

Lesson Plan: Battleship

Summary

In this session, Blade sketched a toy battleship and reflected on its unusual mix of old and modern design features. He described how ships have been used in warfare since the age of sail, their evolution into steel fortresses, their role in movies and recruiting posters, and their retirement into museums such as the USS Texas.

https://www.youtube.com/live/fbZyvHMR7Wk?si=-6Yr_4guf8U59mCw

Objective

Students will learn about the historical evolution of battleships, their cultural impact in media and recruitment, and their eventual retirement and preservation as museums.

Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas of a primary or secondary source.
- NGSS HS-ETS1-3: Evaluate a solution to a complex real-world problem based on prioritized criteria and trade-offs.
- C3.D2.His.2.6-8: Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and continuity.

Materials

- 9 Fun Facts list (Battleship)
- Worksheet (Battleship)
- Optional: whiteboard, projector, printed images of battleships, or access to museum websites

Activity

- Review the 9 Fun Facts with the class.
- Have students create a simple timeline showing the progression from sail-powered ships to steel battleships and finally to retirement.
- Discuss how battleships were presented in media and recruiting campaigns across the world.
- Conclude with a class discussion on the USS Texas and other preserved ships as educational tools.

Introduction

Introduce students to the idea of battleships as both historical tools of war and cultural symbols. Discuss how they evolved over time and how they continue to exist in memory through games, films, and preserved museum ships.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on their ability to recall and explain facts from the 9 Fun Facts, complete the worksheet, and contribute to the class discussion on the cultural role of battleships.

Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Content Understanding	Thorough explanation of battleship history and cultural role	Adequate explanation with minor errors	Basic recall with significant gaps	Little to no understanding shown
Discussion Participation	Actively contributes thoughtful insights	Participates with some relevant input	Minimal participation	No participation
Worksheet Completion	All questions answered accurately and fully	Most questions answered with some accuracy	Some questions answered but with errors	Worksheet largely incomplete
Technology Connections	Clearly connects battleship evolution to modern tech	Some connection made to modern tech	Limited connection, vague or incomplete	No attempt to connect to modern tech

9 Fun Facts

1. Ships have been used in warfare since the age of sailing. Naval power dates back thousands of years, with oared galleys like the Greek trireme and massive wooden sailing ships dominating battle from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Control of the sea meant control of trade and empire.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/ships/ships-of-sail.html>

2. Diesel engines and steel battleships supplanted wooden ships.

The late 19th century saw wood give way to iron and steel, and sails replaced by engines. HMS *Dreadnought* (1906) revolutionized naval warfare, instantly making earlier designs obsolete and sparking a global arms race.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Dreadnought-British-battleship>

3. Modern battleships were floating fortresses. By WWII, battleships were more than weapons. They carried hundreds of crew and were self-sufficient for weeks. They housed bakeries, medical bays, post offices, and repair shops, functioning as fortified platforms afloat while bristling with heavy guns.

<https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2015/june/historic-fleets-majesty-floating-fortress>

4. Battleships lived on in post-WWII cinema. Even as carriers took over, movies dramatized battleships and their crews, turning them into symbols of bravery and naval might. Films like those highlighted in the British Film Institute's list of great sea battle movies kept the imagery alive in popular culture.

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/lists/10-great-battle-sea-films>

5. In countries all over the world, battleships became recruitment icons. Battleships were featured on posters, stamps, and propaganda campaigns worldwide, symbolizing unity, pride, and invincibility. Their silhouettes worked as powerful psychological tools as much as military ones.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/art/exhibits/conflicts-and-operations/navy-recruiting-posters-of-the-atomic-age.html>

6. The word “Battleship” became a cultural brand. The board game *Battleship* became a cultural touchstone, starting as a pencil-and-paper guessing game before Milton Bradley commercialized it in the 1960s. It grew into a brand spanning video games and films, keeping the name alive far beyond the ocean.

<https://www.meeplemountain.com/articles/back-in-the-day-battleship/>

7. Modern technology made battleships obsolete. Guided missiles and satellite navigation extended naval strike ranges, eliminating the need for massive gun platforms. Advanced computer-guided defense systems further reduced the effectiveness of traditional projectiles.

<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2013/may/rise-missile-carriers>

8. Battleships were retired in the late 20th century. The US decommissioned its last battleships, the Iowa-class, in the 1990s. Other navies had already retired theirs earlier, marking the end of an era in naval warfare.

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.19fortyfive.com%2F2023%2F04%2Fwhy-the-u-s-navys-battleships-will-never-sail-again%2F>

9. Many battleships survive today as museums. Instead of being scrapped, iconic ships became museums. The USS *Texas* is currently under restoration, ensuring future generations can walk her decks and witness history firsthand.

<https://battleshiptexas.org/education/history/>

Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Review

1. What role did oared galleys like the trireme play in naval warfare?
2. Which ship design in 1906 made older ships obsolete?

Discussion

3. How did battleships serve as floating fortresses during WWII?
4. Why did battleships often appear in movies and recruiting posters?

Data Analysis

5. Explain how guided missiles and satellite navigation changed the usefulness of battleships.
6. What does the retirement of battleships in the 1990s say about the evolution of naval warfare?

Reflection

7. Why do you think battleships still hold cultural power through games, films, and museums?
8. What can visiting a preserved ship like the USS Texas teach us about history?