskegee Airmen
2. View segregation in the Army Air Corps and the Airmen's response to it
3. Identify Eleanor Roosevelt as an advocate for the Airmen
4. View the accomplishments of the 99th and 332nd Fighter Expeditionary Force

Procedure:

1. Set stage for movie "On Freedom's Wings: Bound for Glory" using a KWL chart (KNOW/WANT TO KNOW/LEARNED) about life for the Airmen in the Armed Services during WWII.
2. View movie that is about 45 minutes long.

Note: Discussion questions from Day 4 might be given to students before movie, if desired.

Assessment:

1. Students will take on the role of war correspondents to write a report or do a Power Point presentation on one of the following:
 - a. Role of Col. Ben Davis
 - b. Eleanor Roosevelt and Chief Anderson (the pilot she flew with)
 - c. Role of Red Tails as bomber escorts
 - d. Story of Capt. Smith and his treatment as a POW
 - e. Effect of Truman's Executive Order

- f. Treatment of African American pilots by white officers
 - g. Accomplishments of 332nd Fighter Expeditionary Force
 - h. Operation Torch
 - i. Battle of El Alamein
2. This assignment will be due for class on Friday.

Day 4:

Aim:

The student will:

1. Review the KWL chart
2. List reasons the Airmen were not considered good enough to fly
3. List example of discrimination faced by the 99th and 332nd
4. Understand the significant role played by the 332nd in the attack on Germany
5. Understand the value of primary sources: the firsthand accounts of three officers in the movie

Procedure:

These discussion questions may be used before or after the movie. If used after the movie, the students may work in pairs on the questions, and then discuss them as a class.

1. Why was their training initially called the Tuskegee Experiment?
2. List 4 reasons why African Americans were not considered good enough to be pilots.
3. Give 2 examples of biased treatment by white officers.
4. Identify Mrs. Roosevelt's role as an advocate for the Tuskegee Airmen.
5. Describe the qualities of leadership shown by Col. Ben Davis.
6. What duties did the 332nd perform in Southern Europe?
7. How did the Tuskegee Airmen change racial attitudes in the Air Corps?
8. Identify Truman's Executive Order 9981? How did people respond to it?
9. What do you think it was like for the Airmen when they went home?
10. Describe the value of hearing the stories of Col. Magee, Col. Archer, and Capt. Smith.

Day 5:

Assessment:

1. Students will take on the role of war correspondents to write a report or do a Power Point presentation on one of the following
 - a. Role of Col. Ben Davis
 - b. Eleanor Roosevelt and Chief Anderson (the pilot she flew with).



- c. Role of Red Tails as bomber escorts.
- d. Story of Capt. Smith and his treatment as a POW
- e. Effect of Truman's Executive Order.
- f. Treatment of African American pilots by white officers
- g. Accomplishments of 332nd Fighter Expeditionary Force.
- h. Operation Torch
- i. Battle of El Alamein
- J. Gen. Rommel, the Desert Fox

Pennsylvania Standards

Reading, Writing, and Listening – 1.2.11.B; 1.4.11.B; 1.5.11.B; 1.6.11.E, F; 1.8.11.A, B

Social Studies Standards – 8.3.12.A, D; 8.1.12.B, C; 8.2.12.B

National Standards

History:

- 5-12 Explain major turning points of the war and contrast military campaigns in the European and Pacific Theaters. (Draw upon data in historical maps.)
- 7-12 Describe military experiences and explain how they fostered American identity and interactions among people of diverse backgrounds. (Utilize literary sources including oral testimony).
- 7-12 Explore how the war fostered cultural exchange and interaction while promoting nationalism and American identity. (Analyze cause-and-effect relationships.)
- 7-12 Evaluate how minorities organized to gain access to wartime jobs and how they confronted discrimination. (Formulate a position of course of action on an issue.)

English Language Arts

- 7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- 8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- 12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).