

1936 Berlin Olympics

Americans Show Up Germany's So-called "Master Race"

Overview:

This lesson teaches about the most dramatic Olympic face-off in history, held in Germany during the build-up to the World War II. In these games, held in 1936, African American athletes showed the world the foolishness of Hitler's concept of a superior "Master Race."

Lesson Objective:

In this lesson students will:

- Learn about unjust moments in the Olympics
- Discover Black athletes who showed resilience in the face of racism
- Understand international conflict of World War II
- See how sports can be a unifying tool
- Acknowledge the talent of Jesse Owens and other Black athletes
- Learn types of civil protest

Lesson Prompt:

How many of you have watched the Olympic Games?

Which events were your favorites? Which athletes do you like?

How did the pandemic affect the 2021 Olympic Games (which were supposed to have taken place in 2020)?

Can you think of any other worldwide events that would affect an event like the Olympics, which bring different countries together from all across the globe?

This lesson includes a prepared PowerPoint slide deck summarizing the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Share the slide show and have students consider and discuss the questions contained in it to spark discussion. Select activities from the accompanying Activity Pack according to your time allowance and student appropriateness.

Included in the Activity Pack are:

Multiple Choice Questions (grades 2-8)

Critical Thinking Exercises (grades K-5 with guidance; 6-8 unassisted)

Crossword Puzzle

Coloring Page (grades K-3)

Selected Videos

Vocabulary:

Nazi, Martial Law, Fascist, Chancellor, Treaty of Versailles, Aryan, Turmoil, Führer
Propaganda, Eugenics, Boycott, Allegiance, Sepia, Shunt, Surreal

Recommended Resources:

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – Exhibition: 1936 Olympics](#)

[Holocaust Encyclopedia \(USHMM\) – The Nazi Olympics](#)

[The Forgotten Story of the 1936 Olympics](#)

[1936 Berlin Olympic Games \(official Olympics site\)](#)

[Jesse Owens and the Olympic Games \(Ohio State University\)](#)

[National Parks Services: 1936 Olympics and Controversy of Participation](#)

[NPR: Nazi Olympics Tangled Politics and Sport \(2008\)](#)

Standards and Learning Objectives

Mapped to the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards published by the National Council for the Social Studies

Grades K-1

Civics:

D2.Civ.1.K-2. Describe roles and responsibilities of people in authority.

D2.Civ.2.K-2. Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community.

D2.Civ.5.K-2. Explain what governments are and some of their functions.

History:

D2.His.2.K-2. Compare life in the past to life today.

D2.His.3.K-2. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

D2.His.4.K-2. Compare perspectives of people in the past to those of people in the present.

D2.His.6.K-2. Compare different accounts of the same historical event.

D2.His.9.K-2. Identify different kinds of historical sources.

D2.His.12.K-2. Generate questions about a particular historical source as it relates to a particular historical event or development.

D2.His.14.K-2. Generate possible reasons for an event or development in the past.

Grades 3-5

Civics:

D2.Civ.6.3-5. Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, work-places, voluntary organizations, and families.

D2.Civ.8.3-5. Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities.

D2.Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

D2.Civ.14.3-5. Illustrate historical and contemporary means of changing society.

History:

D2.His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.

D2.His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.

D2.His.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.

D2.His.5.3-5. Explain connections among historical contexts and people's perspectives at the time.

D2.His.6.3-5. Describe how people's perspectives shaped the historical sources they created.

D2.His.14.3-5. Explain probable causes and effects of events and developments.

D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.

Grades 6-8

Civics:

D2.Civ.1.6-8. Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.

D2.Civ.10.6-8. Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

D2.Civ.14.6-8. Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.

History:

D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

D2.His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.6-8. Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.

D2.His.6.6-8. Analyze how people's perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.

D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.